

## PIER Seed Projects Call 2024

Within the scope of their strategic Partnership for Innovation, Education and Research (PIER), Universität Hamburg (UHH) and DESY promote cooperation across the two institutions and between the PIER research and competence fields (i.e. particle and astroparticle physics, nanoscience, photon science, infection and structural biology, theoretical physics, accelerator research, and artefact profiling). For this purpose, UHH and DESY have established the funding line **PIER Seed Projects**.

### General Description

PIER Seed Projects promote innovative and unusual research ideas with a strong cross-institutional dimension. Projects must involve researchers from both DESY and UHH and/or the University Medical Center Hamburg-Eppendorf (UKE) and must contribute to strengthening research collaboration between these institutions. **The funding program is particularly aimed at qualified early-career scientists (PhD students, post-docs, junior research group leaders)**. It provides rapid and non-bureaucratic seed funding for the identification, initiation, development, testing and implementation of completely new research ideas, concepts or methods in the above-mentioned PIER research and competence fields as well as in data science.

Funding will focus on creative ideas, lateral thinking as well as risky research ideas with possibly high potential benefits. Funding will be granted to:

- Analysis and studies of new hypotheses, new concepts and new methodological approaches.
- Experimental research and development work on building prototypes, demonstration of the feasibility or viability as „proof of principle“, or identification and development of new areas of application.
- Conceptual work and studies on an experiment, experimental set-up or device with high discovery and innovation potential and high benefit potential.

All activities supported within the scope of the **PIER Seed Projects must have a clearly defined focus and serve as a catalyst for the development of novel research ideas and joint projects with a cross-institutional dimension, thereby laying the basis for new externally-funded research collaborations. Interdisciplinary collaboration is encouraged**. The motivation for carrying out the activity must be clearly explained in the application, including how the project would contribute to strengthening research collaboration between DESY and UHH and/or UKE and how the involved partner institutions will benefit from the envisaged cooperation.

### Nature and scope of funding

The funding is provided in the form of a non-repayable grant, covering up to 100 percent of direct project costs. The average funding amount of previously funded projects was 40,000 Euros. The proposed project duration for which support is requested must be consistent with the nature and complexity of the proposed activity. Grants are awarded for a maximum of two years. Funds must be used within the funding period. The funding focuses on project-related expenses exclusively. Personnel costs are generally not eligible.

The underlying concept must have at its core a new approach and, as such, must not be the objective of an existing funding support or a separate part of a funded third-party project. The funding by PIER excludes institutional funding or covering budget deficits of a third-party project. Should the concept arise within the

scope of a third-party project, the context of the project and the further third-party funding must be described in the PIER Seed Projects application.

### Conditions

The applicant must be registered as a PIER Scientist (members of the PIER Helmholtz Graduate School are automatically registered as PIER scientists). Only researchers whose principle affiliation (= employment contract) is with DESY, UHH or UKE are eligible for PIER funding and can apply for a seed project as main applicants. All applications must involve at least one research partner from the other institution(s) respectively (e.g. main applicant from DESY, co-applicant(s) from UHH and/or UKE; or: main applicant from UHH or UKE, co-applicant(s) from DESY). The main applicant and his/her principle research partner may not belong to the same research group. The inclusion of researchers from other research institutions on the Hamburg Bahrenfeld science campus, such as the Max Planck Institute for the Structure and Dynamics of Matter (MPSD), The European Molecular Biology Laboratory (EMBL), the European XFEL, and others, is encouraged. Researchers from these organizations can apply for funding as co-applicants.

### Procedure

Proposals for PIER Seed Projects have to be submitted by e-mail to the PIER Office by **08 April 2024**. The evaluation follows a two-stage procedure by the PIER Executive Board. First, the project proposals will be checked for compliance with formality requirements by the PIER Office. Each proposal will then be reviewed by two senior scientists from the related PIER research field. All projects that receive a funding recommendation will be invited to present their project in front of the PIER Executive Board. Based on these presentations the PIER Executive Board will make its funding decisions.

### Evaluation criteria that must be addressed in the proposal

The evaluation criteria are as follows:

- Scientific quality and originality of the research project
- Relevance of the project with regard to the objectives and contents of the PIER research fields
- Scientific qualification and applicant's expertise
- Support of young scientists
- Strengthening of research collaboration between DESY and UHH and/or UKE
- Potential of the project as a basis for a larger externally-funded follow-up project
- Quality of the project planning and cost plan
- Adequacy of the requested funds

### Reporting

A short report has to be submitted to the PIER Office six weeks after the expiration of the funding measure. In case the report of expenditure of funds cannot be completed due to ongoing settlement procedures, missing documents will have to be filed subsequently.



Partnership of  
Universität Hamburg and DESY

### **Miscellaneous**

PIER is a partnership between UHH and DESY. PIER is not a legal entity. The financial support of funded projects will be handled by one partner of PIER, either UHH Hamburg or DESY.

The submission of an application does not establish a legal claim to funding.

Funded projects are obliged to refer to the funding authority PIER when presenting the project or project results from the funded project.

### **Link collection**

Information about PIER and its activities: [www.pier-hamburg.de](http://www.pier-hamburg.de)

Description of projects funded so far: [www.pier-hamburg.de/funding/pier\\_seed\\_projects](http://www.pier-hamburg.de/funding/pier_seed_projects)

Templates for application and report forms: [https://pier-hamburg.de/funding/idea\\_fund/templates](https://pier-hamburg.de/funding/idea_fund/templates)

Registration as a PIER Scientist at: [https://pier-hamburg.de/partnership/scientist\\_registration/](https://pier-hamburg.de/partnership/scientist_registration/)

### **Contact**

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