

FRAME Grant Funding Policy

FRAME was set up to promote better science and a more humane and compassionate society by promoting and advancing the replacement of animals in medical experiments, drug development and testing. This included advocating for the correct 3Rs approach in science where Replacement is the first and most important consideration to avoid animal suffering.

Today our vision is a world where no animal suffers for science. To work towards this goal our mission is to ensure scientists use non-animal approaches in biomedical research and testing.

The path to animal-free medical research, drug development and testing requires both the existence of suitable alternative methods, and culture change by scientists, regulators, funders, and journals.

FRAME funds research that will help develop and advance non-animal scientific techniques that will benefit human health through human-relevant research and testing approaches.

On the 1st of September 1969, the Trust Deed authorising the foundation of FRAME explained that Dorothy Hegarty and Dr Charles Foister had 'for some time past conducted a fund for the advancement of medical research and for the development of new technologies and propose to launch appeals from time to time for donations to establish and maintain a fund to promote and encourage research into ways of conducting medical research without making use of animals ⁽¹⁾' In the early days whilst also seeking to establish government recognition the FRAME trustees 'emphasised that they did not seek funds to carry out their own research, but to focus attention on, and to support, work being done elsewhere...'⁽¹⁾ This is a philosophy that still fits very much with FRAME's position today.

Our Strategic Goals

We help biomedical researchers and research establishments use non-animal approaches by:

- *Advancing the development of replacement methods*
- *Increasing awareness and education in replacements*
- *Facilitating the use of replacements through tools and training*
- *Prioritising the uptake of replacements in policy and regulation*

Our approach to funding research

Based on opportunities and barriers to achieving our goals FRAME offers funding for research projects that are helping to develop or advance non-animal techniques. In particular, projects that have the potential to replace animal use in fundamental or translational research, and biomedical or toxicity testing. Whilst we hope the research we fund will increase knowledge across all areas of science, and for all species, our core focus is supporting the development and adoption of human-relevant techniques and methods.

Scope of FRAME Funding:

- A. **FRAME will not directly fund, via the Summer Studentships, Innovation Grants, or any other scheme any projects involving any live animals or invertebrates.** We will signpost applicants wishing to do research of this nature to other funders.
- B. **FRAME will consider funding applications that require the use of animal tissue or animal derived products dependent on the potential impact of the project to lead to methods/outcomes that can directly replace animal use, the relevance of the project to the future development of human-based methods and the availability of alternatives that don't require animal product use.**

All applications for funding will be judged against the following key criteria:

- **Fit with FRAME's mission and charitable purpose**
 - **Scientific innovation and advancement**
 - **Human-relevance of the outcomes of the proposal**
 - **Scale of likely impact on replacing animal use**
- C. *There may be some 3Rs focused projects that do not meet the above criteria due to our core focus on **full replacement for biomedical research**. This may include research that contributes to incremental progress including for example work on reduction and refinement, invertebrate work, research that uses animal derived products, or depending on the project aims, some in vitro, or in silico animal models. Whilst these areas of research are not a sufficient end to animal use in themselves, and are therefore not eligible for FRAME funding, we acknowledge that these are important steps on the path to changing culture and replacing animal use.*

Reasons for this:

- A focus on developing alternatives, system change, and education fits with our strategic goals.
- There is a reputational risk to FRAME as an anti-animal testing charity to fund any project involving animals, including invertebrates. It is not in line with the expectations of our supporters and donors.
- Other organisations provide grants for 3Rs based projects that focus on refinement, reduction or partial replacement such as NC3Rs, the Wellcome Trust and other major funders such as the BBSRC.
- We support a precautionary principle approach to funding any animal research in light of our evolving understanding of species sentience. We will not fund research that involves any animal.
- FRAME believes that many animal models are unsuitable for biomedical research due to differences in physiology and metabolism between species. This applies equally to invertebrate models; even when a scientific rationale can be made for their use, we think science is better served by finding human-based in vitro or other alternative methods. The results of which are more likely to impact biomedical and other human health-based research and ultimately lead to the replacement of animal methods.

- FRAME encourages researchers to think about their scientific projects differently and put human-relevant methods and techniques at the heart of a research question.

Current grant programmes & purpose:

FRAME currently provides funding in several ways:

- **The FRAME Laboratory**

The provision of an annual block grant to support the FRAME Laboratory.

Purpose:

(a) *To provide continuity to develop long term solutions in difficult areas such as human models for basic research*

(b) *To support the next generation of researchers in alternatives by providing a supportive environment and options for additional activities with FRAME.*

- **Grant Programmes**

- The **FRAME Summer Studentship Grant Programme** runs annually. The programme uses an application and judging process to award two/three grants (of £1 – 4K) each summer to selected undergraduate/master's students.

Purpose:

(a) *For desk based and lab-based projects that develop or promote uptake of alternative replacement methods. As well as the development of human-relevant methods we will consider a range of areas for these awards in basic and applied research or regulatory testing, (including environmental or chemical toxicity testing, as long as **the full replacement aspect of the research is clear and the project biologically relevant to the target species**). We keep this range wide to engage students from a range of scientific backgrounds with the potential of full replacement.*

(b) *To inspire future researchers to embrace alternative methods, provide opportunities for them to develop their research and scientific communication skills and raise awareness of FRAME within the academic community.*

- The **Innovation Grant Scheme** provides funding for proof of principle research and pilot projects. The scheme offers small grants of around £5k but will consider applications asking for up to £15k.

Purpose:

(a) *To provide funding to allow initial research and development of innovative and novel ideas, techniques and methods that may lead to the **development or uptake of human-relevant, alternative methods for use in biomedical research and testing.***

GOOD PRACTISE

As part of this developing grant strategy FRAME will put in place a solid, sustainable framework for ensuring all funding is given ethically and fairly, has value to both FRAME and the grant holder, is given in line with FRAME's mission and values, and supports high quality research that has impact and opportunities for dissemination and sharing.

To this end all FRAME grant programmes have:

- Signed contracts/agreements and T&C documents which are made readily available.
- If relevant an open and fair application procedure including transparent assessment criteria.
- Agreed reporting criteria and an expectation of how outcomes will be shared both through FRAME channels and external publications.
- Alignment with FRAME's values.

Brave Thoughtful Collaborative Resourceful Supportive

Guidance available to FRAME to ensure 'good grant-making' is carried out include these DSC principles: [1604-Principles-of-Good-Grant-Making1.pdf \(dsc.org.uk\)](#)

References:

1. The Fund for the Replacement of Animals in Medical Experiments (FRAME): The first 25 years, Annett Bill, February, 1995, Vol 23 Issue 1 DOI: [10.1177/0261192995023001](#)