

Mahidol Sussex Seed Fund (Round 4: 2026/27)

Programme Specification

BACKGROUND

This scheme is financed jointly by the Global Engagement Office at the University of Sussex (UK) and the Global Partnerships Division at Mahidol University (Thailand). It underpins the strategic institutional partnership between the two universities through investment in international collaborative projects.

PURPOSE OF THE SCHEME

The Mahidol Sussex Seed Fund supports the cultivation or expansion of research collaborations to address global challenges, contribute to international development at both universities, and grow the reputation of our researcher teams. Bids should result in tangible outputs between groups of researchers as specified below (e.g., workshops, capacity building, PhD co-supervision, publications, and grant applications). Applicants are expected to demonstrate the feasibility of their plan.

Eligible activities would include, but are not limited to:

- Preparation of collaborative bids to attract research funding.
- Facilitating internationally co-authored publications (including joint workshops or conferences).
- Development of new interdisciplinary research programmes.
- Visits to link research groups to establish new contacts and explore possibilities for collaboration and capacity building.
- Other items that facilitate collaboration among research groups at both universities.

FUNDING AND ELIGIBLE COSTS

Proposals can be made for periods of up to one year. **The maximum funding that can be applied for is £10,000 from each institution, i.e., £20,000 in total (THB 400,000 from the Mahidol side)**

One-year period projects are as welcome as shorter-term initiatives. Internal funds are limited, and we wish to maximise the number and range of activities that can be supported. This means that applicants are expected to strive for the greatest possible economies in achieving their objectives.

- Projects towards the maximum end of the funding scale must demonstrate a compelling rationale.
- Applicants must demonstrate that the timeframe and costing of the project are realistic.
- The primary use of funding must be associated with research activities.
- Costs may be used for travel, accommodation, workshops, facilities and equipment use, and other expenses related to meetings or the preparation of external funding proposals, as specified at the time of the proposal. Funds allocated to the Travel category must not exceed 25% at Mahidol University or 30% at the University of Sussex (the difference in percentages at each institution is due to higher prices in the UK and the unavailability of additional sources of funding at Sussex).
- If consultancy fees are essential to the project, a particularly compelling case for their inclusion must be made.

- If bidding for Research Assistants, applicants should indicate clearly what their work would include and it must be fully costed.
- If more than one external funding opportunity is targeted, applicants must explain how the proposal will be adapted for each funder to meet different funder priorities and remits.
- Please note that funds may not be used to support an applicant's salary, or to replace the salary or scholarship of any assistant or student already receiving funding from another source.
- Funds must be spent within the specified funding period for each institution. If a project extension is required, then requests must be formally submitted to the Fund Managers at both institutions, with a clear justification of any changes to the original timeline.

For costing queries and guidance, applicants should contact the Fund Manager at their respective institution (Louise Turton, Global Partnerships Manager, L.A.Turton@sussex.ac.uk for the University of Sussex, Chatinee Kanayart, Global Partnerships Officer, chatinee.kan@mahidol.ac.th for Mahidol University).

Mahidol University will provide its own main applicant with awarded funds in October 2026 which must be spent over the course of a maximum of 12 months and by the project end date. The University of Sussex will provide its own main applicant with awarded funds that must be spent within the 26/27 financial year which ends on **31st July 2027**.

ELIGIBILITY

The fourth round is open to University of Sussex and Mahidol University Researchers of all disciplines.

- Applications should seek to build multifaceted, purposeful and enduring links between groups of researchers.
- Priority will be given to applications that demonstrate clear interdisciplinarity of research, and to those that extend opportunities to early career researchers (PhD students and/or post-doctoral researchers).
- Proposals are required to have both Sussex and Mahidol Principal Applicants, and the approval of the relevant Associate Dean for Global and Civic Engagement at Sussex, and the Dean of Faculty at Mahidol.
- Principal Applicants may be of any faculty rank at Mahidol or Sussex. At Sussex, the Fund is open to all members of academic faculty and professional services staff, whose contract of employment extends to at least the end of the proposed funding period.
- Those who are registered as students (including PhDs) are not eligible to apply directly but may be included within a proposal.
- A faculty member can serve as Principal Applicant on no more than one application per application cycle.
- There is no limit to the number of applications a faculty member can participate in as a team member.
- Successful Principal Applicants from one round may submit a proposal to a subsequent round, but priority will be given to proposals that are submitted by Principal Applicants who have not previously received any funding. Proposals must also be significantly different to the original project, or they will not be considered.

APPLICATION PROCESS

Applications to the Fund should be prepared using the Mahidol Sussex Seed Fund Application Form. It is expected that applications will be discussed jointly and reviewed by the Seed Fund Panel. A nominated Principal Applicant is required to submit the application form, on behalf of both applicants, to their respective institution along with:

- A statement of support from the Principal Applicant's Dean of Faculty at Mahidol and the relevant Associate Dean for Global and Civic Engagement at Sussex.
- A statement of support from the Principal Applicant at each institution
- At Mahidol: The Employment Certificate for the Principal Applicant from Mahidol University

Applicants should bear in mind the need to write for a panel comprising non-specialists in their field. Forms should be submitted to Inken Dunphy, Global Partnerships Senior Administrator, at I.Dunphy@sussex.ac.uk and Deepa Parajuli, Global Partnerships Office, at Deepa.par@mahidol.ac.th

Note: Mahidol Internal Procedure

Mahidol researchers are required to submit the application through their respective faculty (not as individual applicants). The application must include an endorsement letter signed by the Faculty Dean and be submitted via the University's e-Office portal.

Applications will be open from Monday, 2nd March to Friday, 2nd June 2026, 23.59 GMT.

REVIEW PROCEDURE

Applications will be considered jointly by the Seed Fund Panel with representatives from each institution. Where not available, Panel members may nominate a substitute, and other academic reviewers with relevant expertise may be consulted if necessary.

In round four the Seed Fund Panel members will consist of the following staff:

At Mahidol:

- Vice President for Global Partnerships and University Council
- Assistant Director for Research, Institute of Molecular Biosciences, Mahidol University
- An academic from a relevant faculty

At Sussex:

- Pro-Vice-Chancellor Global and Civic Engagement
- Director of Research and Innovation Services
- Global Partnerships Manager

REVIEW CRITERIA

In addition:

The Seed Fund Panel will assess applications according to the following:

1. **Scientific quality** – Suitability of the methodology and its potential to generate high-quality outputs and build capacity for future collaborations, funding bids, and publications.
2. **Team quality** - Suitability of the proposed participants, including appropriate number of researchers, relevant expertise, and a mix of disciplines that supports interdisciplinary collaboration.

3. **Outcomes and deliverables** - Potential for the activity to achieve its stated goals, and for the project to have long term sustainable outcomes that support the ongoing development of partnerships/networks beyond the initial funding period.
4. **Reputation building and wider partnership development** - Potential to engage the wider university community and build strong partnerships that enhance collaboration and raise the institution/centre's profile
5. **Early Career Researchers** - Commitment to providing opportunities for Early Career Researchers (PhD students and/or post-doctoral researchers)

REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

Successful Principal Applicants will be expected to submit interim, end-of-project and final reports detailing progress towards anticipated outcomes and results to date. Reports will be shared with both partner institutions.

Fund recipients must submit a project outcome such as a publication, manuscript, evidence of conference participation or policy brief. They will also be expected to give a 15-minute presentation after the completion of their project. The presentation will bring together groups of researchers from both institutions and will provide an opportunity for prospective collaborators and applicants to find out more about the funding scheme, as well as showcasing the impact of the seed funding.

The Global Partnerships Division/Global Engagement Office and the Research Office may publicise the activities supported by this scheme for university marketing purposes and applicants are expected to engage in this process.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Sussex and Mahidol have agreed to assist with research matching by facilitating connections between academics from both institutions to share their work and explore potential research collaborations. If you would like assistance with sourcing collaborators, please contact the Global Partnerships teams.

Colleagues are also strongly encouraged to discuss their application with Fund Managers. If you would like to discuss an application or the application process, please contact the lead for the institution in the first instance:

Mahidol University, Thailand

- Deepa Parajuli – Global Partnerships Division
deepa.par@mahidol.ac.th

University of Sussex

- Inken Dunphy - Global Partnerships Senior Administrator
I.Dunphy@sussex.ac.uk