Tech4Impact Research Seed Grants 2018
1st Call for Proposals

Introduction

EPFL’s Tech4Impact Initiative seeks to empower students, researchers, academics and innovators to act as responsible leaders and change agents for finding innovative solutions to tackle urgent societal challenges throughout Switzerland and beyond. In fulfilling this ambitious vision, Tech4Impact launches its 1st Research Seed Grant with the aim to explore new research avenues that leverage technologies to create significant social or environmental impact.

The call for proposals addresses EPFL researchers and broadly focuses on all kinds of research projects that utilize new technologies for achieving social/environmental impact.

Objectives

The 1st Tech4Impact Research Grant addresses the following key objectives:

• Stimulate technological research that has the potential to create social or environmental impact
• Encourage interdisciplinary, cross-sector research collaborations that provide collective solutions to grand societal challenges
• Create and disseminate scientific knowledge related to new technologies for sustainable development

Thematic scope

All scientific disciplines at EPFL are invited to submit a research proposal.

We particularly encourage submissions of research projects related to technologies that can be applied for:

i) humanitarian aid purposes (e.g. humanitarian drone applications, edtech solutions, satellite imagery)
ii) environmental protection (e.g. energy efficient technologies, waste reduction, efficient mobility solutions)
iii) advancing ethics in digitization (e.g. financial inclusion through blockchain, solutions for algorithmic biases)

Scope of Funding

The 1st Tech4Impact Research Seed Grant awards two grants under a competitive basis. The maximum granted amount for one project is CHF 50,000.

Please note the following specificities:

• This funding may cover parts of the salary costs for EPFL staff (specifically PhDs) and needs to be directly aligned with the proposed research activities (e.g. lab equipment, field visits, travel expenses, etc).
• The claimed expenses should be detailed in the budget request of the application form alongside financial and in-kind contributions from each partner.
• The budget request encompasses one calendar year. By 31 December 2019, granted researchers will have to confirm that the entire amount has been or will be spent. In the event of any significant delays, Tech4Impact has to be informed immediately. Financial surpluses have to be retransferred before 31 January 2020.
Eligibility Criteria

The following criteria need to be considered to qualify for a Tech4Impact Grant:

- The project leader is based at an EPFL unit (institute, laboratory, college or center)
- The project is related to the activities of that unit
- The project is in line with the research call, i.e. how technologies can be used to create social/environmental impact

Submission of Applications

All proposals must be submitted using the Tech4Impact Seed Research Grant application form no later than 15 October 2018 (midnight, CET). Applications must follow the indications mentioned in the application form and must be send to t4i@epfl.ch

Late and incomplete applications cannot be considered.

Timeline

Deadline for Submission: 15 October 2018
Notification of Decision: Beginning of November 2018
Project Start (latest): 01 January 2019
Project Completion: 31 December 2019
Submission of Final Report: 31 January 2020

Evaluation Criteria

Applications will be assessed by an evaluation committee on the basis of the following criteria:

- Relevance of the proposed project for tackling a social or environmental problem
- Novelty of the project vis-a-vis current state of research
- Scientific rigor and quality of the proposed research design
- Transferability of scientific evidence into practice (e.g. in form of a spin-off, tech transfer, policy brief, etc.)
- Efficient use of resources

Reporting Commitments

Upon completion of the project, grantees will need to submit a final report consisting of a final scientific report and a final financial report. Granted researchers may be asked to present the results of the project at a workshop or event, yet this form of dissemination is not compulsory.

Following EPFL commitment to Open Access, any publications resulted from the project should be accessible electronically so that they are freely and immediately available to the public and can be reused without any charge.

Contact

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