**ENVIRONMENT INITIATIVE SEED FUNDING PROGRAM**

**2021-2022 RESEARCH AWARD**

**JOINTLY SPONSORED by the OFFICE OF THE VICE PRESIDENT FOR RESEARCH AND INNOVATION and the ENVIRONMENT INITIATIVE**

**OVERVIEW & PROGRAM GOALS**

***BACKGROUND:***

The [Environment Initiative](https://environment.uoregon.edu/) aims to focus the intellectual energy and work of faculty, students, and community partners on working towards a just and livable future through transdisciplinary research, teaching, and experiential learning. The effort is part of the UO’s academic initiatives, dedicated efforts to collaborate across disciplines, translate discovery for societal benefit, and develop the next generation of leaders and problem solvers.

Given the shared goal of the Environment Initiative (EI) and the Office of the Vice President for Research and Innovation (OVPRI) to further this important work, the units are collaborating to sponsor the Environment Initiative Seed Funding Program, which consists of 2 award mechanisms: Research Awards and Curriculum Awards.

While sponsoring this award program together streamlines the application and review process, the funding decisions and financial support are separate. The Vice President for Research and Innovation (VPRI) and the Director of the EI will appoint a group of faculty to conduct peer review and rank proposals. Final funding decisions and financial support will be managed separately—research awards are funded by OVPRI and selected by the VPRI; curriculum awards are funded by EI and final decisions will be made by the EI Executive Director. In an effort to integrate research and teaching, there will be representation by the OVPRI and the EI on selection committees in each process.

Awards made through this program will align with and advance the goals of the Environment Initiative.

Please review the [Environment Initiative guiding principles and nodes](https://environment.uoregon.edu/about-us) which are central to the work of the initiative and should inform your approach. Successful proposals are not expected to address all priorities and/or nodes.

***Research Awards:***  EIResearch Awards are designed to support the development of new collaborations and/or pilot work that leads to the submission of one or more major external proposals. Researchers seeking to support stand-alone research projects should pursue [other funding mechanisms](https://pivot.proquest.com/funding_main/internal_opps). Due to the nature of the gift funding source for this program, partnerships between natural scientists and social science, humanities scholars, and/or faculty from the professional schools are preferred, although all types of collaboration across disciplines will be considered. Partnerships should emerge from shared research interests and a problem-centered approach and represent new research directions for the team members.

The program requires that during the course of the funding period the team submits one or more major proposal for extramural funding for a significant research award that involves multiple faculty investigators. Although the proposal amount may vary depending on the funding source and disciplines involved, the goal of this funding mechanism is to assist researchers in submitting high quality proposals for major funding mechanisms. A specific funding plan will need to be included with the proposal. While we anticipate that most funding plans will focus on federal funding, we will consider foundations as part of a funding plan. Those who include foundations in the funding proposal plan should consult with UO’s [Foundation Relations](https://partnerships.uoregon.edu/foundation-relations) prior to the submission of their proposal. External partnerships and collaborations are encouraged. Applicants are encouraged to engage experts who can contribute to their project and strengthen their eventual application for external funding.

Please note that the Environment Initiatives Research Awards program is one of several internal award programs supported by the OVPRI. We do not encourage submission of identical projects that were submitted to other OVPRI funding programs. Funding preference is given to investigators without active OVPRI seed funding from other internal awards programs.

**TIMELINE**

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| **Dates** | **Item Due** |
| **February 15, 2022** | Mandatory Notice of Intent to Submit |
| **March 7, 2022** | Full Proposal |
| **Late March** | Faculty Review Panel |
| **Mid-April** | Award Notifications |
| **July 1, 2022 – Start Date for Projects** | Project Period: *Project length is 24 months. Final reports are due August 1, 2024* |

**ELIGIBILITY**

**Principal Investigators:** At minimum, proposals are expected to have at least 2 Principal Investigators from different disciplines. For the purposes of the application, one faculty member will need to be identified as the Contact PI. Eligible PIs are tenured or tenure track faculty and career NTTF faculty with the classification of: *research associate*, *research professor, research scientist, research engineer,* or *principal research scientist,* with 0.75+ FTE appointments during the academic year(s) of the research award. *Emeritus, retired, courtesy, Visiting, instructor, postdoc, librarian, and pro-tem faculty are ineligible to apply as a principal investigator. They may be part of the team as Other Key Personnel as described below.*

**Other Key Personnel on the Interdisciplinary Team:** The remaining interdisciplinary team may include personnel who would be ineligible to serve as a PI, such as emeritus faculty, postdocs, research assistants, graduate student employees, etc.

NOTE:

* Faculty members may only serve as a PI on ONE application, but may serve as key personnel on other proposals.
* Faculty members funded as a PI through this program are not eligible to compete as PIs in future Environment Initiative Research Awards program cycles for three years from the activation date of a successful proposal.
* Faculty members may apply for both an EI Research Award and an EI Curriculum Award.

**BUDGET & USE OF FUNDS**

**Amount:** $50,000

**Length of project:** Project period begins July 1, and may not exceed 24 months. *Note that 50% of the grant funds will be distributed at the time of award; distribution of the remaining funds is contingent on a successful progress report after 12 months and a meeting with Research Development Services (RDS) and the EI to ensure proposal development strategies are being designed and executed successfully. RDS is expected to be engaged in proposal development.*

**Allowable costs:** Funds may be used for costs necessary to plan the research project (consistent with university and state rules) including:

* Salary for non-tenure track faculty, graduate students, undergraduates, and/or technical personnel.
* Travel: may include funds to support a planning workshop, faculty retreat, to host a distinguished speaker who will help you initiate your project, or to travel to visit a program officer to discuss your project
* Equipment
* Materials and supplies
* Contractual services
* Other direct costs: e.g. core/shared user facility use, speaker stipend

**Ineligible costs:**

* Replacing current funding from another internal or external source including tenure track faculty academic year salary.
* Summer salary for 9-month faculty, stipends, or overloads
* Renovation, remodeling, or alteration of research laboratories or core/shared facilities

**APPLICATION COMPONENTS**

**Notice of intent:** The [***notice of intent form***](https://app.smartsheet.com/b/form/3b2b57c5331e4dbdab2a363afdc5f800) is mandatory but non-binding—the purpose of the NOI is solely to help identify appropriate faculty reviewers. *All individuals who submit an NOI are invited to submit a full application.*

**Application:**

The Environment Initiative Seed Funding Research Award applications must be submitted using the online submission form.

1. [***Application Form***](https://app.smartsheet.com/b/form/6bc1856a7e1c46098c83c722fee37e0c)*(online)***:**Basic Information: Please complete the form’s text boxes. (Note: the form cannot be saved part way through).
2. *Proposal Documents:* (single-spaced text, Times New Roman font in 11 point or larger, and 1” margins).
   * + 1. Abstract (250 words or less): a short summary of the project goals and activities.
       2. Proposal Narrative (3-page limit): Use [TEMPLATE](#Narrative) at end of this document to complete this component of the application.
       3. References (1-page limit)
       4. Advancing Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in Research Statement (1-page limit): Advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion is a key value for both the EI and the OVPRI and we now ask faculty to articulate how their seed-funded work advances these principles. Use the [TEMPLATE](#DEI) at the end of this document to complete this component of the application.
       5. Biographical sketch or CV (2-page limit per person): Each PI should submit a Biographical Sketch or CV.
       6. Current and pending support (no page limit): For each PI, use the [TEMPLATE](#CP) at end of this document to list any current and/or pending funding for any research project at UO, whether or not related to the proposed I3 project.
       7. Budget: Use the EI budget excel template on the [RDS website](https://research.uoregon.edu/sites/research1.uoregon.edu/files/2022-01/EI%20Research%20Budget%20Template.xlsx).
       8. Budget justification (1-page limit): Use the [TEMPLATE](#budgetjustification) at the end of this document to complete this component of the application.
       9. Letter of support: Please provide a letter from Department Head/Center or Institute Director and/or Dean(s) for each PI, describing how the application supports the unit/college mission/goals and detailing/authorizing the commitment (if any) for matching support designated for the project.
3. [***Optional demographic survey***](https://app.smartsheet.com/b/form/b6eda4d487654b5794adfa2e0d0054dd) *(online)*: The OVPRI and the EI are committed to creating an environment that fosters sensitivity to and understanding of the diverse academic, socioeconomic, cultural, disability, gender identity, sexual orientation, and racial and ethnic backgrounds present in our community. The application form includes a section to disclose demographic information aimed at assessing the success of our activities towards this goal. Response to these questions is entirely optional and is not considered in award decisions. This information will not be seen by the review committee, but used by OVPRI and EI leadership to ensure our internal granting programs are inclusive and equitable and serve diverse populations at UO. We welcome submission of this information from all PIs on the project.

**Submission Instructions**:

1. Complete all components of the application and combine into a single PDF in the order listed above, with each component on its own page. Save with the naming convention *[Contact PI Last Name]\_FY 22 EI Research application*.
2. Fill out the basic information on the [online application form](https://app.smartsheet.com/b/form/6bc1856a7e1c46098c83c722fee37e0c).
3. Upload the complete PDF.
4. Submit form.
5. Each PI completes the [demographic survey (optional)](https://app.smartsheet.com/b/form/b6eda4d487654b5794adfa2e0d0054dd).

**REVIEW PROCESS & CRITERIA**

Research Development Services will conduct an initial review will be conducted to ensure that proposals are in compliance with all guidelines. Proposals deemed non-compliant will not be reviewed further.

A faculty review panel, convened by the Vice President for Research and Innovation and the EI Director, will conduct peer review to evaluate the grant proposals and recommend proposals for funding. In an effort to integrate research and teaching, there will be representation by the OVPRI and the EI on the selection committee. As noted above, final funding decisions and financial support will be managed separately—research awards are funded by OVPRI and selected by the VPRI; curriculum awards are funded by the Environment Initiative and final decisions will be made by the EI Director.

Applicants are informed of whether they are selected or not for the award. Upon request, feedback can be provided to interested applicants whose proposals are not funded.

**Criteria**

1. *Research Project*:
   1. How clearly does the applicant describe the research problems or questions? Does the applicant specify a gap in the research to be addressed?
   2. Is the project’s significance well-articulated? Does the project have intellectual merit?
   3. Does the project represent a new and promising direction for the research team that advances the goals of the Environment Initiative?
   4. Is the proposed research interdisciplinary? Are the intellectual contributions of the identified disciplines clearly articulated?
2. *Research Approach*:
   1. How clearly does the project describe the overall project aim and/or goals?
   2. Is the methodology clearly articulated and appropriate to the proposed project?
   3. Are the roles and responsibilities of the team members clearly described and well-justified?
   4. Do the research activities proposed enhance the competitiveness of the project for external funding?
3. *Research Team*:
   1. Do the research team members possess the appropriate qualifications and experience to accomplish the proposed research objectives?
   2. Do the team members provide evidence of past success in obtaining external research funding?
4. *External Funding Strategy*:
   1. Does the research team clearly identify an external funding mechanism or program to which they intend to apply?
   2. Does the proposed research align with the funding mechanism and the funding priorities of the external sponsor(s)?
   3. Does the application describe a feasible and appropriate strategy for preparing and submitting a proposal for external funding?
5. *Advancing Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in Research Statement*:
   1. How clearly does the application articulate the alignment of the proposed project and/or activities with the OVPRI goals for advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion in research?
   2. Evaluate the significance and potential impact (in scholarship, community-engagement, broadening participation, etc.) of the proposed work.
6. *Timeline and Budget*
   1. Does the applicant describe a realistic timeline to accomplish research goals and proposal development activities?
   2. Is the budget well-justified? Will the budget support the development and implementation of the project?

**REPORTING**

For research awards, 50% of the grant funds will be distributed at the time of award; distribution of the remaining funds is contingent on a successful progress report after 12 months and a meeting with Research Development Services (RDS) to ensure proposal development strategies are being developed and executed successfully. RDS is expected to be engaged in proposal development.

A final report is required and due to Research Development Services no later than one month (30 days) after the conclusion of funding. RDS will supply awardees a link to the final report form in the last quarter of their project.

Final reports will be shared with leadership from OVPRI and the Environment Initiative.

**INQUIRIES**

Questions about the Environment Initiative Seed Funding program or submission process may be directed to Research Development Services, [rds@uoregon.edu](mailto:rds@uoregon.edu).

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**Project Narrative**

**Introduction**

* + Provide a background or rationale for the project, including significance
  + Describe how the proposed work represents a novel research direction and aligns with the goals of the Environment Initiative. Justify the need for an interdisciplinary collaboration to address your research questions, including approach, methodology, and overarching goals.
  + Identify current status of the research at UO, including programmatic strengths and expertise of team members.

**Proposed Plan**

* Describe overall project aims or goals
* Identify specific research, scholarly, and/or proposal development activities to which funds will be applied, how you will complete these activities, the roles and responsibilities of each collaborator, and how these activities will enhance the competitiveness of the project for external funding

**External Funding Strategy**

* Identify one or more external funding agency and program and submission deadlines. Provide a strategy and a timeline to prepare and submit to these opportunities (recipients are expected to submit an external proposal within 24 to 36 months of receipt of an EI Research Award).
* Describe the fit between the proposed project and external funding priorities/opportunities.

**TEMPLATE (Erase text in blue)**

**Advancing Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in Research**

**(1-page limit)**

Advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion is a key value for OVPRI and the Environment Initiative. We proactively support the creation of a diverse, equitable, and inclusive research community. We act upon the deep belief that diverse, equitable, and inclusive research environments are fair and just, and are necessary to accelerate discovery and innovation.

In up to one page, please describe how your proposed project advances diversity, equity, and inclusion in the UO research community. This can be demonstrated through multiple and various ways, such as:

* subject matter
* methodology
* project implementation strategies
* training/mentoring
* team composition
* engagement with UO students, staff, faculty
* engagement with communities external to UO
* and more as defined by the applicant

The following examples illustrate potential ways that research projects could advance diversity, equity, and inclusion:

1. A history faculty’s research topic examines the U.S. federal policies that led to racial discrimination in lending during the twentieth century.
2. A mathematics faculty plans to support a graduate student from a population underrepresented in STEM to work on big data analysis, and will mentor them to give a presentation at a conference.
3. A computer science faculty plans to present her research on a new programming language for robotics at the local science summer camp for girls.

We recognize that faculty from different disciplines may or may not have engaged directly in this type of work in the past. Prior engagement or success in achieving these goals is not required to be competitive for this program. If proposed activities require funding, please either include costs in the project budget or note alternative sources in the application.

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**Current and Pending Support Form for EI Research Award Program**

For the PIs, please provide a list of current and/or pending funding for any research project at UO, whether or not related to the proposed EI Research Award project. Include any awards you have received from the University of Oregon (*excluding start-up funds*), as well as external awards. Expand sections as necessary—no page limit enforced.

**Name**:

Current Funding

Funding Source:

Project Title:

Project Period:

Total Award Amount:

Does this project overlap with the proposed work?

Funding Source:

Project Title:

Project Period:

Total Award Amount:

Does this project overlap with the proposed work?

Pending Funding

Funding Source:

Project Title:

Project Period:

Total Award Amount:

Does this project overlap with the proposed work?

Funding Source:

Project Title:

Project Period:

Total Award Amount:

Does this project overlap with the proposed work?

**TEMPLATE (delete blue text)**

Describe each budget line item listed in the budget template, breaking out costs by unit as applicable. Giving clear details will help the reviewers understand the reasonableness of your request.

**Budget Justification**

**Personnel**

*Technical/NTTF Salary*

The names of the faculty and other personnel for which funding is requested

*Graduate Student*

Number and % FTE of graduate student(s)

*Undergraduate Student*

Number of student hours anticipated

**GE tuition/fees/ insurance**

**Outside Collaborators/Consultants**

**Equipment (stand-alone pieces over $5K)**

**Materials & Supplies**

When anticipated, the proposal budget justification must indicate the general types of expendable materials and supplies required.

**Travel**

Travel activities must be specified, itemized and justified by destination and cost. Funds may be requested for field work, attendance at meetings and conferences, and other travel associated with the proposed work, including subsistence.

**Other Direct Costs**

These may include: Publication/documentation/dissemination costs, consultant services, computer services, etc.