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### **OIST Technology Pioneer Fellowship**

This program aims to foster the development of independent technology entrepreneurs.

Technology Pioneers are selected to undertake independent research to develop OIST technology into a product or service. The program does not support basic research.

Applications are open to individuals, or teams of two. Once selected, Technology Pioneers will benefit from resources, training, and mentorship from OIST to help them commercialize their chosen technology. By the end of the program, Technology Pioneers are expected to form a start-up, or in some other way commercialize their technology.

Applications are competitive, and a limited number of Technology Pioneer awards are made. Awards are based on an evaluation on innovation potential.

Fellows are supported for one year, renewable for an additional one year after review. Limited operating budget up to 15m JPY/year may be provided with proper justification.

Selection is based on an internal administrative review, external expert review and presentation to an internal committee.

#### **Aims**

Technology Pioneers are expected to create a start-up company or otherwise commercially develop their technology during their project. They are expected to engage in of the following activities:

- Explore the commercial potential of research-based technologies.
- Get and incorporate feedback from industry and technology transfer mentors.
- Commit to a commercially focused training certification.
- Develop a path towards proof of concept for the research-based technologies.

#### **Eligibility**

OIST Postdoctoral Scholars, Staff Scientists, PhD graduates, and technicians are eligible.

Applicants must be:

- a) Inventors of OIST IP
- b) , or able to develop OIST IP that is not their own; OR
- c) Demonstrate that they could create commercializable IP by the end of their proposed project.

Two individuals can be part of the same application if they are contributing equally to the project, and they can demonstrate the necessity of their combination of skills.

## Application

Interested individuals should contact the POC team at [rdcluster@oist.jp](mailto:rdcluster@oist.jp) to obtain the application materials.

The application must be prepared independently by the candidate, using the form(s) provided. If a team of two is applying, a single application for both applicants should be submitted.

## Review Criteria

- *Entrepreneurial Potential:* Can the applicant mobilize the resources needed to advance the proposed project; identify and prioritize project milestones; and operate in situations with rapidly changing and often incomplete information?
- *Leadership:* Can the applicant lead toward productive outcomes, manage conflict, and engage with diverse technical and non-technical stakeholders; the motivation to identify professional strengths and weaknesses, an openness to constructive criticism, and a willingness to grow professionally; conduct themselves with a willingness to take responsibility for their actions?
- *Technical Excellence:* Does the applicant have a strong knowledge base in the field of the proposed project? Can they quickly learn new concepts, develop new skills, and adapt to new technical information?
- *Team Building:* Is the applicant an effective team organizer?
- *Feasibility:* Is the proposed project feasible within the proposed time frame. Does it have a clear and organized plan with well-reasoned technical milestones? Does it present a credible path to scale, including viable entry markets?

Criteria related to feasibility and the technical plan will be evaluated mainly by external experts, with the personal attributes such as Leadership being evaluated through a pitch to the final evaluation committee.

## Conditions of the Fellowship

Successful applicants will be appointed as OIST employees with the title “Technology Pioneer”, and will be managed through TDIC. They will report directly to the Senior Manager of R&D Cluster Programs section for Human Resources and budgetary matters. Mentors will be

allocated to help guide their project direction, but otherwise Fellows will be independent in choosing the direction they take in developing their technology.

Appointments will be for a maximum of 2 years. initially for 1 year and renewable after review. A review will assess the project against its milestones no later than 10 months after starting. The Vice President for Technology Development and Innovation make the decision about renewal.

The salary level of Fellows will be determined according to their experience level (years from PhD or equivalent). They will also receive a limited budget appropriate to their project (Maximum 10M, which will be reviewed by the committee). Fellows may seek additional grant or industry funding during the fellowship if it directly supports the aims of the funded project.

Fellows are expected to work full time exclusively on the project, and to undertake no research unconnected with the technology development work. Additionally, they must commit to commercially focused training. This may include attendance at the annual OIST I-Corps entrepreneurship training program and completion of online innovation courses such as those at the Massachusetts Institute of Science and Technology. Successful completion of this training will also be considered for renewal applications.

Fellows and their budgets will be managed through TDIC, R&D Cluster Programs Section. The fellows will use either TDIC allocated office space or the I<sup>2</sup> Incubator, whichever is the most appropriate. It is also possible to use existing lab space, but this would be at the discretion of the relevant Principal Investigator and would be confirmed at the application stage with a letter of support.

After the project, TDIC could support the fellow to access other resources (such as the incubator) should they decide to start-up a company. This would be discussed prior to the end of the project.

## **Application**

Interested researchers should contact the POC team at [rdcluster@oist.jp](mailto:rdcluster@oist.jp) to determine eligibility and to obtain an application.

The application must be made independently by the candidate, using the form provided. Note that if a team of two is applying, then only a single application should be submitted. The application should include the following:

- Equipment required for carrying out the necessary development work, as well as the likely usage time per month.
- Budget detailing consumables, travel and other expenses necessary to undertake the project.
- Detailed project plan based. Emphasis must be put on the innovative aspects and customer benefits of a potential product or service. It may further include some evidence of market relevance, e.g., a business model, a technical and market-specific feasibility study etc. The description must include a time plan with distinct milestones and an explanation of the costs. Expected results are to be clearly outlined (max 5 pages).
- A short project summary which should give an overview of the planned activities, the market situation and the innovation potential. This summary should not contain confidential information, as this will be used for reviewing purposes.

## Application Procedure

The fellowship program will be offered twice a year. Applications should be sent to the POC team at [rdcluster@oist.jp](mailto:rdcluster@oist.jp).

## Evaluation

Applications will undergo:

1. **Administrative review:** All applications will be evaluated internally to make sure that there is an overall fit and that eligibility requirements are met.
2. **External Review:** Projects will be reviewed and ranked by external industry technology transfer experts.
3. **Committee and pitch:** Applicants will present their projects to a committee of TDIC members and external experts.

## Further information

Please contact the POC team at [rdcluster@oist.jp](mailto:rdcluster@oist.jp) for more information.