

UCD Research-UCD Earth Institute Climate Research Seed Fund 2022: Call Document

Introduction

UCD Earth Institute and UCD Research are delighted to launch a one-off call to seed and mobilise climate research projects and activities in UCD. The Seed Funding Scheme will fund projects/activities with tangible outputs and impacts focused on climate research linked to the 'Creating a Sustainable Global Society' theme of the UCD Strategy 2020-2024 ['Rising to the Future'](#).

The aim of the Seed Funding Scheme is to fund existing or new projects/activities that focus on developing or scaling research clusters to demonstrate opportunities to help address national and global climate challenges.

The Seed Funding Scheme provides practical 'seed' support for projects, activities, initiatives and ideas that are ambitious and strategic, as well as those that lead to new knowledge, clusters and capabilities.

The Scheme is supported by funding from the Higher Education Authority (HEA) and offers the UCD research community the opportunity to apply for internal funding to enhance their research activity and networks in the area of climate.

The main objectives of the Scheme are to:

- Enhance UCD's research activity, profile, reputation and impact nationally and internationally in the area of climate;
- Support the development and scaling of research clusters within UCD and with external stakeholders (e.g. national and international academics, government, policy makers, industry, non-governmental organisations, charities, community groups) in the area of climate;
- Support early career researchers in their initial steps to develop their independent research careers and networks in the area of climate;
- Support the transformation of new ideas in the area of climate from early concepts into viable research projects and activities;
- Support new projects/activities, existing project/activities, and research clusters with the potential to seed large-scale research;
- Support projects and activities where there is demonstrably no alternative source of funding available; and
- Support the development of research projects in their early stages, to a point where they are considered ready for competitive submission to an external national/international funding agency.

In this regard, priority will be given to applications that have a clear plan regarding future proposal development, particularly those with a likelihood of receiving future external funding.

Details of Scheme

This Scheme is being co-managed by UCD Research and UCD Earth Institute. UCD Earth Institute¹ is UCD's research institute for environmental and sustainability research. The mission of the UCD Earth Institute is to foster research and innovation to address the environmental challenges of our time, to develop and support the environmental and sustainability research community in UCD and beyond, to forge new connections across disciplines and sectors, and to help maximise the impact of our members' work. UCD Earth Institute members address challenges relating to the built and constructed environment; climate; developing crops for the future; ecosystems and evolution; people, work and society; sustainable communities; and water. The 'Climate' Strand in the UCD Earth Institute aims to identify and support short-term strategic priority projects on the topic of climate.

The Scheme is open to all UCD staff whose research work connects with climate, not just UCD Earth Institute members.

Applications should propose a project/activity on a topic that is strategically important in the area of climate, including but not limited to:

- Earth Observation and climate monitoring
- Climate modelling
- Carbon sequestration
- Climate adaptation, mitigation and resilience
- Biodiversity loss and restoration of nature
- Climate, health and the environment
- Environmental behaviour
- Climate change legislation and governance
- Sustainable natural resources
- Transition to net zero emissions
- Environmental policies and politics
- Sustainable finance
- Just Transition

Applications should outline tangible steps to raise the profile of or progress an emerging area of climate research, or to establish a research cluster in this area. Projects should entail activities that are topical, strategic, achievable and impactful in the short- to medium-term. Multiple awards ranging from €500 to a maximum of €15,000 will be made through this scheme. Awarded funds must be spent by **31st December 2022**, but projects/activities may continue after this date.

As projects must spend the award by 31st December 2022, this scheme may suit projects/activities that are already in train or significantly developed.

¹ More about the UCD Earth Institute and its aims/objectives can be found in the [UCD Earth Institute Strategy 2021-2023](#)

What does the Scheme fund?

There is considerable flexibility in what the Scheme will fund. Unlike the annual UCD Earth Institute Strategic Priority Support Mechanism scheme, this Seed Funding Scheme can fund preliminary research with the intention of building capacity for further research activity, as well as support the continuation of existing projects and activities.

Eligible activities include but are not limited to:

- activities to support the development of an emerging research area in climate
- activities to support the development or scaling of a research cluster/network
- visits to/of potential collaborators in other institutions
- invited speakers for internal workshops
- visiting Professor to UCD
- travel to attend research networking, information or consortium building events
- development of a large-scale funding application
- collaboration with external/partner organisations
- innovation, enterprise and commercialisation activities
- knowledge transfer activities
- development of industry links

Example budget costs include but are not limited to:

- Staff time (hiring of research assistant/Postdoc/admin support, buying out staff time)
- Costs for an event/conference at UCD
- Hosting of visiting researchers/Professor (to develop long-term research collaborations/networks with leading international researchers and academic leaders who are well recognised in their field)
- Travel to other institutions for meeting/networking opportunities
- Purchase of equipment/infrastructure
- Access costs to equipment/infrastructure/facility/data

How to Apply

Applications with a strong rationale leading to a clear set of objectives are invited, with tangible, measurable outputs and deliverables, and a programme of activities to achieve them within the defined period.

The scheme application form asks for concise information on the team involved, background and rationale, objectives, outputs and deliverables, future plans and impact, and budget.

The deadline for applications is **12pm on Wednesday 28th September 2022**. Late applications will not be accepted or reviewed. Please submit your application form by email to Earth Institute research manager Caitriona Devery caitriona.devery@ucd.ie.

Submitted applications will be acknowledged by UCD Earth Institute, and all applicants will receive notification of the outcome of their application by **Monday 3rd October 2022**.

Applicant Eligibility

1. Each application must include a lead applicant. There is no limit on the number of co-applicants. Collaborators from outside UCD are also eligible, but not mandatory.

2. The lead applicant must be a member of UCD Faculty, Postdoctoral staff, or UCD Postgraduate student currently undertaking a PhD or master's programme.
3. The Scheme is open to members and non-members of UCD Earth Institute whose research work connects with climate.

Evaluation Process and Criteria

All eligible applications will be reviewed by an assessment panel comprised of assessors from UCD Research and UCD Earth Institute. The assessment panel will evaluate the applications on the basis of the following 6 criteria. All criteria except for criteria 1) will be scored between 0 and 5. The maximum score available is 25.

- 1) The application is relevant to the scope of the Seed Funding Scheme (Answer YES or NO for this criterion only. If NO, no further scoring is required).
- 2) The application clearly demonstrates the topicality and scientific importance of the proposed project/activity, including alignment to current environmental challenges and national and global initiatives such as the UN SDGs, EU Directives, strategies/policies and funding priorities (Score 0-5).
- 3) The application clearly outlines the objectives, expected outputs and deliverables of the proposed project/activity/collaboration (Score 0-5).
- 4) The application clearly demonstrates how the proposed project/activity will support the development or scaling of a research cluster to demonstrate opportunities to help address national and global Climate challenges (Score 0-5).
- 5) The application clearly demonstrates the anticipated impacts and future plans of the project/activity including: how the proposed project/activity will support strategic collaborations and partnerships with key national and/or international stakeholders (e.g. academic institutions, government, policy makers, industry, non-governmental organisations, charities and community groups), build the application team's network, enhance UCD's profile, enhance scientific capacity/excellence in UCD, and (if applicable) the prestige of the research funding opportunity being targeted (Score 0-5).
- 6) The application clearly demonstrates a feasible timeframe, value for money and a clear budget justification for the proposed project/activity (Score 0-5).

Queries

Please contact Caitriona Devery (UCD Earth Institute Research Manager, caitrona.devery@ucd.ie) if you have any queries or would like to discuss the Seed Funding Scheme in more detail.