

SEED GRANT FOR SDGS – GUIDANCE FOR APPLICANTS

Overview

The Seed Grant for SDGs funding is designed to help members of the DMU community to take action on sustainable development and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), for situations where a little money and support can help.

A total of £2500 is available in 2020/21 and the maximum application is for £1000. The funding aims to support between 4 and 7 projects, with a typical budget between £150 and £500. Projects can take place between February and June 2021 inclusive. Applications should be submitted by **11.59pm on Sunday 31st January 2021**, by emailing to sustainability@dmu.ac.uk.

The 2020/21 Seed Grant scheme is a pilot for a potentially larger fund in future years – even if the funds available and possible timing of projects is not appropriate for you this year, please still get in touch to express your interest to help the design of the fund in future years.

Who can apply?

Applications can be led by current DMU students, DMU staff, DMU alumni (i.e. former students) or groups/organisations with a lead applicant in one of these three roles (e.g. DMU student societies; DMU staff networks).

What can funding be used for?

The Seed Grant fund is flexible and can be used to support any idea that makes a positive contribution to the [sustainable development agenda](#) and/or impacts upon the UN [Sustainable Development Goals \(SDGs\)](#).

This could include, but is not limited to:

- Organising one-off or repeated educational events, such as workshops, film showings or talks
- Volunteering activities, for which equipment is required
- Small-scale projects for which materials are required (e.g. arts-based activities)

What support is available?

The Seed Grants process is designed to support applicants to plan, deliver and evaluate their ideas.

Potential applicants are strongly encouraged to contact the DMU Sustainability team for an initial discussion before drafting an application. You can contact sustainability@dmu.ac.uk to get feedback on your project (by email or phone) and advice on how to ensure cost effectiveness (criterion 4) and make effective linkages to activities already happening at DMU, in Leicester or otherwise (criterion 3).

Successful proposals will also be able to receive further support with implementation (e.g. promotion on social media) and evaluation (e.g. creating online surveys).

How will decisions be made?

Decisions will be taken by a Grant Panel led by members of DMU's Sustainability Team.

The four criteria that will inform decisions are:

1. **Positive contribution** to sustainable development and the SDGs
2. **Spreading awareness** of the SDGs and DMU's commitment to achieving them
3. **Linkages** – the activity links effectively with other initiatives at DMU or in the target community
4. **Cost Effectiveness** – the project has considered other sources of funding and uses the grant efficiently

Projects will be shortlisted on the basis of criterion 1 (positive contribution), with unsuccessful applications receiving feedback on their proposal and suggestions on how they can further develop their idea in the future.

Shortlisted applicants then have an informal short interview with panel members – either on the phone/Skype or, if possible, in person. This is to enable an introduction of the proposal, questions and clarifications (typically fifteen minutes). Prior to interviews, panel members will rate applications on a 1-3 scale against each of the four criteria, alongside their overall view of the project's value.

Final decisions will be based upon achieving the most effective overall impact with the £2500 funding available across all funded projects; in some cases, this may mean that projects are offered less funding than originally applied for. Any unsuccessful applicants will receive feedback on their application and suggestions on how they can further develop their idea in the future.

The stages of the process are shown below:



Can you say more about the criteria?

- 1. Positive contribution** to sustainable development and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)
Sustainable development is about meeting the needs of people and the natural world, now and over the long term. We are interested in supporting any activities that have these impacts – for example, spreading awareness about challenges (e.g. poverty, climate change) or solutions. See links above for further information on the SDGs.
- 2. Spreading awareness** of the SDGs and DMU's commitment to achieving them
DMU has made a strong commitment to supporting the UN SDGs, and these are at the heart of the university's [Strategic Plan](#). We would want supported projects to spread awareness of the SDGs and DMU's commitment in the way they are run. Materials are available to help with this – for example pull-up banners which can be borrowed from the University.
- 3. Linkages** – the activity links effectively with other initiatives at DMU or in the target community
To have a positive impact, we suggest that activities link with other networks and planned activities. For example, an activity could be organised within an existing event such as the [SDG Teach-in](#) (Feb 22-26) or the DMU Festival of Teaching, to help increase attendance.
- 4. Cost Effectiveness** – have other sources of funding or support been explored?
In many cases financial support will be available elsewhere, such as through DMU budgets for research or student activities, so here we seek reassurance that this has been sought and that this Seed Grant fund is the best way to support your activity.

What costs are eligible for funding?

We envisage that in most cases funding will be used for one-off expenditure such as running costs for events. This might include venue hire; equipment hire; promotional costs; printing; social media promotion; or the use of software on a one-off basis.

Staffing costs are eligible in principle (e.g. through Unitemps), although please discuss this in advance with the Sustainability Team to check viability for a particular proposal.

If any items are purchased that will be used beyond the funded activity (e.g. pull-up banners), these should be retained as the property of an organisation or group, not an individual. In some cases, they could be owned by DMU for use in further projects and activities through the university. Please discuss this in advance to confirm that this can be arranged.

Guidance by section

Project Name and Organisation

- Please give your project a **name** (this can be changed later if you wish).
- **Organisation (or team/etc.)** applies if your project is being led by a group of some sort. This might be a DMU based Student Society or team of staff, a school/faculty or research group or any other collective. For alumni, this might be a business, local authority team, voluntary sector organisation or other collective group which they are part of.

Lead and Other Applicants

- Each project should have one **Lead Applicant**, a person who is either a current student or staff member or a former student ('Alumnus'). This person acts as the main point of contact with the team administering the Seed Grants.
- For current staff, '**role**' relates to their main relevant role at DMU (e.g. 'Senior Lecturer, Leicester Media School'). For students or alumni, please state the **course studied** (either currently or previously)
- **Other applicants** refers to other individuals and/or organisations that are part of the core team putting forward the proposal. If individuals represent an organisation, please state both the named person and their organisation.

Project Summary

- This is intended to be a flexible section where applicants can describe **what they want to do and why**. Further questions related to evaluation criteria will be picked up through a short interview, so this section should focus on:
 - what will be done and why;
 - how you can judge if the project has been successful;
 - and how the activity will be documented (e.g. by photos, videos) and disseminated (e.g. by social media, blog posts).
- DMU's sustainability team can provide support with planning, documentation and dissemination, so it is worth discussing project ideas in advance.

Project Details

- For **when the project takes place**, please either give specific plans or your current thinking on dates. This could include events that the project will link in with.
- **Amount requested**: Please state the total amount requested, noting the guidance above that £1000 is an upper limit, and to be able to support several projects, the Panel may look to offer support of the order of several hundred pounds to any one project.
- For the **itemised breakdown**, please use specific amounts where you know them (e.g. the cost of providing lunch for 20 people at an event from DMU's catering team) or estimates if not.

Declaration

- Note here that for some projects, **ethical approval** for research may be a relevant consideration. Please contact the DMU sustainability team for advice if relevant
- The **signature** can be done using a scanned image of the lead applicant's signature

Further Questions

- If anything else is unclear, please contact the DMU Sustainability Team on sustainability@dmu.ac.uk