

Call for proposals: Seed Money Call 2026

The Amsterdam Sustainability Institute supports innovative and interdisciplinary research that advances the sustainability transition. The ASI Grants Programme aims to stimulate collaboration across faculties and disciplines, strengthen emerging research ideas and accelerate projects toward external funding. Over the years, the programme has enabled 37 projects that benefited more than 120 researchers. [Topics from recent winning projects](#) focus on promoting climate education at VU, supporting sustainable diet policies through the use of AI and implementing transformative learning tools to empower future leaders in sustainability.

Building on insights from the previous round, ASI is reopening the seed money call with a stronger focus on interdisciplinarity and thematic alignment. In this edition, we will fund one innovative research project with up to €10.000. Proposal have to be submitted by **14 June 2026 midnight CET**.

Seed money call 2026

The seed money programme has been designed for new or early-stage interdisciplinary projects and is ideal for exploratory collaborations, pilot studies or concept development and building the foundations for future research. The reopened call emphasises interdisciplinarity and alignment with ASI's research themes. Proposals must be conceived, designed and written through an interdisciplinary lens. All involved disciplines are expected to make a substantial, clearly defined and indispensable contribution to the project. Interdisciplinarity should be reflected not only in the consortium composition but also in the research questions, methods, and outputs. Projects in which disciplines operate largely in parallel, sequentially or in a purely supportive role will not be considered sufficiently interdisciplinary.

In addition, proposals must demonstrate a clear thematic connection to one or more of ASI's research clusters. The ASI research clusters are:

- Behaviour and Governance
- Biodiversity and Natural Resources
- Climate Change and Energy Transition
- Food, Agriculture and Land Use
- Water Security and Justice
- Natural Hazards and Society
- Arctic Change
- Nature-based education (working title)

All clusters and more information about them can be found on this page: [ASI Research Clusters](#).

Eligibility criteria

The ASI grants programme is open to **VU researchers as main applicants** and societal partners as consortium members. More information about the eligibility criteria, application and assessment is provided on the following pages.

- The two leading applicants must **both** be postdocs or assistant professors **with less than 5 years of experience after PhD defense**.¹ Other team members may be PhD candidates or more senior colleagues.
- The team must include researchers of at least **two faculties** of VU Amsterdam. If the applicants are from the same faculty, they must be of different departments and demonstrate that they represent **distinct disciplines**.
- **Societal partners and VU service departments** (e.g., FCO, library, restaurant) and societal partners outside VU may join the project team, but **funds cannot be spent by third parties outside VU**.
- The proposal must demonstrate a **genuine interdisciplinary collaboration**, including how each discipline contributes.

Proposal Outline (0.5–2 pages, PDF):

1. Project Objectives: concise description of the outcomes the project aims to achieve.
2. Expected results: deliverables of the project (presented in bullet points).
3. Project Description, including:
 - a. Interdisciplinary Integration: the contribution of each discipline how they are integrated
 - b. Thematic Alignment: explicit connection to one more themes of the ASI research clusters
 - c. Theoretical contribution: brief reference to the most relevant literature.
 - d. Methodological rigor: clear explanation of how the research will be conducted.
4. Timeline: planned duration of the project (max. one year) and activities beyond it, if applicable.

¹ Periods of recognized career interruption (such as maternity, parental or adoption leave, long-term illness, caregiving responsibilities, compulsory military or civil service or other statutory leave) are excluded from the calculation of this five-year period.

5. **Budget:** description of how the grant will be used, including specific activities. By default, any **remaining funds will be deleted after 31 December 2026**. If you plan to use budget after that, indicate this clearly in the proposal. The project has to be finished by 30 June 2027 the latest.

Assessment criteria

An interdisciplinary committee of senior ASI researchers reviews and evaluates each submission based on the assessment criteria.

1. Innovativeness: Projects must demonstrate how the idea is novel, fosters new collaborations and contributes to the relevant academic field(s). The added value of an interdisciplinary approach for achieving the objectives should be explained. Proposals built bottom-up and following a proof-of-concept approach are preferred.

2. Interdisciplinarity: This call explicitly aims at deep interdisciplinary collaboration. The proposal must clearly explain the contribution of each discipline to the project. Interdisciplinarity should be reflected in:

- the formulation of the research questions
- the theoretical and methodological approach
- the execution of the project
- the expected outcomes

3. Societal Impact and Relevance: Proposals should articulate how the project will benefit society, its potential for practical implementation and how the collaboration could continue beyond the grant period. Applicants are encouraged to consider potential pathways to follow-up funding.²

Application and timeline:

Applicants submit their proposal (see the outline in the call description) through [this application form](#) until **14 June 2026 midnight CET**. On 26 June 2026, the winners will be announced.

² For inspiration of follow-up grants, see [Research Funding - Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam](#) where you find an overview of grants and information on how to obtain a personal funding scan.

After reviewing all proposals, the selected project will be announced on 26 June 2026. Winners will be contacted by email. If you have questions, please contact Neele van den Bongardt (neele.vanden.bongardt@vu.nl), Managing Director Amsterdam Sustainability Institute.