Stage 1: Outline Application

Submission will be via the grant portal by midnight Wednesday 5th January 2022 (UK time). Through the portal, you will register your details and have the opportunity to download an interactive form for the project proposal, which you will upload as part of your submission. Full details of the requirements for proposals are available via these links: Working Group Proforma, Research Project Proforma.

We expect to inform all applicants of the outcome by the end of March 2022 and will provide unsuccessful applicants with feedback, upon request, as soon as is possible. We may suggest collaboration/amalgamation (as appropriate) of independent applications where we deem that this will enhance the aims, and cost effectiveness, of the grant scheme.

The Review Process

The funding scheme's project manager, Lorna Winship, will oversee the process to mitigate any unconscious bias of the project lead, Rachel Kendal. A panel of CES executive committee members and invited others will rank outline applications (i.e. within each Research Project thematic area/Applied Working Groups). Applications will be reviewed blind (identifying matter redacted by funding scheme team prior to review & question related to the appropriateness of the project team considered only after blind review), receiving a score from 3 independent individuals (balanced for expertise, gender, and geographical diversity). The allocation of reviewers will be monitored by Fiona Jordan (CES executive member 'at large', who is not applying for funding) to ensure transparency of process and reduce any conflicts of interests. Reviewers will not be assigned to applications within a funding call that they have applied to.

Reviewers will:
- Score applications with regard to (i) novelty, (ii) appropriateness, and (iii) feasibility of the proposal within cultural evolution and the call topic.
- Explicitly overlook inconsistencies in writing or approach from their usual experience in assigning scores. The idea is what is important at this stage!
- Highlight any weaknesses in proposed methodology, ethics and researcher safety in a separate form (for feedback and/or later consideration regarding mentoring).

An overall ranking of applications for each Research Project thematic area/ Applied Working Group call will be produced. Richard McElreath will apply a Bayesian model that provides a statistical solution to the "hierarchical rater problem" ensuring fairness in funding decisions when each candidate is not reviewed by the same panel of reviewers and each individual reviewer varies in how generous or harsh they are in use of the categorical rating scale.

The project manager, Lorna Winship, with guidance from the project lead, Rachel Kendal, will then input details of whether the applications meet any of the specific diversity criteria highlighted as desirable by the funding scheme (early career, geographical or disciplinary diversity).

The top 15+ ranking applications in each call area will be scrutinised by the funding scheme lead to ensure those invited to full application stage represent the highest quality proposals while maintaining the diversity objectives. Decisions regarding which applications are invited to full application stage will be ratified by the independent Advisory Board.