MORU Public Engagement Bursary Scheme 2020-2025
Objectives of the scheme

• **Provide seed funding** for PE projects, to support small-scale projects and pilots for bigger grant applications.

• **Build capacity** by supporting researchers to plan and lead their own engagement projects.

• **Extend the reach** of MORU engagement activities to build new partnerships and target a wide range of different audiences.

• Help MORU research programmes to **achieve their engagement outcomes**.
Experience from 2018-19

We awarded 14 bursaries to professors, senior/junior researchers, PhD students

**What went well:**

- Many researchers led and were trained on engagement, many ideas generated, and networks expanded, new partners found
- A ”surge” of PE projects – raised the visibility of PE

**Challenges:**

- High administrative burden (e.g. for PE team, finance)
- Needed a lot of support from PE team
- Slow to start and spend after award
First round in April 2021

Four small grants of up to GPB 2,500 (THB 102,000/USD 3,400)
   E.g. workshops, panel discussions, local events...

Three larger grants of up to GBP 10,000 (THB 410,000/USD 13,600)
   More substantial projects, e.g. series of workshops, geographically spread events with travel, or collaborations with content creators to produce new resources
Timeline

- Reviewed by the MORU Public Engagement Bursaries Committee (25 May 2021)
- Successful applications approved by the MORU Science & Strategy Committee (28 May 2021)
- Projects to start from June 2021 and finish by Dec 2022 (max. 18 months)
- Round 2: 31st Oct 2022
Selection criteria

- Project engages a clearly defined, non-expert audience with MORU research or related areas
- Two-way communication and participation
- Clearly defined aims, rationale and objectives
- Completion within 18 months is feasible
- Justification for the requested funds
- Evaluation plan
- Supports the MORU Engagement Strategy ([https://zenodo.org/record/3510158#YBg60eiwnIU](https://zenodo.org/record/3510158#YBg60eiwnIU))
Evaluation (based on Logic Model)

Quantitative:
• number of applications and awards
• amount requested and spent
• number and demographics of researchers/staff (incl. subject areas)
• number of external partnerships (any new ones?)
• audience numbers and demographics

Qualitative:
• project outputs (e.g. videos, websites/apps, artwork)
• audience feedback
• researcher feedback (informal and survey)
• researcher reflections (final report)
• PE team reflections
• success of seed fund projects
Key advice

1. Balancing capacity building (= funding many projects) with resources required for administration and monitoring of the scheme

2. Balancing capacity building and budget constraints:
   - larger awards = bigger projects
   - smaller awards = fund more projects, increase reach of the scheme

3. Need to communicate the difference between engagement and social science projects (...and what about the ‘grey area’?)
Top Tips

• When drafting the timeline, think backwards from when you need the PE project reports, to include in renewal application of the core grant or annual reports to the funder.

• We held a seminar (as part of the MORU science seminar series) to promote the launch of the new bursary round:
  • Two bursary recipients from the previous round talked about their projects and experience.
  • Included a brief introduction to PE.
  • Introduced the scheme, timeline and selection criteria.