Innovation Seed Fund for Horticulture Development

2017 Funding Guidelines

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Innovation Seed Fund for Horticulture Development (ISF-HD) is a joint initiative between The University of Melbourne and Department of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport and Resources (DEDJTR), which fosters innovative and high impact research projects that leverage the strengths of the two partnering organisations. ISF-HD focuses on industry development in the field of Horticulture.

1.2 The University of Melbourne and DEDJTR have each committed $200,000, a total of $400,000, to support the activities of the Seed Fund from 2015 to 2018. There will be one funding round per year. Total funding available for 2017 is $100,000.

1.3 Funds available for each project will be awarded at a minimum of $5,000 and a maximum of $25,000.

2 AIMS

2.1 ISF-HD aims to:

- Create an environment where scholarship based on agreed high impact research and innovation priorities can flourish;
- Be a seed fund to develop quality collaborative projects that will have practical applications to Horticulture Industry;
- Bring researchers from The University of Melbourne and DEDJTR together to develop innovative and inspiring projects;
- Develop the next generation of agricultural research professionals;
- Develop the next generation of research communicators.

2.2 ISF-HD supports research teams to develop and implement research projects that address one or more of the research themes (detailed in Section 3 of this document) and/or focus on a suitable topic that is relevant to the research objectives of both DEDJTR and The University of Melbourne.

2.3 Projects should demonstrate strong potential to:

- Lead directly to applications for competitive research grants such as, but not limited to, ARC Linkage Projects, Industry Transformation Research Hubs/Centres, ARC Discovery Grants or Department of Agriculture Research and Development Corporations;
- Develop collaborative research initiatives between The University of Melbourne and DEDJTR;
- Produce high quality, high impact research outputs;
- Demonstrate impact beyond the academic and research communities.
3 ISF-HD RESEARCH THEMES

3.1 The funding will focus on the following research themes:

- Boosting Victorian horticulture industries’ productivity and competitiveness by innovation in production systems (e.g. new growing systems, integrated approaches for nutrient, water, pest and disease management such as robotics or unmanned aerial vehicles);
- Managing seasonal variability (e.g. manipulating fruit quality under covers, use of digital technology to predict and reduce risks of climate change impacts);
- Improving horticulture management systems that yield high quality produce to meet the requirements/preferences of consumers (e.g. new approaches for storage, handling, logistics and supply management);
- Optimising horticultural exports by developing market information and addressing issues (e.g. Queensland Fruit Fly management practices; improved market access protocols for target markets, obtaining and optimising market information for export development);
- Building industry capability, capacity and supporting transition (e.g. innovative re-design of existing outputs or processes such as products and labour, development of value adding products or processes, workforce and education attraction and skills for a smarter workforce).

3.2 As per Clause 2.2 of this document, consideration will also be given to project proposals that fall outside these themes, but all proposals must relate to the horticulture industry and be well justified.

4 ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA AND FUNDING RULES

4.1 Applications must have a co-ordinating investigator from both DEDJTR and The University of Melbourne (refer to Section 4.2 of this document).

4.2 Coordinating Investigators (CIs):

- The University of Melbourne CI: can be any current continuing or fixed-term staff member with a contract end-date of at least 31 January 2018. If the CI leaves their position during the project, the team will be responsible for nominating a replacement. The replacement may be a new team member where appropriate. Individuals can only be named CIs on one application per funding round.
- Department of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport and Resources CI: can be any current ongoing or fixed term staff member with a contract end-date of at least 31 January 2018. If the CI leaves their position during the project, the team will be responsible for nominating a replacement. The replacement may be a new team member where appropriate. Individuals can only be named CIs on one application per funding round.

4.3 Teams should comprise researchers from The University of Melbourne and DEDJTR. Team members may be continuing academic, fixed-term, casual, honorary academic and professional staff members from The University of Melbourne, and ongoing, fixed-term, casual or honorary staff members from DEDJTR, with contract end dates of at least 31 January 2018.

4.4 ISF-HD funding will be awarded for a period of one year only; commencing 1 January 2017 and ceasing 31 December 2017. Where approved by both organisations, start dates may be deferred up to no later than 30 June 2017. Regardless of start date, projects must be completed and all funding expended within 12 months of commencement.

4.5 ISF-HD funding is not intended to supplement an existing University of Melbourne or DEDJTR internal grant. Applications by research teams already involved in such grants will normally be considered ineligible.

4.6 Costs of fixed term or casual staff employed on the project must be costed in accordance with the salary scales of the employer of their supervisor. For example, if a Research Assistant on the project is to be
directly supervised by a University of Melbourne researcher, their salary and other associated costs will be estimated in accordance with the University’s research costing policy.

4.7 All requests for funding from ISF-HD are to be made via the Application Form and during the relevant funding round. Requests for funds outside this process will not be considered.

5 USE OF FUNDING

5.1 Funding will be administered by the collaborating Faculty/Department at The University of Melbourne. DEDJTR will invoice the relevant Faculty/Department where necessary.

5.2 Funding may be used for:

- Employing casual or fixed-term staff to perform a scholarly, operational, or administrative role in the project, including grant development and writing;
- Costs of staging facilitation workshops or similar events (for example catering, venue hire, equipment hire, facilitator fees, etc.);
- Overseas or interstate travel costs (flights and accommodation) key external collaborators and modest travel expenses for the CIs and/or project team members;
- Purchase of new equipment (hardware, software, consumables), if specifically required for the project and not obtainable via any other source;
- Other items deemed necessary to the successful conduct of the research project (specific justifications must be provided in the application).

5.3 Funding may not be used for:

- Coordinating Investigator salaries/on-costs;
- Salary top-ups for continuing or full-time fixed-term staff;
- Extending contracts of full-time fixed-term staff;
- Student scholarship top-up;
- Staff seeking funding for their own postgraduate studies;
- Fees for international students or Higher Education Contribution Scheme (HECS) or Higher Education Loan Program (HELP) liabilities;
- Funds that duplicate or supplement another current internal grant;
- Costs not directly related to the research project.

6 APPLICATION SUBMISSION PROCESS

6.1 Applicants should be in consultation with the relevant parties from both organisations well in advance of the due date to ensure support for the proposal is established.

6.2 Teams must demonstrate that they have consulted with the relevant parties at both The University of Melbourne (i.e. CI’s head of department) and DEDJTR (i.e. CI’s Executive Director or delegate) about their proposed project and ensure that they have the time and resources to undertake the project.

6.3 All applications must be signed off by the appropriate Head of Department/Executive Director or equivalent from both organisations.

6.4 All project applications must be submitted using the provided Application Form, with attachments. These are to be emailed as a single PDF file named in the following format: ISF-HD_2017_{CI’s Surname}_{Short-Title} (e.g. ISF-HD_2017_MORLEY_childhood-games).
6.5 Applications are to be submitted by the due date to: ric-internalgrants@unimelb.edu.au.

6.6 The University of Melbourne CI must also submit the application via the Themis submissions workbench. For guidance on how to submit a grant via the workbench, please see: http://research.unimelb.edu.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0007/1665871/themis_ECR_help.pdf.

7 ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

The following assessment criteria shall apply:

**Project Team Composition [15%]**
- Comprising researchers from The University of Melbourne and DEDJTR;
- Suitably skilled or networked team members;
- Research track record of the CIs and the team.

**Impact [30%]**
- Demonstrable impact beyond academic and research communities, for example demonstrating how the outputs of the project will influence or be communicated to the broader community through the Horticulture Centre of Excellence, DEDJTR or how stakeholders outside of the academic and research communities will be engaged with the project;
- Scope for further development or expansion by means of coordinated activity by the team;
- Evident potential of the project to attract future funding by grant-making bodies or to have an independent life beyond the duration of the ISF-HD funding;
- Identifiable practical application(s) for the relevant horticulture industry, including how the horticulture industry would use or adopt the project outcomes.

**Genuinely interdisciplinary [20%]**
- Demonstrate how the project leverages knowledge and expertise from at least two academic disciplines.

**Project Relevance [15%]**
- Relevance to the objectives of ISF-HD;
- Relevance to the horticulture industry objectives of DEDJTR and/or The University of Melbourne;
- Identification of and engagement with the relevant key stakeholders;
- The Horticulture Centre of Excellence Industry Reference Group have identified industry priorities which will form the basis for this Selection Criterion (see Research Themes in Section 3 of this document).

**Project Quality [20%]**
- A single project purpose or unified set of purposes, with outcomes stated accordingly;
- Innovation: novelty of topic, conceptual framework, method, or design or outcome;
- Feasibility: realistic costing based on current University of Melbourne/DEDJTR human resources and finance policies.

8 ASSESSMENT PROCESS

8.1 Applications will be assessed by the ISF-HD Selection Committee. The Committee comprises a minimum of three staff associated with DEDJTR and three staff associated with The University of Melbourne. Final joint approval for successful applications is provided by the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research Partnerships) at The University of Melbourne and the Director of the Horticulture Centre of Excellence at DEDJTR.

8.2 The ISF-HD Selection Committee reserves the right both to discuss applications with the relevant Head of Department or Dean, or other senior colleagues of the CI, and to seek further information from an applicant prior to making a final decision.
8.3 The ISF-HD Selection Committee reserves the right to award grants totalling less than the amount allocated, depending on the quality or relevance of the applications received.

8.4 The ISF-HD Selection Committee reserves the right to recommend that applications that have overlapping research objectives be combined into a single project.

9 CONDITIONS OF AWARD

9.1 The offer of award must be accepted in writing by the two CIs by way of a Research Grant Acceptance Form, with the sign-off by their Head of Department and Executive Director (or Delegate).

9.2 The CIs will be responsible for all correspondence relating to the project and will ensure compliance with reporting requirements.

9.3 The CIs will ensure that research is conducted in accordance with The University of Melbourne and DEDJTR policies, including compliance with the Code of Conduct for Research and policies on human and animal research ethics, health and safety, and intellectual property. The relevant clearances and approvals are required before the project may proceed.

9.4 The CIs must comply with any instructions or conditions in the offer of award relating to approved items of expenditure. This includes entering into a Collaboration Agreement with external parties involved in the project.

9.5 The CIs are responsible for ensuring that expenditure of grant funds is broadly in accordance with the indicative budget submitted in the application, and that expenditure is consistent with the nature and aims of the approved project.

9.6 The CIs will be required to provide a Final Report on the outcomes of the project within two months of the completion of the project. A pro-forma for the Final Report can be found on the following webpage: http://research.unimelb.edu.au/work-with-us/funding/internal/manage-your-grant. Project teams will also be required to present their work in the form of a 20 minute oral presentation to selected members of ISF-HD Selection Committee.

9.7 The partnering organisations reserve the right to desktop publish and print (in limited run) the project Final Report and to feature the project on the ISF-HD website. The partnering organisations will use project information for reporting and promotional purposes.

9.8 Project teams and members will acknowledge the support of ISF-HD in any publications, presentations or media communications and other promotions relating to the ISF-HD project.

9.9 The project must be completed within 12 months of commencement. Any leftover funding must be relinquished to the funding bodies.

10 KEY DATES AND CONTACT DETAILS

Round Dates:
- Applications OPEN: Tuesday 30 August, 2016
- Applications CLOSE: Monday 31 October, 2016
- Notification of Outcomes: Early December, 2016

General Enquiries and Further Information:
- Ms Emily Goss, The University of Melbourne: ric-internalgrants@unimelb.edu.au
- Ms Aimee McCutcheon, DEDJTR: aimee.mccutcheon@ecodev.vic.gov.au