



SIEF STEM⁺ Business Fellowship Program

Program and Eligibility Guidelines

Version 3

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Introduction

The SIEF STEM+ Business Fellowship Program is an industrial research program, which supports the collaboration of early-career researchers (ECR), employed by Australian universities or research organisations, with Australian small and medium-sized enterprises (SME) to work on technical projects that improve the SME's competitive advantage. SIEF STEM+ Business ECR fellows work full-time for two-to-three years on a research project identified and led by the SME. The ECR fellow is supported by the expertise of their resident university or research organisation.

The objectives of the program are to:

- build deep connection and collaboration between universities/research organisations and SMEs that allow for knowledge flow between research and industry sectors
- accelerate the adoption of new ideas and technologies by Australian SMEs
- fast track solutions to increase the competitiveness of Australian SMEs
- elevate the significance of science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) disciplines as skills and capabilities central to industrial competitiveness
- provide practical experience in industry for ECRs, creating and sustaining a cohort of researchers capable of addressing national challenges

SIEF STEM+ Business fellowships are provided through funding from the Science and Industry Endowment Fund (SIEF) and are administered by CSIRO's SME Connect team. The program provides grant funding up to a maximum of \$105,000 per annum (excluding GST) for engagement of the ECR fellow with the project. The SME is required to make an annual cash contribution to the project that is equal to, or greater than, the grant amount. Both the grant and the SME contribution is to be paid directly to the collaborating university or research organisation.

NOTE: The latest version of this document and the accompanying *SIEF STEM+ Business Fellowship Program - Funding Application Form* can be found on CSIRO's SME Connect site at:

<http://www.csiro.au/en/Do-business/Solutions-for-SMEs/Researcher-placements/STEM-Plus-Business>

All enquiries regarding eligibility and applications should be directed to the SME Business Manager:

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SME Business Manager
SME Connect
CSIRO
+61 3 9545 8246
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1 Eligibility

An application for the SIEF STEM+ Business Fellowship Program may only be made for eligible projects. To be eligible, a proposed Fellowship must satisfy ALL of the following eligibility criteria:

- An eligible SME must:
 - have completed, or be in the process of completing, an AusIndustry Researcher in Business or Research Connections/Innovation Connections grant project

OR

- have had an annual turnover, income or expenditure of \$1 million to \$100 million in the current or one of the two preceding financial years; AND
- have collaborated with a university or research organisation on a one-to-one basis for at least five months on a project that has direct commercial benefit to the SME; AND
- Contributed at least \$25,000 in cash (not in-kind) to the university or research organisation to assist in delivery of that project.

In either case the business must have an ACN and be solvent. The SME must also be a for profit company that is non tax-exempt and registered for GST. Trading activities must be the majority of the SME's overall activities.

Furthermore the SME must be prepared to support the following:

- participation of the ECR fellow in 6 business meetings per annum (e.g. strategy, customer and other non-project meetings) that provide the ECR fellow with business context
- professional development of the ECR fellow (e.g. allowing them to publish their research outcomes (without sharing sensitive IP)).

- An eligible early-career research fellow must:
 - have completed a research higher degree in a STEM subject (Science, Technology, Engineering or Maths) or have a bachelor degree in engineering with relevant research experience
 - have no more than 6 years relevant experience since conferral of the most recent degree
 - be employable by an eligible University or Research Organisation
 - have the required research skills to achieve the deliverables of the project
- An eligible university or research organisation must:
 - be an Australian university, publically-funded research organisation, or research-focused institute
 - employ the eligible ECR fellow for the duration of the project

- An eligible project must:
 - be led by an eligible Australian SME
 - involve research whereby outcomes cannot be determined in advance on the basis of current knowledge, information or experience, but can be determined by applying a systematic progression of work based on principles of established science
 - be a new research project which would not be otherwise delivered without the assistance of a SIEF STEM+ Business Fellowship
 - not be more effectively delivered by the private sector
 - involve activities that do not form a normal part of doing business for the SME
 - support the professional development of the ECR fellow
 - be aligned to the SME's strategy and be expected to result in commercial outcomes
 - be 2 to 3 years in duration
 - ensure the ECR fellow is 100% allocated to the project with a target of over 30% of time engaged with the SME
 - have a nominated research supervisor with expertise relevant to the project and who is employed by the university or research organisation
 - have a nominated mentor from within the SME, such as an experienced company manager, who can provide guidance and business context to the researcher.

2 Reporting requirements

All grant recipients are required to participate in bi-annual reporting, which will include written reports. There will also be a requirement for regular meetings between all participants on at least a quarterly basis. Through involvement in the program, the participant's name and logo, as well as the project title and grant amount awarded, may be used publically.

3 Funding

SIEF STEM+ Business research projects are to be co-funded by the SME and SIEF. In-kind contributions from the universities or research organisations are encouraged.

The eligible project is to be costed by the university or research organisation based on agreed research outcomes discussed with the SME. Any in-kind contributions by the university or research organisation are to be deducted to determine the annual cost of research delivery to be shared by the SME and SIEF*.

SIEF will dollar-match the SME cash contribution up to a maximum of \$105,000 per annum (i.e. for projects with an annual cost of delivery under \$210,000, the SME and SIEF are expected to co-fund

an equal share). For projects with an annual cost of delivery over \$210,000, SIEF will fund a maximum of \$105,000 per annum and the SME will be expected to fund the remaining balance.

It is suggested that participating SMEs will be invoiced on a quarterly basis, in advance, by the research organisation. It is also recommended that quarterly meetings be held between the SME, research organisation and ECR fellow to coincide with the invoicing cycle.

*Please note that certain costs are not fundable by SIEF, particularly those that do not directly support the research project in question. Examples of non-fundable items include:

- Capital works or infrastructure costs
- Professional membership fees, visas, insurance and other indirect costs

It is recommended that the research organisation bear these costs as in-kind contribution to ensure clarity regarding the SME/SIEF funding balance.

SIEF STEM+ Business grant funds will be paid via CSIRO to the participant research organisation upon acceptance by CSIRO of written reports from SIEF STEM+ Business participants at 6 months, 12 months, 24 months and 36 months (where applicable) from the project commencement date. The research organisation will be required to show evidence that the matching SME funds have been received prior to the payment of the grant fund amounts.

4 Application process

Applications are lodged by completing the *SIEF STEM+ Business Fellowship Program - Funding Application Form* and emailing a scanned copy to:

Jason Barkla
SME Business Manager
SME Connect
CSIRO
+61 3 9545 8246
jason.barkla@csiro.au

The form can be submitted by the SME or the research organisation and must be signed by authorised representatives of both parties. The researcher, if known, will also be required to sign the application. Researchers cannot apply directly for a SIEF STEM+ Business Fellowship but can apply for fellowship positions advertised by a participant research organisation.

5 Selection and evaluation criteria

Applications will be assessed on eligibility, the opportunities for knowledge transfer between the SME and the university or research organisation, anticipated commercial benefit for the SME, and professional development of the ECR fellow and the SME's staff.

6 Assessment process

Applications will be assessed by a panel of three members of CSIRO's SME Connect team. Decisions will be based on satisfying all eligibility criteria and the quality of the responses to the questions in the *Project details* and *Evaluation criteria* sections of the application. Applicant SMEs will be advised of the outcome of the assessment with 10 working days of the application being received by SME Connect's SME Business Manager.

Successful applicant SMEs will be contacted with a letter of offer which will advise on subsequent actions required. Unsuccessful applicant SMEs will be advised either to amend and re-submit the application, or that the application is not eligible and on what grounds. The assessment panel's decision is not subject to appeal; appeals against administrative processes may be considered.

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FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

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