



SCOTLAND BEYOND NET ZERO SEED FUND

Call for proposals

New seed fund launched to support net zero research collaborations and partnerships across Scotland – awards up to £15,000.

Deadline: 5pm Friday 23rd August 2024.

About the seed fund scheme

Scotland Beyond Net Zero is a collaboration of leading climate and sustainability experts from across Scotland's universities. Together, we are committed to mobilising research, data and innovation to accelerate Scotland's transition to a future beyond net zero. By 'beyond' net zero, we include wider issues of sustainability than carbon management and achieving net zero, to include for example biodiversity, human and ecosystem health, and just societal transformation. While net zero plans are targets are undoubtedly important, we are interested in how to move more quickly, and how to ensure and maintain a just society and flourishing ecological systems after we reach net zero.

The goal of the seed funding scheme is to foster collaborations and partnerships which maximise the impact of research and help drive solutions for beyond net zero in Scotland. This is in support of SBNZ's mission to support high-impact research,

partnerships and collaborative activities that help drive solutions to Scotland's climate and environment challenges.

The seed fund will fund activities that:

- Pilot or trial new technologies, methods, data or approaches that can support achievement of Scotland's net zero goals; or
- promote adoption and take-up of such technologies, methods, data or approaches across the public, private and third sector; or
- augment or maximise the impact of existing research and innovation on finding solutions to Scotland's climate and environmental challenges.

Proposed projects must:

- Align with the core SBNZ themes of food, finance, built environment, natural systems, energy and transport.
- Involve close collaboration across at **least two university members of SBNZ**, and clear plans for engagement or partnership with at **least one other organisation** (e.g. community group, third sector organisation, local or national government or industry).

We are particularly interested in funding interdisciplinary projects (across all academic disciplines including arts and humanities, social and physical sciences) which address research challenges that have been co-created across project partners, and which lay foundations for further high-impact collaboration.

What we are looking for

Projects will be assessed against the following criteria:

- **Quality and relevance**

Your proposal should clearly explain the objectives of your research or collaboration activities, how you will go about fulfilling them, and likely results. Your proposal should strongly align with Scotland Beyond Net Zero strategic priorities and the goals of the seed fund. Research should also align with one or more Scotland Beyond Net Zero themes, and this should also be clearly described in the proposal. Your proposal will be

assessed on overall alignment with the seed fund's priorities, along with the soundness of the research concept and its potential to lead to future high-impact collaborative research.

- **Impact**

We would like to know how your proposed research or collaboration activity would contribute to the relevant field of research and to Scotland's transition to net zero. We also want to know about your pathways to impact - if your research and collaboration were to be scaled up, what contributions would you make to Scotland's transition net zero (and beyond), and how would you achieve that impact? We understand this is a relatively small award so are also interested to hear about potential future impact were your collaboration to continue.

Your proposal should also explain how the findings will be communicated to different audiences (e.g. blogs, workshops) as well as any proposed academic outputs. If your application is successful, we will ask you to write short summary of the research for SBNZ communications along with other proposed dissemination.

- **Co-creation of research across partnership**

We aim to support distinctive collaborations between academia and society. Your application must propose a partnership between **at least one other SBNZ university member plus a partner from a non-university organisation** (e.g. industry, community group, local or government). This can be a brand-new partnership, or can be new activity between partners who have worked together before. You should set out how your partnership will work together to co-create relevant research challenges and activities.

You should explain and provide evidence for the proposed partnership arrangements, and explain how the partnership relates to research goals. Evidence for partnership arrangements with non-university partners can range from letters of support and commitment to participate in the research, to commitments to contribute to funding the research – this will be assessed on the basis of appropriateness to the specific proposal.

- **Sustainability and durability of collaboration**

Applicants should explain how the project will develop or strengthen a durable collaboration across SBNZ, for example a brief overview of any long-term plans for any further engagement, plans to scale up the research, or plans to attract further funding.

The proposal should explain the composition of the team, including a short track record statement of each applicant which sets out the applicants' relevance to the research proposal and how each member will contribute to the project aims. This statement should be anonymised. It should also explain what the partners will gain from the project.

- **Project plan and costs**

The proposal should provide a credible project plan with milestones that are achievable with the budget and timeframe available. The application should explain the role of each partner in the delivery of the project (if not fully explained in the response above), and each partner should have a valid role which is supported by resources allocated in the budget. The proposal should include a realistic and detailed timeline and budget which is deliverable by the end of July 2025. The budget should clearly set out the resources requested by each university partner, as well as the total award requested.

We expect to award funds of between £5,000 and £15,000.

Who can apply

As described above, we expect projects teams to include partners from at least two participating Scotland Beyond Net Zero members, along with at least one partner from outside higher education in Scotland such as local or national government, industry, charities or community groups.

The list of participating Scotland Beyond Net Zero members are:

- University of Aberdeen
- University of Dundee
- University of Edinburgh
- University of Glasgow
- **Glasgow Caledonian University**
- **Heriot-Watt University**
- University of St Andrews
- **University of Strathclyde**

Projects should have a Principal Investigator (PI) from each participating university. This is because funds will be awarded as a split across academics from each university. Each

application should therefore clearly state the amount of funding requested from each university (for example, a partnership between the University of Edinburgh and the University of Glasgow might request £7,500 each across a total £15,000 project).

PIs need to be academic staff within their university and have responsibility for research. Postdocs can be part of research teams but cannot lead in this round.

Some SBNZ members are offering a combination of financial and in-kind support. These universities are highlighted in **bold** in the list above. Applicants from these universities should highlight within their applications where the research will be supported by in-kind support such as equivalent staff time and cost accordingly. If your institution is highlighted in bold above, please check for more details with your university about what is fundable under this scheme.

What you can apply for

Activity/Cost	Eligibility
Travel expenses: Train, rental car, lodging, meals etc. Please note we will not fund any air travel within the UK or where a reasonable rail alternative is present (for example, London to Paris), and expect researchers to travel in the most sustainable way possible in line with their institutions' sustainable travel policies.	Eligible
Costs for hosting seminars/conferences or workshops (e.g., venue rental, catering, lodging, etc.)	Eligible
Conference registration (related to collaborative research)	Eligible
Consumable materials and supplies (we expect this to be as sustainable as possible and would like researchers to consider the environmental implications of any supplies requested)	Eligible
Publications and printing (related to collaborative research)	Eligible
Hiring research assistants and associates to help with research project (subject to each institution's recruitment policies).	Eligible
Replacement teaching buyout	Check with your university
DA (directly allocated) staff time	Not eligible, but in-kind contributions of

	staff time welcome.
General teaching or instructional programs	Not eligible
Stipend payments to non-Edinburgh or non-partner individuals	Not eligible
Student scholarships	Not eligible
Website development	Not eligible
Mobile phone cards	Not eligible
Entertainment costs	Not eligible
Computers, laptops, printers, standard software, basic computing accessories (access to high-performance computers or other specialised applications that are justified by the project are allowed)	Not eligible

Application process and form

We will be holding a webinar on [Wednesday 3rd July at 11am](#). This webinar will be recorded and made available after the event. If you would like to sign up to attend the webinar, please email sbnz@ed.ac.uk noting 'webinar' in the subject line. Or you may wish to note the time and date in your diary and join using the link above.

You can contact the Scotland Beyond Net Zero Senior Research Partnership Manger, Dr Kate Symons on k.symons@ed.ac.uk with any questions. Kate may also put you in touch with a local research contact in your institution.

Please apply using the attached form. This form should be completed and emailed to k.symons@ed.ac.uk and sbnz@ed.ac.uk by 5pm on **Friday 23rd August 2024**. **You must note 'seed fund application' in the subject line.**

Selection process

Projects will be selected by a panel convened by Scotland Beyond Net Zero and made up of representatives from participating universities.

Projects will be judged on their alignment with the criteria given above.

The deadline for applications is **5pm on Friday 23rd August 2024**. Applicants will be informed of the outcome of their submission around 23rd September 2024.

We anticipate that projects will run from around September 2024 to no later than 31st July 2025.

Communications

We require successful applicants to provide a short summary of their project on award, and a short summary of key fundings on completion. This will be used for communications purposes across the Scotland Beyond Net Zero network.

Awardees will also be invited to take part in support and networking events throughout the grant period. We will also stay in touch after the grant period to fund out about any further successes as a result of the collaboration.

Apply now

Please fill in the attached application form by **5pm Friday 23rd August 2024**.