
SUSTAINABILITY ENHANCEMENT FUND

PROGRAM GUIDELINES

Please carefully read the Guidelines prior to completing your application. Failure to follow the guidelines may result in the return of your submission.

All conditions on awards (e.g., ethics approval) must be cleared within six months from the award date, unless an exemption from this requirement is sought and obtained from the Office of Sustainability. If this requirement is not met, the award is forfeited.

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1. INTRODUCTION

- The Sustainability Enhancement Fund exists to improve sustainability on campus in the following areas: outreach and engagement, teaching, research and improvements to facilities and operations. It is also intended to advance our progress on the following initiatives: University of Alberta’s institutional strategic plan “[For The Public Good](#)”, “[Sustainability Plan 2016-2020](#)”, “[A Plan for Deepening Sustainability Education and Scholarship at the University of Alberta 2016-2020](#)” and the [Sustainability Tracking, Assessment and Rating System](#). This fund demonstrates our commitment to continuously improving sustainability on campus, and it is in alignment with the University’s Sustainability Commitment and Guiding Principles.

The Sustainability Enhancement Fund increases access to funding through a competitive process, and helps support areas that do not have access to significant external funds. The Office of Sustainability is responsible for the stewardship and administration of the Sustainability Enhancement Fund.

2. GRANTS & LOANS

The Sustainability Enhancement Fund invites applicants to apply for funding awards in the form of grants and/or loans that address the following sustainability outcome areas:

Teaching

Building opportunities for engaging and educating students, faculty and staff so that everyone has the opportunity to participate in formal learning about sustainability.

Research

Supporting innovative research and inquiry that improves understanding related to sustainability, leading to real-world solutions and problem-solving.

Facilities & Operation

Developing strategies and objectives that conserve resources, decrease the production of waste, decrease greenhouse gas emissions, minimize ecological footprints, and build sustainable supply chains.

Outreach & Engagement

Sharing knowledge, expertise, best practices and lessons learned so all members of the University and the local and global community has the knowledge and tools needed to promote a culture of sustainability.

University of Alberta’s Sustainability Commitment

The University of Alberta is committed to a continuous effort to instill sustainability into the many aspects of university life, on our campuses, in our institutions, and in the larger community of which we are part. In alignment with its values, vision and mission, the University takes an integrated approach to sustainability that incorporates teaching and learning, research, outreach, and the operations that support them, as it builds one of the great universities for the public good. The University strives to manage all resources in harmony, recognizing the interconnectedness of ecological, social and economic systems. To this end, the University of Alberta is committed to constant improvement guided by the principles contained within the themes of integration, education and outreach, research,

The Chief Sustainability Officer will adjudicate and select projects monthly providing funding is available. Letters of Interest are to be submitted and these will be evaluated to determine if they should move forward to a full proposal. Funding may be requested in the form of:

- ✓ An interest-free loan where savings are available and are used to pay back the loan over a period of time (not to exceed 10 years).
- ✓ An interest-free loan to amortize the cost of an initiative that is to be paid back over a period of time (not to exceed 10 years).
- ✓ A matching or contributory grant that contributes to a portion of the overall cost of an initiative.
- ✓ A grant that covers the entire cost of an initiative.

Initiatives from ancillary and charge-back operations are considered for loans only, with interest at a rate to be determined at the time the project is awarded. Project funding will require financial reporting upon completion of the initiative to verify funds were expended for the purpose intended. Any unspent funds will be returned to the Sustainability Enhancement Fund.

The Sustainability Enhancement Fund is managed in an efficient, imaginative and flexible manner. While each submission is considered on its merits, applicants are advised that we anticipate the demand for funds to be high so not all projects can be supported. Submissions that generate financial savings for our institution will be given priority. Letters/proposals should be clear, concise, complete and all requested funds appropriately justified.

3. GENERAL PRINCIPLES

Funds are dispersed on a competitive basis based on the principles outlined below.

Project Criteria. Projects will be eligible for funding if they align with the University's *Sustainability Commitment and Guiding Principles*, make progress on the objectives of the Office of Sustainability, improve the university's sustainability performance, help to build a culture of sustainability and balance ecological, economic, and social activities.

Project Eligibility. Without limiting consideration of any initiative, preferential treatment may be given to applications for funding that generate institutional savings, projects that replenish the fund and projects with matching/contributory grants that extend the reach of the fund. While all projects will be considered, projects that help the University of Alberta make progress on our University of Alberta's institution's sustainability performance with connections to: "[For The Public Good](#)", "[Sustainability Plan 2016-2020](#)", "[A Plan for Deepening Sustainability Education and Scholarship at the University of Alberta 2016-2020](#)" and the [Sustainability Tracking, Assessment and Rating System](#).

Flexibility. The duration of a project is flexible, with most projects anticipated to be completed in 1-2 years. Projects involving loans or payback periods may be up to 10 years in length. Annual disbursements for multi-year projects may be approved subject to milestone achievement and satisfactory follow-ups. The Office of Sustainability may elect to fully fund, partially fund or not fund a project. Combinations of loans, grants, and external funding sources will be considered.

4. APPLICATION ELIGIBILITY

- Any recognized University of Alberta student, student group or club, staff member, association, Department, Faculty, or Central Unit is eligible to apply.
- Undergraduate or graduate student projects must be conducted in collaboration with a Faculty mentor. A letter from the Mentor outlining the terms of their engagement must be submitted along with the letter of interest/proposal.

- Proposals may be submitted by one student or teams of students, with one student designated as the project lead.
- Each new project will be considered, regardless of whether or not the individuals have been funded before. However, preferential consideration may be given to individuals or groups who are first-time applicants, members of sustainability working groups, participants in the [Green Spaces Certification Program](#) or [Green Labs Leaders Network](#), current/past participants in the Office of Sustainability's [Leading Sustainability At Work](#) program
- Initiatives that fall within a unit's normal operations will not normally be eligible. Funding is not intended for initiatives that fall within standard practice. Applying for a Sustainability Enhancement Fund loan or grant will not preclude other funding or funding combination options.
- Department/Faculty or Central Unit support is required. Applications that advance immediate savings in the area of energy efficiency, waste reduction or water conservation may receive preferential treatment.

5. SUITABLE COSTS

The following costs are eligible for funding:

Equipment, Materials, Supplies and Services: Equipment is eligible, but only if it is not normally provided by the University and it is justified as essential to the proposal. Equipment will remain the property of the University. Direct costs, such as survey costs, data purchases or the collection or preparation of materials primarily intended to expand the incorporation of sustainability into classroom needs or for teaching purposes are eligible. Word processing, printing, graphic design, telephone calls, book purchases, or postage, are eligible but limited funds will be made available in these categories.

Research Assistant Wages: An applicant who seeks funding to support a research assistant or other assistant must include that person's qualifications, responsibilities, salary (hourly and total), and the prospective employee's name, if known. Applicants should consult their department for appropriate rates of pay.

Travel: Airfare will be limited to the lowest available fare (i.e., excursion fare, advance booking charter, seat sales, etc). Applicants must provide a quotation from the travel agency clarifying the lowest available fare status. Connecting ground transportation may also be claimed when this travel is an essential part of the transportation to and from the destination. Subsistence costs are eligible for people working on the project. Applicants should demonstrate that every effort has been made to achieve cost-savings.

The following costs are not eligible for funding:

- Wages for individuals currently employed by the University
- Travel to conferences
- Research conducted under contract for a public or private agency or firm
- Research by faculty and/or students to meet degree or course requirements
- Teaching release
- Out of country travel
- Fundraising

6. LETTER OF INTEREST

Interested applicants are invited to submit a Letter of Interest (no more than four pages long). There is no standard format. The following information should be included in the letter:

- a) Name of organization/team and complete contact information
- b) Organization/team mission
- c) Outcome Area(s) that your project will address (Outreach & Engagement, Teaching, Research, Facilities & Operations)
- d) How your project links to the university's strategic priorities ("[For The Public Good](#)", "[Sustainability Plan 2016-2020](#)", "[A Plan for Deepening Sustainability Education and Scholarship at the University of Alberta 2016-2020](#)" and the [Sustainability Tracking, Assessment and Rating System](#))
- e) Project rationale, objectives, potential impacts and general approach
- f) Budget and other secured funding sources
- g) Grant dollars required
- h) Experience and capability of the organization/team delivering the project
- i) Key individuals involved/engaged. Please indicate if any team members are participants in the ecoREPs or Green Spaces Certification Program.

The Chief Sustainability Officer may share your *Letter of Interest* with other members of the university community to assess your proposal's strategic fit with institutional priorities. If your letter is deemed to be in alignment, you will be invited to complete a *Proposal* for consideration. You may be directed to consult/engage/include other members of the campus community in your *Proposal*. *Proposals* will be considered for funding based on their potential impact, implementation feasibility and availability of funding.

Please submit your *Letter of Interest* via email to sustainability@ualberta.ca. You may address your letter to: Trina Innes, Chief Sustainability Officer, Office of Sustainability, 2-06 North Power Plant, Edmonton, Alberta, T6G 2N2.

The cycle time from receipt of the *Letter of Interest*, internal review and final approval may take up to 4 months.

7. PROPOSAL

Proposals are submitted to the Chief Sustainability Officer who will make a determination about funding. Proposals will be evaluated against the following criteria:

Addresses University Issues

The University issue(s) addressed by the proposal is clear and valid. Sufficient supporting evidence of a problem is provided. The proposal clearly shows likely benefit to campus sustainability and demonstrates the project is feasible. Please draw links between your project and projects that make progress on our University of Alberta's institution's sustainability performance with connections to: "[For The Public Good](#)", "[Sustainability Plan 2016-2020](#)", "[A Plan for Deepening Sustainability Education and Scholarship at the University of Alberta 2016-2020](#)" and the [Sustainability Tracking, Assessment and Rating System](#).

Creativity/Collaboration/Extension

There is evidence of collaboration among various stakeholders across the campus. Multiple stakeholders (campus and community) share leadership and management of the project during the grant period. Evidence of a broad base of support is demonstrated (e.g., department chair, academic dean, or Facilities and Operations staff have provided letters of support). The project complements other goals and activities of partners and the university.

Extension/Networking

There is a plan for sharing results, best practices, approaches, activities, strategies and lessons learned on our campus, and with other campuses and regions.

Evaluation/Impact/Benefits

The project will deepen sustainability on campus by generating: a tangible reduction in our environmental footprint, financial savings to the university, and/or strengthen our sustainability culture. Evidence of the criteria by which the effectiveness and success of the project will be measured is provided. The project is positioned to

deliver results for a long period of time.

Use of Funds

The planned use of funds is clear and appropriate. Where relevant, there is an explicit plan for sustaining associated infrastructure and operating systems past the grant period. Evidence of savings should be provided where applicable.

8. APPLICATION GUIDELINES

- Letters of interest and proposals should be clear and concise, consistent with the purposes, principles and priorities of the Sustainability Enhancement Fund Program, justify the use of all monies requested, and provide all information requested on the application form. The proposed project is intended to support engagement and a tangible move towards sustainability on campus. Clear and concise outlines of rationale and gap that the project will fill, the methodologies and partnerships that will be used, and how the projects results will be shared are required.
- All student and faculty letters/proposals must be signed off through Faculty Chairs and Deans. Research projects will need sign-off from their faculty's Research Facilitation Office. All Central Unit letters/proposals must be signed off through their Associate Vice President.
- All letters/proposals should be free of typographical and budgeting errors, avoiding unnecessary disciplinary jargon. Applications must use an easy to read font, size 12 point, with six lines per inch and no condensed font or spacing.
- All budget items must be appropriately justified.
- One electronic copy (PDF or MS Word) of the letter/proposal is required. Prepare an email with "SEF Letter of Interest: <insert title of project>" or "SEF Proposal: <insert title of project>" in the subject line and send it to: sustainability@ualberta.ca

9. ADMINISTRATION OF APPLICATIONS

Letters of interest and full proposals for may be submitted at any time. They will only be considered if funding is available.

10. ADMINISTRATION OF FUND

Successful proposals for research projects will be directed to the Research Services Office for administration. Other successful applications will receive a letter outlining their award and funds will be directed to their Faculty or Central Unit through an inter-departmental transfer.

The lead individual representing the successful proposal will be required to agree to the conditions outlined in this section. Failure to abide by any of the above may result in forfeiture of the grant or loan. These conditions are:

Funds Dispersal: Eligible expenditures are subject to University policies and procedures. Any funds unspent at the conclusion of a project's specified term will revert to the Sustainability Enhancement Fund Program.

Project Extensions: Understand that the proponent may be required to repay a portion of the grant or loan if he/she chooses to terminate the project early or in some way does not complete the project. The Office of Sustainability retains the authority to determine the sum of such a reimbursement. This does not apply to cases in which early termination results from developments beyond the proponent's control.

Written requests to extend a project's term may be sent to the Chief Sustainability Officer, Office of Sustainability, noting the reason for the extension request and the period of the time required. Only under exceptional circumstances (such as major illness) will an extension be granted.

Important Dates: All conditions on awards must be cleared within six months from an award date, unless an exemption from this requirement is sought and obtained from the Chief Sustainability Officer. If this guideline is not met, the award will expire. Travel claims must be submitted within 90 days of travel. If this requirement is not met, the award may be forfeited. Cheques issued to proponents by the Office of Sustainability must be picked up within one month of notification of arrival.

Accountability Framework: As proof that the funds given were used as specified by the Sustainability Enhancement Fund, the proponent will collect receipts totaling the amount of the grant or greater and complete the attached grant report form. The report will be completed and submitted to the Office of Sustainability within two weeks of the completion of the project.

The proponent agrees to use the funds for the project proposed, abide by any additional requirements mandated by the Office of Sustainability, as stated in their award letter, and will contact the Office of Sustainability for approval of any changes to the project before they occur.

For projects involving research of human or animal subjects, no projects will be permitted to commence until the Office of Sustainability has received written approval from the relevant ethics boards on campus

Proponent's Obligations: Accepted proposals must comply with the University's freedom of information and privacy rules.

Sharing Results: The proponent may be further obligated to share experiences with others through talks, participation in panels, etc. at the request of the Office of Sustainability, and agree to any additional reporting conditions mandated by the Sustainability Enhancement Fund communicated to the proponent by the Office of Sustainability.

11. FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

How much funding can I expect from the Sustainability Enhancement Fund?

Grants and loans will vary considerably—funding may range from \$2,000 to \$50,000. Projects requiring larger funding support may be considered depending on the funding and number of proposals received in any given year. The number of projects awarded will vary depending on the nature of the applications and the amount of funds available.

Does my project have to be a major project?

No! Any project, big or small, will be considered for the Sustainability Enhancement Fund. Every action helps. If your project will encourage sustainability at the University of Alberta, it is eligible. Individuals with project ideas valuing less than \$2,000 should direct their application to the Office of Sustainability's [Green Grant](#) program.

What if my plans change?

Any changes in your project after it has been submitted MUST be approved and accepted by the Office of Sustainability. In some cases, adjustments to your project will cause the amount of your grant or loan to be changed. Changes in your project that are not approved may result in the forfeiture of your entire award.

Are there any other requirements to receive a grant or loan?

It is important to share your experience with others. We want to celebrate successes and share learnings. You will be required to write a short report on your experience upon completion of your project. We will post summaries of projects on the Office of Sustainability website. You may also be asked to present information in other formats, such as a presentation, a panel discussion, or a visit to another school, at the request of the

Office of Sustainability. While you are putting together your proposal and delivering your project, you should reflect on and include information about how you will share your results with others.

Can I receive funding for a project with a faculty or staff member?

Yes! The Sustainability Enhancement Fund prefers collaborative projects with one or more faculty members, staff, student and community organizations.

Can I and others garner a wage for my project?

Proposals may incorporate reasonable wages into the costs of the project for any individuals not currently receiving a full-time salary from the university.

What types of expenses are eligible?

Eligible expenses may include wages (as per above), materials and supplies necessary for the realization of the project, rental of facilities and equipment, and travelling expenses directly related to project research or outreach. See Section 5.

Who can I contact if I have further questions?

Please send your question to the Office of Sustainability by email at sustainability@ualberta.ca