

Detailed Seed Fund Guidelines - 2026

Climate and Biodiversity Research and Education

0. Scope of the call
 - 0.1. This call invites proposals for research and education projects related to the Leiden-Delft-Erasmus Program Climate and Biodiversity and its Program guidelines¹
1. Eligibility to submit proposals
 - 1.1. Main applicant must be academic staff at Delft University of Technology, Leiden University or Erasmus University Rotterdam, with a contract of employment for the full length of the proposed project. Co-applicants do not need to be staff of these universities.
 - 1.1.1. The project partner consortium should at least hold members from two of the three universities (or its affiliated institutes) Leiden University, Delft University of Technology, and Erasmus University Rotterdam, three is encouraged. New proposals from existing collaborations are encouraged.
 - 1.1.2. The project partner consortium should at least hold one early career researcher or educator (<10 years of experience).
 - 1.1.3. The project partner consortium is encouraged to hold at least one *external partner* (e.g. governmental institution, NGO, start-up, foundation).
 - 1.2. The project incorporates at least both themes of Climate and Biodiversity.
 - 1.2.1. The project activities are encouraged to focus on research or education applied in the outdoor field and preferably making use of an existing or new Living Lab.
2. Funding principles
 - 2.1. Proposals can be funded up to the amount of EUR 15,000.
 - 2.2. The total annual funding available is EUR 60,000.
 - 2.3. The funding is provided on the rationale that it will be used as catalytic funding for research and education activities that have the potential to develop further, beyond the lifetime of the grant, and ideally leverage external funding.
 - 2.4. Examples of eligible activities include, but are not limited to: organizing workshops, developing new teaching materials or courses, building and strengthening networks, running small-scale demonstrations of potential research use cases, setting up joint research or education initiatives, and preparing larger research grant applications.
 - 2.5. Funding cannot be used to support research activities subcontracted to companies.
 - 2.6. Please refrain from air travel or other activities with a large carbon footprint, keeping in mind the universities climate and sustainability goals. If included, please motivate accordingly, and keep in mind that (intercontinental) air travel makes your proposal less convincing to the jury.
 - 2.7. Funding cannot be used for staff costs for staff who are already employed, but can be used for hiring student assistants.
3. Duration of the project
 - 3.1. The maximum duration of each project is one year.
4. Call timeline

Call announced	October 15 th ,2025
Closing date for submission of proposals:	December 15 th , 2025
Online meeting with main applicants of potential projects:	January 5-9, 2026
Successful proposals notified after:	Mid-January 2026
5. The proposal shall be comprised of:
 - 5.1. **Climate and Biodiversity Seed Call Project Proposal** that includes the following:
 - 5.1.1. Title of the project
 - 5.1.2. Short and easy to read abstract (max. 150 words)

- 5.1.3. Main applicant
 - 5.1.4. List of collaborators
 - 5.1.5. A concise project description: objectives, proposed activities and expected results
 - 5.1.6. Expected impact of proposed activities (societal, economic/technological and/or scientific).
 - 5.1.7. A motivation of how the proposal resonates with the LDE Climate and Biodiversity Program Guideline.
 - 5.1.8. An explanation on the composition of the team, emphasizing the interdisciplinarity and how external partners will be involved within the project or in the future.
 - 5.1.9. Information on follow-up to the proposed activities, particularly on how funding the proposed activities will contribute to future research/education activities, larger-scale transdisciplinary collaboration and/or funding opportunities;
 - 5.1.10. Concise planning of the activities;
 - 5.1.11. Concise budget with clear break-down of expenses;
 - 5.1.12. Any references, figures, and/or tables to illustrate the above.
6. Submission process:
 - 6.1. Applicants should fill out the application form before December 15th 2025, provided at <https://forms.office.com/e/sky9xE1a3> including the 2-page PDF Project Proposal.
 - 6.2. The main applicants of potential projects will be invited for an online meeting in the week of January 5, 2026 to gain more information and insight into the potential of the project.
7. Selection criteria used by the internal review committee:
 - 7.1. Compelling proposal design and rationale.
 - 7.2. Expected impact of proposed activities.
 - 7.3. Fit of the proposed activities to the LDE Climate and Biodiversity Program guidelines.
 - 7.4. The composition of the project consortium.
 - 7.5. Potential for long term continuity of the proposed activities.
8. Review Committee and Procedure
 - 8.1. The internal review committee will be comprised of representatives of the LDE Climate and Biodiversity Program.
 - 8.2. The review committee will review and rank the proposals. The top 4 will be granted. The criteria used are listed under 7.
9. Reporting, learning and monitoring
 - 9.1. We request a publicly available deliverable (e.g. a webpage featuring a visual or written report, a short movie, etc.) after the end of the project.
 - 9.2. We request a short pitch at the kick-off workshop of this Seed Fund, where at least half of the projects' consortium partners are present. The event is on March 5th, 2026, exact location and program will be announced.
 - 9.3. The consortium partners should fill out a questionnaire two times (in the middle and at the end of the project) to monitor, learn and reflect on the growth of the project.
10. Open proposal
 - 10.1 The program aims to create a database with creative ideas for research and education. In the form it is asked if you agree with sharing your project title, submitted abstract and list of contributors in our database. In this way a proposal still has the option to be honored via another route and we stimulate that initiatives can find each other in terms of content.
11. For further information on the call or questions, please do not hesitate to contact LDE Climate and Biodiversity Program coordinator Suzanne van den Bosch s.j.m.van.den.bosch@cml.leidenuniv.nl