

Interdisciplinary, Scalable Solutions for a Sustainable Future (ISSSF)

Submission deadline: May 1, 2022

Background and Purpose

The *Interdisciplinary, Scalable Solutions for a Sustainable Future* (ISSSF) project is funded by the Office of the Provost, Provost Investment Fund. This is the final RFP in this series.

The primary aims for this project are to:

- Promote the University of Iowa as an important destination for research and teaching in the environmental and sustainability sciences.
- Enhance the competitiveness of UI researchers as they seek large interdisciplinary grants.
- Engage faculty, graduate students and undergraduate students from across campus in research focused on sustainability.

The Annual seed grant program

It is expected that 3-4 proposals will be funded this year. Research teams must be comprised of researchers from more than one discipline and funded projects must be focused on questions related to sustainability or climate change. *As suggested above, a primary goal for this project is to increase the number of externally funded research projects in the area of sustainability science and sustainable development.* Funding can be used to conduct research in support of a subsequent proposal (research proposal) or to build a team that produces and submits a proposal for external funding (planning proposal). Research proposals should not exceed \$40,000, proposals for team building should not exceed \$7,500. All proposals should fully address: 1) the relevance of the work to sustainability or climate change and 2) plans for subsequent proposals. Use inspired research that engages Iowa communities is encouraged but not required. The majority of participants on team building proposals must be UI faculty or research scientists and the lead institution for subsequent proposals must be UI.

Review criteria include:

- Relevance to sustainability and sustainable development
- Intellectual merit
- Detailed plan for a subsequent proposal for external funds
- Inclusion of students in the research process.

Questions can also be sent to David Bennett, david-bennett@uiowa.edu.

Additional details.

Definitions. We follow the National Academy of Sciences and define sustainability science as “...an emerging field of research dealing with the interactions between natural and social systems, and with how those interactions affect the challenge of sustainability.” Here sustainability and sustainable development are used interchangeably and, again following the NAS, defined as “...meeting the needs of present and future generations while substantially reducing poverty and conserving the planet's life support systems.” While investigators do not have to propose research

on natural **and** social systems, they should illustrate how the proposed research leads: 1) to a better understanding of issues of sustainability and 2) a strong subsequent proposal focused on sustainability to an external funding source.

Who may apply? Faculty and research staff at the Universities of Iowa.

Funding Policy. The maximum award for a research proposal is \$40,000, for team building \$7,500. Awards typically cover one year. Funds may be used to support students, travel for research, and the purchase of supplies and equipment. Funds may be included for faculty summer salary but are contingent on the submission of a larger externally funded proposal (maximum of \$4,000). These summer salary funds will be released after the new proposal is submitted. Any reference to funding from other UI sources (e.g., the funding of an undergraduate student from a department or ICRU) should be accompanied by a letter of commitment (e.g., from a DEO or the ICRU Office).

Faculty salary during the fall and spring semester as well as travel to conferences/professional meetings are not allowed. Team building proposals can request funds for non-UI participants to travel to Iowa City. Researchers who previously received ISSSF funding should include in an Appendix the year and title of the funded research project, and a brief summary of significant research outcomes and major products (e.g., manuscripts, meeting presentations, externally funded grants, etc.) that result from the prior work. If the current submission is for a similar line of research, describe how it differs from past funded projects and why additional funds are needed.

Researchers may leverage ISSSF resources with other funding sources. However, the research team must demonstrate why such a joint effort is needed to make a strong case for subsequent external funds (e.g., it is not the intent of this fund to help researcher complete ongoing projects).

Proposal format:

- Project summary (1 page max)

- Project description (5 pages max)

 - Intellectual merit, research goals and methods, discussion of fit to sustainability, broader impact as appropriate

- Plan for a future proposal (1 page max)

 - For example, expected research questions, intellectual merit, date of submission, funding agency, total budget.

- Timeline with major milestones (not included in above page limits)

- Bibliography (not included in above page limits)

- Budget and justification (not included in above limits)

Due date. May 1, 2022

Submission. Submit proposals to: Blake Rupe, Office of Sustainability and the Environment (blake-rupe@uiowa.edu). Please direct questions to David Bennett, david-bennett@uiowa.edu.