



ESI CALL FOR RESEARCH PROPOSALS: ENVIRONMENTAL RESEARCH SEED GRANTS FOR 2017-2019

The MIT Environmental Solutions Initiative (ESI) advances science, engineering, policy, design, social sciences, humanities, and the arts toward a people-centric and planet-positive future.

ESI is pleased to announce the second CFP for its Seed Grant Program. Proposals are welcome from all MIT faculty and research scientists with innovative ideas for multi-disciplinary research to advance progress and solutions on issues of significance to environmental and social sustainability.

The ESI Seed Grant Program is designed to encourage MIT researchers to form multi-disciplinary teams to pursue novel environment and sustainability research collaborations that could bring about significant advances.

ESI has articulated three priority research domains: Climate Science and Earth Systems, Cities and Infrastructure, and Sustainable Society and Economy; a detailed discussion of these domains is available in the [ESI Agenda](#). Proposals focused on problems in these areas are particularly welcome, although other topics will be considered.

Full proposals are due February 17, 2017 by 5:00 pm.

Awards of up to \$200K in total over two years are available—free from all overhead and transaction fees. Proposals are due no later than February 17, 2017, with awards to be made in April 2017 in time for September 2017 project start dates. An ESI research community forum will take place during the week of January 16 to help interested MIT faculty and researchers find new collaborators for ESI seed projects.

Progress on society's most pressing environmental challenges will benefit from contributions from all corners of the Institute – engineering, science, management, humanities and social sciences, architecture, design, and planning. ESI seeks proposals across the spectrum of research, from more clearly defining and deepening our comprehension of key problems, to developing empirically sound strategies for responses to those problems, to guidance for the wise implementation of solutions that various sectors of society choose to pursue.

OPTIONAL COLLABORATION WITH THE INTERNATIONAL POLICY LAB

[MIT's International Policy Lab \(IPL\)](#) offers the opportunity to enhance the impact of environmental research by working to share policy-relevant insights with federal and international government bodies. We encourage seed grant proposers to include consideration of a supplemental communication project supported by the IPL in their ESI seed grant proposals.

PROPOSAL SUBMISSION DETAILS

Who May Apply

The grants are open to faculty as well as senior and principal research scientists. Preference will be given to multidisciplinary, multidepartmental team proposals. Proposals for the same or similar work

submitted to J-WAFS' current request for proposals may be considered for joint funding.

How to Apply

*All components should be submitted via Formsite
(<https://fs27.formsite.com/MIT-ESI/SeedGrant2017/index.html>)
by 5:00 pm on Friday, February 17.*

Proposals should make a strong, succinct case for funding. Proposals should specifically address the following questions:

- How will the proposed research advance the search for solutions to environmental/sustainability issues of global, regional and/or local significance?
- How will the proposed research differ from or contribute to other efforts/activities? *Proposed work should be novel and distinct from prior research.*
- How is the proposed work innovative and multidisciplinary?
- How will seed funding for the proposed project help to strengthen ESI and its growing portfolio of research, education, and convening activities?

Application packages should consist of, in order:

1. **Project Details.** Please complete the information on the Formsite form, including the name(s) and departmental affiliation(s) of the PIs and key research personnel including, as appropriate, graduate students and post-docs.
2. A **research proposal** of not more than five (5) pages (inclusive of figures) that contains:
 - Abstract (150-200 words)
 - Statement of Purpose and Project Rationale
 - Work Plan
 - highlight major project activities on a rough timeline
 - include anticipated research and publication/communication outcomes
 - Project Start and End Dates (use September 1, 2017 (start) and August 31, 2019 (end) unless there is a strong reason for a different request)
 - Identification of any supplemental funding either secured or anticipated
3. A line-item **budget** (by year and cumulative up to \$200K)
4. **Statements of current and pending support** from all relevant personnel

PROPOSAL/AWARD SCHEDULE

Before January 13, 2017: indicate interest in attending ESI research community forum

On or before January 6, 2017: Online grant proposal form available

Week of January 16, 2017: ESI research community forum held

February 17, 2017: Deadline for proposal submission

April 2017: Proposal decisions announced

On or after September 1, 2017: Project start date
Proposals will be reviewed by a multi-school faculty committee.

AWARD

Winning proposals will be announced in April 2017, with project start dates anticipated for September 1, 2017. First-year funding increments will be deposited into single, dedicated project accounts set up within ESI, but fully accessible to all relevant PIs and their administrative and financial support staff. First-year progress reports of not more than five (5) pages will be required as part of a review process before second-year funding increments are released. Details of the review process will be provided to all PIs in timely fashion. All grant recipients will also be expected to participate in a joint meeting to share findings and discuss new directions.

Proposals to amend projects funded in this call—including work plan changes, personnel changes and requests for no-cost extensions—will be considered as necessary. In general, however, projects will be expected to conclude on scope, on time and on budget.

Unapproved cost overruns will be the responsibility of the PI(s) to cover, while funds unexpended at the conclusion of projects will be returned to ESI.