The Interdisciplinary Team Building Initiative (ITBI) is a funding mechanism designed to promote collaboration among faculty researchers from different disciplines, with the goal of enhancing our capacity to grow interdisciplinary environmental scholarship and to compete for external grants. ITBI is a joint initiative of the Environmental Science and Policy Program (ESPP) and MSU AgBioResearch.

Objectives

The ITBI grants support the formation and operation of workgroups focused on strategically important research areas including, but not limited to, antimicrobials, bioeconomy, food systems, global climate change, invasive species, and water. A workgroup consists of a small number (e.g., 3-5) of core faculty members from multiple disciplines who interact regularly with the goal of developing grant proposals, designing an interdisciplinary curriculum, or working on major multidisciplinary publications. Workgroup members are expected to maintain regular interactions towards clearly specified workgroup goals, and should budget to spend their funds evenly throughout the two year cycle.

Eligibility

ITBI funding is open to all MSU faculty members.

Funding Level

An ITBI grant will provide funding for two years with a total amount of up to $10,000. The grant also gives options for requesting further seed funding if the team members, through interactions supported by the ITBI grant, identify such needs in response to significant external grant opportunities.

Use of Funds

The funds can be used for group meetings, workshops, visitors and invited speakers, site visits, travel to funding agencies, identification of and responses to grant opportunities, preliminary research, etc. Unlike a typical seed grant, an ITBI grant primarily supports interactions of faculty members who otherwise do not have the opportunity to collaborate. The ITBI funding is not intended for supporting established research teams with well-developed research agenda. Again, groups should use the money on a regular basis throughout the two years, and not reserve it for the end of the term.

Application Instructions

The application deadlines are April 15 and Dec. 1, annually.

Updated March 1, 2016
Each proposal should include
- Cover page: outlining the research areas, names and department affiliations of workgroup members and the lead faculty, and contact information for the lead faculty.
- Workgroup Description (not to exceed 5 pages): outlining background information, research questions, goals of the workgroup, workgroup composition, activities of the workgroup, and expected outcomes.
- CV: NSF style two page CV of each workgroup member.
- Budget and budget justification with a timeline of planned expenditures.
- Current and Pending Support form: NSF style document for each workgroup member.

Review Criteria

Proposals will be reviewed according to value added of the workgroup, including the following criteria:
- Fostering new collaborations, especially with new and junior faculty members,
- Interdisciplinary nature of the group membership and approach,
- Nature of proposed activities,
- Commitment to and likelihood of group members pursuing external funding opportunities,
- Alignment of research proposal with missions of ESPP and MSU AgBioResearch.

Award

An interdisciplinary committee will review the proposals. Funding decisions will be made within 4 weeks of the application deadline. The funds are expected to be spent within the funding period.

Post-Award

ESPP will provide logistic support for the operation of the workgroups. This would include space for group meetings, help with scheduling, grant intelligence and assistance with proposal development.

ESPP and AgBioResearch will hold annual meetings for the workgroups to present their progress reports and discuss plans. The meeting will provide an opportunity for the workgroups to interact with each other.

Each workgroup is required to submit a progress report after one year and a final report after two years, outlining the activities, expenditures, and achievements of the workgroup. A final report is due two months after the 2 year anniversary of the awarding of the funds. ESPP staff will also continue to monitor the progress of the group after the initial two years of funding for our own records.

Each workgroup must acknowledge ITBI in all publications that result from work supported or partially supported with ITBI resources such as: “This material is based upon work supported in part by the Interdisciplinary Team Building Initiative at Michigan State University.”