FY2024 Sustainability Research
Seed Grant Program: Request for Proposals

The **Sustainability Institute (SI)** is pleased to announce the FY2024 Sustainability Research Seed Grant Program for The Ohio State University research community. This funding opportunity aims to foster research on sustainability and resilience topics at Ohio State by supporting new interdisciplinary research teams and laying a foundation for convergence research[1] in one or more of the Sustainability Institute (SI) research program areas: [2]

- circular economy

- healthy air, land, and water systems

- smart and resilient communities

- sustainable energy

- sustainable resources

We seek proposals that consider components and interactions of both human (social, behavioral, economic, or engineered) and natural (earth, environmental, or ecological) systems addressing one or more SI research program areas. To be eligible for this funding opportunity, teams must 1) be led by a SI faculty affiliate and 2) include Ohio State faculty representing two or more distinctly different disciplines. Preference will be given to proposals that 1) include early-career faculty, 2) constitute diverse teams (e.g., participants with varied backgrounds or viewpoints, and/or from communities that are historically underrepresented in the research area), and 3) demonstrate potential for future external funding.

New for FY24 – In addition to funding proposals related to all five research program areas, additional funds are available for proposals that address circular economy, recycling education and/or disposal/recycling of batteries thanks to a grant from Rumpke Waste & Recycling.

The average award size is expected to be $25,000.

Full proposals are due no later than **Monday, January 29, 2024 at 11:59 p.m.**

See below for proposal instructions and award details.

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[1] **Interdisciplinary research** combines or applies data, techniques, theories, or approaches from two or more disciplines to advance fundamental understanding or solve a problem(s). **Convergence research** requires the integration of knowledge, methods, and expertise from intellectually diverse researchers to form new, shared research frameworks to address vexing problems of science or society.

[2] See http://si.osu.edu for information about SI and its research areas

Proposal Instructions and Award Details

A. **Scope of Projects:** Grants will support teams who engage in scholarship activities on human-natural systems (as defined above) that clearly build the capacity of interdisciplinary teams at Ohio State. The proposed research must be conducted 1) by a new interdisciplinary team, or 2) by an existing team that has not yet received external funding for the proposed research.

B. **Fund Administration**: Grant funds will be transferred to an account designated by the department of the named Principal Investigator (PI).

C. **Grant Duration:** Grant funds will be issued for up to sixteen months from the effective date of the award. Time extension requests will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

D. **Mid-project review and final report**: Grantees will receive 60% of the funds at the start and the remaining 40% after providing a satisfactory mid-project progress report. SI will provide templates for the submission of these reports. They should be concise, written for a general audience, include appropriate graphics (e.g. photos, charts), and be suitable for publication via online or print media.

E. **Eligibility**: The PI must hold an Ohio State appointment as a faculty or research scientist and must be an SI faculty affiliate before any funds are received. Team members' roles must be described on the team roster (see I. below), and each member must provide a **signed commitment.** The size and structure of the team is open and should be determined by the proposed research question and scope. At a minimum, interdisciplinary teams are comprised of researchers from two or more distinctly different disciplines. We recognize that, in some cases, these may be researchers from the same department. We also encourage diverse, interdisciplinary teams involving multiple departments or colleges. External collaboration is permissible, provided it clearly supports Ohio State capacity building.

F. **Funding:** Funds may not be used for capital improvements or faculty time. Any unused funds at the time of the final report shall be returned to SI.

G. **Matching Funds**: Cost sharing through matching funds, either cash or in-kind, is highly encouraged. Funds may be obtained from internal sources such as other seed grants, new faculty startup funds, colleges, centers, or departments, and other Ohio State grant programs, as well as from external partners. Proposals should identify the potential for securing additional support to continue project funding beyond the 2024-2025 academic year.

H. **Intention to Submit.** The FY24 Sustainability Research Seed Grant Program will not include a pre-proposal stage. To arrange for appropriate reviewers, PIs should submit a letter of intent (template provided) to Courtney Price (price.1217@osu.edu), SI research program manager by December 15, 2023. Potential proposal submitters are encouraged to email Courtney with questions about this solicitation and the application process early in the writing stage.

I. **Proposal Components:** Complete proposals will consist of five components:

  a. **Proposal narrative:** Detailed in Section K

  b. **Reference list:** No specific citation format required

  c. **Team roster:** Template provided

    d. **Budget form:** Template same as above

    e. **Summary slide:** Single slide that 1) summarizes project and 2) includes key graphic related to the project

J. **Proposal Format**: Proposals must be in 12-point font with appropriate spacing and 1-inch margins to ensure readability. All five components (see Section I) should be combined into a single **PDF document.**

K. **Proposal Narrative:** The proposal narrative **may not exceed 6 pages in length**, including charts, tables, and graphs. Brevity is encouraged. Narratives should include:

    1. **Descriptive Proposal Title**.

    2. **Lay Summary** (50-word maximum): A brief description written for a general audience. Should your proposal be funded, this summary (potentially edited) will be used in SI communications announcing the award.

    3. **Concept and Rationale**: Document the significance of the compelling challenge related to sustainability or resilience and describe how the project will address the challenge, engage Ohio State people and partners, build on existing work or partnerships, leverage new resources, and produce useful results. Clarify the system of study, including both the human and natural components and key interactions.

    4. **Objectives, Approach, and Expected Results**: Describe specifically the project objectives, how the team plans to accomplish those objectives, the expected tangible outputs, and the expected short- and long-term benefits or results, including identifying at least one non-NSF potential source of funding for future related work (in narrative or logic model format).

    5. **Team Qualifications**: Describe the qualifications of the key team members, including the capacity of the team to succeed, the aspects in which this team is interdisciplinary, how the team will achieve effective interdisciplinary collaboration that integrates multiple disciplinary perspectives, the diversity of backgrounds and/or perspectives that are represented within the team and how this will inform the research.

    6. **Community Engagement & DEIJ**: Describe any aspects of the proposed project that includes community engagement, co-creation of knowledge, and/or a focus diversity, equity, inclusion and/or justice.

    7. **Budget Justification**: Describe how the team plans to use the grant funding as well as any matching resources to carry out the project.

L. **Submission Process:** Submitted proposals should be uploaded in a single PDF format by 11:59 p.m. on Monday, January 29, 2024 to https://orapps.osu.edu/fundops/admin/opportunity/5853. Save the filename as follows: "Lastname-Firstname-SI-Seed-Proposal". **Send questions** to the SI research program manager: **Courtney Price** (price.1217@osu.edu, 614-292-8208).

M. **Review Criteria**: All proposals will be reviewed according to the following criteria:

    a. **Team Composition and Integration**: Appropriate representation from multiple disciplines and units, with a clear description of how disciplinary knowledge of team members will be integrated to achieve an

        interdisciplinary approach; a clear statement of how the team brings together a diversity of backgrounds and/or perspectives and how this will benefit the research.

    b. **Capacity Building**: Potential to build the capacity of interdisciplinary research teams at Ohio State in the specified area of scholarship, and to lay a foundation for new convergence research in this area.

    c. **Feasibility**: Likelihood of meeting or exceeding the stated project objectives; evidence that the interdisciplinary team has the capabilities required to perform effectively.

    d. **Expected Impacts:** Potential knowledge or societal benefits resulting from this work; likelihood of generating external funding.

    e. **Diversity of Team:** Scholars from two or more distinct disciplines and units (e.g., physical sciences, natural or environmental sciences, humanities, behavioral or social sciences, engineering, policy, or law, etc.). Preference will be given to teams that include early-career faculty and that bring together researchers from a diversity of backgrounds and perspectives.

    f. **Fit to SI:** Takes a systems approach that includes consideration of both human and natural components and interactions; relates to one or more of the Sustainability Institute (SI) research program areas: circular economy; healthy air, land and water; smart and resilient communities; sustainable energy; and sustainable resources.

N. **Notification of Awards:** Applicants will be notified via e-mail about the outcomes of their proposals by **April 15, 2024** of the successful proposals will be published on the SI website.

O. **Acknowledgment of Support:** Any presentation or publications resulting from this research should appropriately acknowledge the Sustainability Institute. The acknowledgment should read as follows: This work was supported in part by the Sustainability Institute at Ohio State.

P. **Official Project Timeline:** Projects will begin May 1, 2024 and conclude August 31, 2025. Mid-project reports will be due on January 30, 2025. A final report must be delivered to SI no later than October 31, 2025.

Q. **Proposal attachments:** Templates for the Team Roster and Budget Summary are provided. These documents must be completed properly and included with the proposal PDF file for the proposal to be considered.

R. **Important Dates**

RFP released	November 7, 2023
Letter of Intent due	December 15, 2023
Proposals due	January 29, 2024
Notice of awards	April 15, 2024
Funds released	May 1, 2024
Project start date	May 1, 2024
Mid-project report due	January 30, 2024
Project end date	August 31, 2025
Final report due	October 31, 2025