

Evolution Nailed It

\$30K Seed Funding Competition 2020

The 2020 Seed Funding Competition is designed for teams to develop creative, nature-inspired solutions to global/practical/ human technological and design challenges. The natural world reflects 3.8 billion years of ruthless developing and refining form, function and process that offers insights for creative solutions to problems ranging from nanoscale challenges to global issues.

The Challenge:

The competition, which has two categories, will award \$10,000 seed funding to the top three entries

Category 1:	Category 2:
BioInspired improved performance or direct replacement	BioInspired design or technology innovation
Demonstrate a biologically inspired replacement for an existing synthetic object, material, process or service, or how natural materials provide superior performance	Demonstrate how a biological process, mechanism or adaptation can provide a novel design or technological innovation
*** Your entry should demonstrate potential commercial application ***	

Other Criteria:

- **You must be part of a Team of two or more members.**
- **Teams must be genuinely interdisciplinary** - preference will be given to Teams with representation from different academic divisions, and/or external/ industry organisations.
- **Your Team must appoint a Coordinating Investigator** holding a salaried academic position at the University of Melbourne of at least 0.5 EFT for the duration of the project and the reporting period.
- **Your entry must involve a technology, product, service, or process** that addresses a challenge related to one of the two Categories. The entry must show a clear connection between a biological mechanism, process, pattern, or system, and the proposed solution. The entry should indicate the potential market/need.

PRIZES:

We have **THREE \$10k prizes** for the most impressive entries! The winning proposals will each receive a one-off seed fund of \$10,000 towards their research. Prizes are not restricted to one per category, but decided on their merit.

We allow substantial flexibility in how the funds are used, including prototype development, equipment purchase, attending or hosting workshops, travel costs (for conference attendance, or collaboration). However, funds cannot be used for salary top-ups to existing UoM staff, extension of UoM staff contracts, retainer fees for consultants, or extensive overseas travel by UoM staff.

Other things to know

One entry per Team, one Team per person.

Teams may include students (any level), ECRs, and/or academic staff with appropriate and complementary expertise for the proposed project. Priority may be given to teams with an established industry relationship.

SPONSOR:

The BioInspiration Hallmark Research Initiative is funded by the University of Melbourne, with the aim of transforming bio-inspired ideas into tangible outcomes, by supporting interdisciplinary collaborations between the biological and physical sciences, engineering and architectural design.

SUBMISSION:

Application: 5 pages maximum:

- Project title
- 200 word pitch
- Names and email addresses for all team members, affiliations, and indicate the Coordinating Investigator, any industry members, and existing funding. Briefly describe the role and contribution of each named team member.
- Description of your bio-inspired project - Overview, research aims and innovative aspects of the project, including a description/depiction of your biological inspiration.
- Research approach and methodology, including a timeline for the project development
- Expected outcome and impact of the project, including capability to attract further funding, and potential market
- Design concept images, photograph or illustrations can be included in the sections above
- Project budget, indicating how funds will be spent, and associated justification.
- A list of all references and sources, including experts consulted.

Teams must complete the application form available from [HRI BioInspiration website](#), and submit via email to Katrina Rankin, katrina.rankin@unimelb.edu.au

Submissions open: 1st May 2020

Submissions close: midnight, 31st July 2020. Late applications will not be accepted.

Winners will be notified by the 31st August 2020.

JUDGING CRITERIA:

All submissions will be considered by the Selection Committee. Selection will be based on the following criteria:

1) Project quality and potential for a commercial application

Project Quality and Innovation (50%)

- How well does the idea address one of the two categories?
- Does the proposal demonstrate innovation in at least one of the following areas: methodology and design; area of focus; conceptual approach and analysis; potential impact and engagement?
- Is the proposal likely to generate new research activities? What are the intended short- and long-term impacts of the project?
- Does it show potential for future funding and/or development?

2) Feasibility and Outcomes

Budget, timeframes and outcomes (25%)

- Is the proposed project budget aligned with the proposed outcomes?
- Has the project identified and engaged with key target audiences for the project outcomes?
- Is the project value for money?

3) Team interdisciplinarity

Suitability of the project Team (25%)

- Does the proposal involve an interdisciplinary Team with appropriate and complementary expertise for the proposed project?

CONDITIONS:

- 1) Prize must be accepted in writing by the Coordinating Investigator and their Head of Department/School.
- 2) Successful Teams must provide appropriate acknowledgement of the BioInspiration HRI when communicating project outcomes.
- 3) The Coordinating Investigator -
 - a. Will be the contact person for all administrative matters to do with the project and is responsible for internal reporting requirements.
 - b. Must ensure that the research is conducted in accordance with University policy, including compliance with the Code of Conduct for Research and policies on human research ethics, animal experimentation ethics, requirements of the Office of Gene Technology Regulator, health and safety and intellectual property. No project may proceed unless the appropriate ethical or other required clearances have been obtained.
 - c. Must comply with any instructions or conditions in the Offer of Grant relating to approved items of expenditure.
 - d. Is responsible for ensuring that the expenditure of Funds is broadly in accord with the budget presented in the application and is consistent with the nature and aims of the specific project approved and the objectives of the HRI.
- 4) Teams are required to provide a formal final report on the outcomes of the project within 3 months of the project's completion. Summaries of projects funded and project final reports may be published.
- 5) The BioInspiration Hallmark Research Initiative:
 - a. Will use project information for promotional purposes.
 - b. The project should be completed by 30th September 2021.
 - c. Recognises that the research timelines in the project proposal are indicative, and subject to change according to changes in COVID-19 related Government and Institutional regulations.