

# Researcher-Led Initiative Fund Application Form

Thank you for your interest in applying to the Researcher-Led Initiative (RLI) Fund.

Applications are invited from University of Sussex doctoral researchers and early career research staff for funding to support short-term, well-defined training and development or public engagement projects.

The deadline for applications is Friday 16th November 2018.

Please ensure that you have read the [guidance](#) before completing your application.

## 1. Name

[REDACTED]

## 2. Sussex e-mail address

[REDACTED]@sussex.ac.uk

## 3. Contact telephone number

[REDACTED]

## 4. School and department of lead applicant

School of Life Sciences - Evolution, Behaviour and Environment

## 5. Are you a doctoral researcher or early career research staff?

Early career researcher

## Type of activity

Do you wish to apply for funding for a training and development initiative, or a public engagement initiative?

Public engagement initiative

## About the public engagement initiative

Please tell us about the purpose of the public engagement initiative.

You may select any or all of the options below. Please explain your rationale when prompted.

**Is the purpose of your activity to inform and inspire the public?**

Yes

### Please explain your rationale

The proposed activity is to visit various groups, trusts, clubs and schools in an area of the UK where little or no mammal records have been submitted in the past. The lead applicant's research is centered on estimating the distribution and abundance of mammals across Britain in order to inform management and conservation decisions. The aim of the visit is to inspire and educate people to get involved with mammal recording. This will be addressed through educational talks on how to identify and record mammals, why this data collection is important, what the lead applicant is proposing to do with the data, and how this will help to conserve British mammals. The presentations will also include information on The Mammal Society's Mammal Mapper App, a free to download and use mobile smart phone App. The App is used to collect effort associated mammal sighting data, which can subsequently be used by the lead applicant to look at relative abundance, distribution and temporal trends of British mammals.

**Is the purpose of your activity to consult and listen to public views?**

Yes

### Please explain your rationale

The proposed activity will engage mammal groups and wildlife trusts, and potentially other wildlife orientated organisations. During the proposed activities part of the process will be to understand why engagement is low for some groups, geographical regions and mammal species in order that steps can be taken to address these issues. The lead applicant is also directly involved with refining the Mammal Mapper smart phone App and the feedback on people's experiences with it in the field will help the lead applicant to make improvements to functionality and data recording specifications. This will help to tailor the App to the desired audience and improve robust data collection.

**Is the purpose of your activity to collaborate with the public?**

Yes

**Please explain your rationale**

The talks will present how to record and identify British mammals and the importance of doing so. With the intention for this information to be used by members of the public so that they can then actively go out and collect robust scientific data using The Mammal Society's Mammal Mapper App and other recording methods described. Data that can then be used to answer questions on mammal distribution, abundance, density in the area visited. Data that can be assimilated into a larger data set, which can be used across the UK.

**Why do you want to engage with the public? What do you hope to achieve by engaging?**

The Mammal Society's free to download citizen science mammal monitoring app, Mammal Mapper, has been live since the 3rd of May 2018. In this time the app has been used by 1808 users to collect 10,278 km of transect surveys and 3,916 effort associated sightings from across the UK. Despite the successful launch of the App and its subsequent data collection certain areas across the UK, e.g. southwest Wales, have seen little or no survey effort. This has left data gaps in the UK coverage that will need to be addressed if work at a UK scale is to be analysed by the lead applicant.

The aim of the engagement is to target specific schools, groups and wildlife trusts to promote mammal monitoring in areas of current low survey coverage. This targeted engagement activity will create networks of groups, promote the work of the University of Sussex, the School of Life Sciences and The Mammal Society and collect mammal record data from an area in the UK that is under-represented.

**What are the objectives of the activity? Please list the steps you will take to achieve these objectives.**

The principle objective of the activity is to engage directly with members of the public through presentations, talks and guided walks, enthusing them to get involved with a UK wide mammal based citizen science project. The activities will be directed toward people, such as mammal enthusiasts along with general members of the public. These people will be reached through discussions and collaborations with existing key partners in the region of Pembrokeshire (e.g. The Wildlife Trusts of South and West Wales, Local Environmental Records Centres and South Wales Mammal Groups). With the objective to run five public talks and presentations on mammal identification, mammal recording and its importance, what can be done with the data being collected and how people can get involved. This will also include details on The Mammal Society's Mammal Mapper App and the potential for guided walks using the App. Thus, promoting the App, mammal recording and awareness to areas of interest within an under-represented region.

**How will you evaluate whether you have achieved the objectives of the activity?**

Evaluations will be conducted over short, medium and long-term time periods. Short-term evaluations will be conducted by looking into the number of events and attendees at the engagement events to understand the number of people reached by these events. The medium-term evaluation will be conducted by looking at the number of new users, geographical coverage, transects surveyed and sightings submitted to the Mammal Mapper App in the region of interest within a month of the outreach program. Over the long-term evaluation will be assessed by looking at the sustained use of the App and the maintenance of connections

with the regional local groups that were involved with the outreach program. A feedback form will be written and circulated around to all attendees to get feedback on the various activities to see how they were received and to understand where future improvements can be made.

**Who are your target audience/participants and how many people do you expect to engage with?**

The target audience for the outreach activity will be principally wildlife enthusiasts and specialists, especially those with an interest in mammals. However, it is also hoped that members of the general public of all ages and backgrounds will also be reached.

The number of people expected to be engaged would be five visits to groups with audiences of 15 to 20 people each, so expecting to reach 100-120 people.

**What is the timeline of the project? Please include start and end dates, and key milestones.**

The outreach of the project will aim to start in Spring of 2018 and be conducted over a fortnight.

The time line of the project will begin with travel to the region of interest, then over the next 10 to 14 days various school and group events will be organised to occur each day/evening. Then travel back to work. After the trip office based work will be conducted to look at the incoming data and write up of the engagement level and activity.

**How does the suggested project relate to your own research? Please indicate how the activity will benefit yourself and your research.**

The lead applicant is in a post-doctoral researcher position at the University of Sussex working in association with The Mammal Society looking at habitat suitability, abundance and population viability of British mammals. The lead applicant has been working on estimating the population status and distribution of terrestrial British mammals. Off the back of these projects, it has been discovered that there exist multiple gaps in our understanding of the distribution and relative abundance of many of these species. The Mammal Society's Mammal Mapper App, since its release on the 3rd of May 2018 has provided snapshots of information across the UK. These snapshots will be able to provide point density estimates to fill some of these gaps and provide information of estimate variability. However, if the App data could provide consistent distribution of survey effort across the UK, nationwide abundance and habitat modelling could be conducted. This would greatly increase the lead applicants research scientific output. It will also help the lead applicant researcher by creating a network of mammal enthusiasts and specialists around the UK.

**What is the potential legacy of the project?**

The scope of the project will have a lasting impact as the networks built and the data collected will continue well after the engagement. Although the principle engagement objective is to enthuse and connect with members of the public and wildlife enthusiasts, hopefully establishments of connections with wildlife groups and trusts will be made. This will include establishing the range and scope of of any existing surveys and will allow for liaising with project leaders and volunteer coordinators that could become incorporated in the UK wide data collection.

The data collected from the area will not be a one off and the members of the public that have been reached will continue to collect mammal data for a continued time after the activity. So far, out of the current App users, roughly 6% use it on a regular basis. However, these users have between them submitted over 58% of the total transects collected in this project. These 6% of users have on average conducted 12 transects each with each transect being of roughly one and a half hours in duration. So if the target of 100 people is met and the same user usage is assumed then on average we can expect 6 people to continue to use the App and monitor mammals regularly in the area of interest.

**Please outline your public engagement experience to date**

The lead applicant has various public engagement experience:

Sardinia 2012 - part of a team that gave talks and presentation on marine mammal monitoring as part of funding project looking at conservation units.

Scotland 2016 - Marine mammal identification and monitoring talks to three Scottish Wildlife trust groups.

Scotland 2015 to 2016 - Citizen science project, funded by Scottish Natural Heritage, training and supervising members of the public in boat based marine mammal monitoring program.

Scotland 2016 - 2017 - Open boat and school visits, talking with school children and members of the public on the research conducted by the Hebridean Whale and Dolphin Trust

England 2018 - Two presentations at this years Countryfile live event on the wildlife zone stage

England 2018 - Talk and guided Mammal Mapper walk for the Sussex Mammal Group

## Budget

Please provide a detailed budget indicating what you would spend the funding on if you are successful in your application.

Your budget should include a breakdown of costs and justification for each item (e.g. lunch for 30 people at £6 per head from Sussex Food; accommodation for external speaker at £80 per night at a University approved hotel or guest house). See the guidance notes for further advice on your proposed budget.

## Budget details

Item details	£
Android tablet - to help present Mammal Mapper App during public engagement	£200.00
Travel to and back to area - 600 miles at 40p per mile	£240.00
Travel between venues in the area - 200 miles at 40p per mile	£80.00
Accommodation during the week - 4-5 nights accommodation at £50	£200.00
Food budget - 4-5 days of meals at £6	£30.00
<b>Total: £750.00</b>	

### Total requested

£750.00

### Budget code

RF006-04

## Supporting statement

You must submit a supporting statement (in PDF format) from your School's Director of Doctoral Studies (for doctoral researchers) or Director of Research and Knowledge Exchange (for research staff).

Your School's Director of Doctoral Studies or Director of Research and Knowledge Exchange's name, title and electronic signature should also be included.

If you have any difficulty with this, please contact [researcher-development@sussex.ac.uk](mailto:researcher-development@sussex.ac.uk) or call 01273 873366.

**Upload your supporting statement here**  
DRKE Life Sciences supporting statement.pdf