



Welcome to the Challenge Fund Webinar

We will proceed once everyone has had a moment to join



UK Research and Innovation





Challenge Fund Webinar: Seedcorn Projects (round one)

30th March 2026, 11:30am – 12:30pm
Presented by:
Tim Taylor, Centre Director &
Philippa Mina, Communications and
Impact manager



UK Research
and Innovation



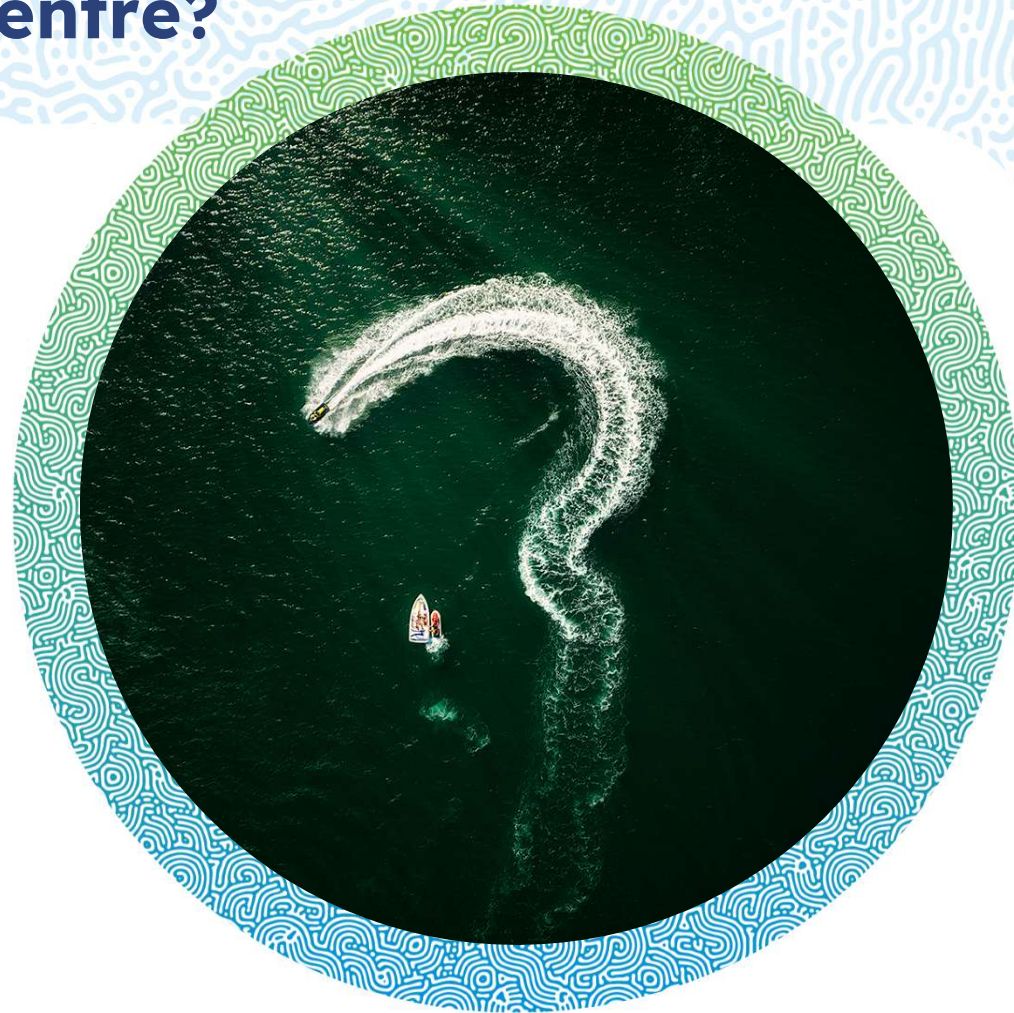
Housekeeping

- This webinar is being recorded so if you do not wish to be included in the recording, please keep your camera off.
- The recording will be available on our website along with the slides.
- Please keep your microphone on mute while speakers are presenting
- There will be time for your questions at the end of the presentation.
- Please add your questions to the Q&A area for collation.



What is the Net Positive Centre?

- Funded by UKRI, we work with partners across the UK to act as a national hub for research, collaboration and capacity building.
- Led by University of Exeter, with the UKHSA, National Trust and Forest Research as core partners.
- At the Net Positive Centre we focus on what's possible, turning the climate challenge into an opportunity to support healthier lives, improve health equity and improve the environment.
- We aim to deliver scientific advances, policy advice and innovation that will address climate-environment-health inequalities across the lifecycle.



Theme 1: Conceptualise

- Complex systems analysis and horizon scanning of emerging risks
- Research gaps
- Opportunities for policy action

Theme 2: Understand

- Theme 2a: Resilient urban environments
- Theme 2b: Resilient green and blue infrastructure
- Theme 2c: Resilient food systems

Centre Activities

Theme 4: Build

- Creating a community of practice
- Engagement with policy, public, industry
- Building climate change-health research capacity across disciplines
- Identifying solutions and trade-offs

Theme 3: Evaluate

- What works to deliver co-benefits?
- Modelling impacts and analysis of policy actions
- Community priorities, acceptability and feasibility
- Tools to aid decision making

Interdisciplinary approach

Equality, Diversity & Inclusion

Sustainability

Involved communities

Identifying barriers to action

Needs-led research

Foundational Principles

What is the Challenge Fund?

- **Challenge Fund: Seedcorn projects** (Scheme A) - two rounds of funding for projects up to £40,000 per project.

- **Challenge Fund: Outreach and Engagement** (Scheme B) will also run across two rounds, with the first opening later this year.
- ***Funding available:*** Up to £7,500 per project | up to 5 projects per round | £40,000 total per round @ 80% FEC.

Challenge Fund: participation (Scheme C) fund will run alongside Net+ events to cover travel, child and other caring expenses, to allow for attendance.

What is the Challenge Fund?

Supporting innovative research and impact at the climate-health intersection

Our Challenge Fund

- Supports new research, training, engagement and impact activities addressing emerging climate-and-health priorities.

Scheme A: Seedcorn Projects

- Encourages innovative ideas and UK-wide collaborations.

Funding

- Up to £40,000 per project
- 3 projects awarded per round
- Grants awarded at 80% FEC



Eligibility: Who can apply?

Your project must meet ALL of the following eligibility criteria:

- Led by a UK Higher Education Institution (HEI) or eligible research organisation
- Co-Produced funding submission between academic leads and non-academic partners.
- Include public or community engagement
- Deliverable within 12 months
- Budget under £40,000 (funded at 80% FEC)
- One application per PI



Eligibility: Who can apply? *(continued)*

In addition:

Preference will be given to projects that involve an Early Career Researcher (ECR) or Mid-Career Researcher (MCR) as Principal or Co-Investigator.

Applications from all four UK nations are actively encouraged, with geographic diversity considered in our selection process.



Remit: What can be funded?

Projects must span the intersection of climate change and health and align with at least one of the following research areas:

- Resilient Urban Environments
- Resilient Green and Blue Infrastructure
- Resilient Food Systems



Remit: What can be funded? *(continued)*

Examples of eligible project types could include:

- Empirical studies
- Evaluations and assessments
- Task force activities
- Capacity building initiatives
- Responsive research addressing urgent issues
- Impact delivery projects
- Large-scale arts-based activities

Projects should complement rather than duplicate activities already being carried out by the Centre.

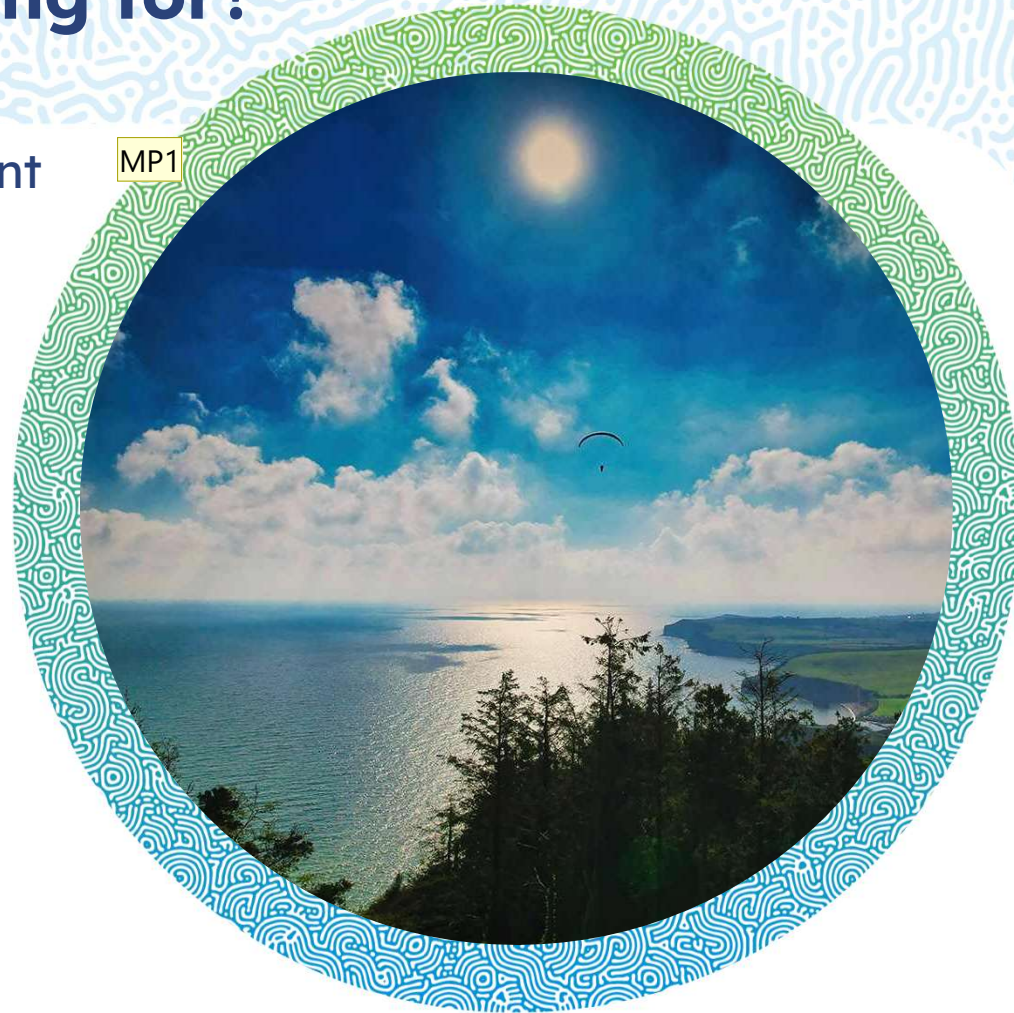


Criteria: What are we looking for?

Projects must demonstrate clear alignment with **at least two** of our **Foundational Principles**:

- Inter-disciplinary approach
- Needs-led research
- Involved communities
- Identifying barriers to action
- Equity, diversity and inclusion
- Environmental sustainability

MP1



Slide 12

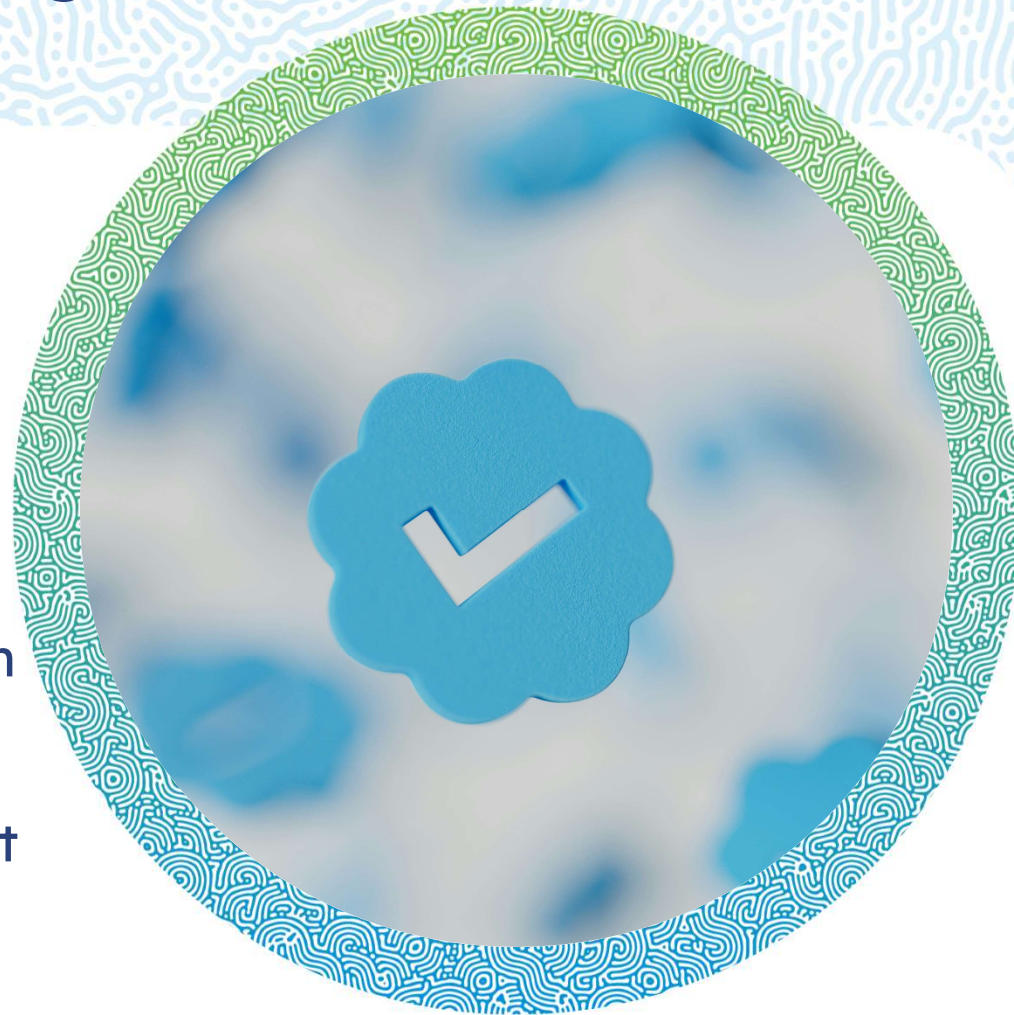
MP1 Is this just at expression of interest phase - do they need to align with all at full application?
Mina, Philippa, 2026-03-02T11:07:02.270

Criteria: What are we looking for? *(continued)*

Additionally, your application should demonstrate:

- Academic rigour and clear research objectives
- Value for money
- Feasibility of delivery within the specified timeframe
- Strong commitment to collaboration across disciplines and sectors

Your application will be scored against each of these criteria.



What might co-production look like?

Engaged research:

- Involving others in research design and delivery – not just as participants – but as collaborators and co-producers of knowledge.
- Throughout the life course of the project from initial exploration of the issue through to co-designing the question, methods and/ or impact activities of that research.



What might co-production look like?

Example:

Sensing Climate Putting disabled people at the forefront of climate adaptation policy and practice this project aims to:

- understand how people are adapting to the climate crisis.
- analyse how disability & climate are considered in policy & law
- identify areas for change
- understand how to create disability-inclusive cities now and as the world changes.
- co-produce resources, policy, stories, creative outputs & impact projects.



What do we mean by creative practices?

Broader and richer than:

Research first → arts as impact, communication, or dissemination

As process and as output:

- Visual Arts
- Theatre, Music, Comedy, and Dance
- Oral history and museum practice
- Craft
- Creative Writing (poetry, short stories)
- Creative Digital Technologies (serious games, interactive storytelling, virtual reality experiences)
- Design Led Practices
- Creative Facilitation Methods

Amia Choo, Cultural Producer



Artist Daksha Patel 2024

As a Creative Fellow leading a creative mapping exercise
with interdisciplinary researchers

Photo by Steve Hayward

What do we mean by creative practices?

Case Study 1: A cooperative game that helps players work through a policy problem using principles of co-design.

Game design is one approach that the Policy Design Community is exploring as a means of introducing creative tools (like serious games) to policymakers who are looking to take a user centred approach to policy-making.

[Annie Sheen, Cultural Producer](#)



Farming Fantasy 2021

Commissioner: DEFRA, Gov Policy Lab, Home Office, DofE

Game Designer: [Matteo Menapace](#)

What might creative practices look like?

continued

Case Study 2: The Public Cooling House is a flat pack low impact design combining a contemporary interpretation of desert architecture with natural materials and cooling practices to create a poetic experience of public cooling.

A public meeting space for cooling, conversation, consultation and communication.

Part of this work premiered at Arts House as part of the Refuge Heatwave project 2017.



Public Cooling House

2018, Australia

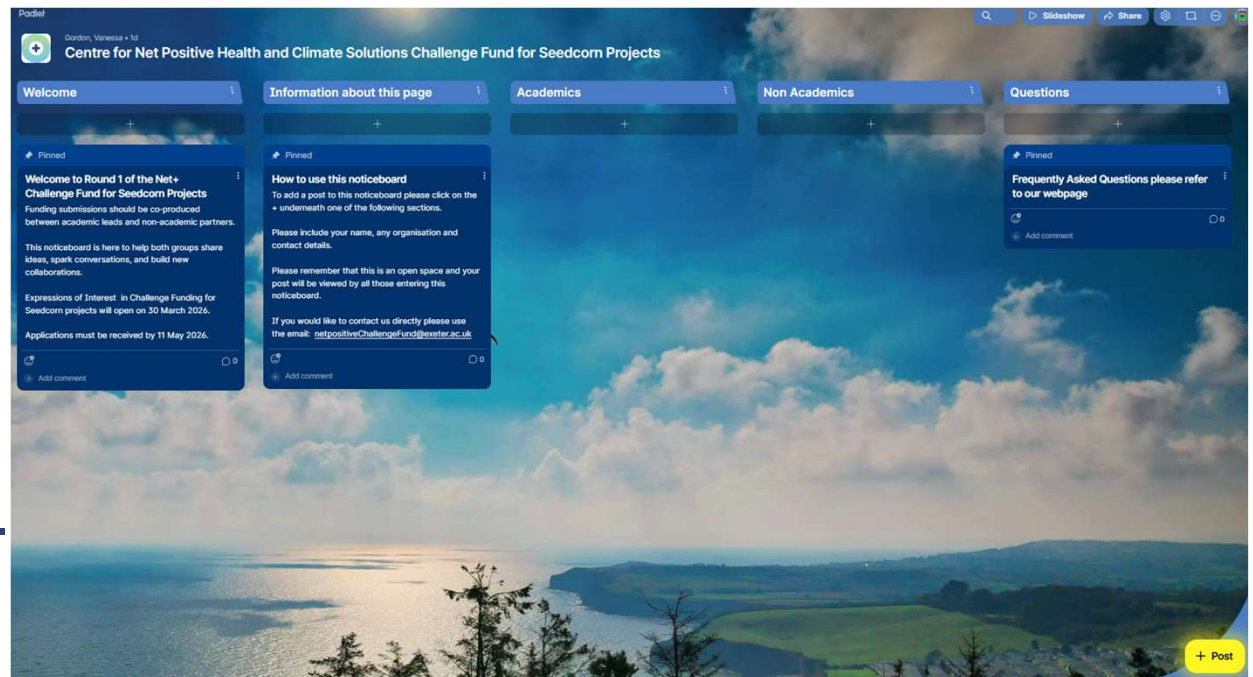
Jude Anderson, Punctum

How do I identify a partner?

Projects should be co-produced between academic leads and non-academic partners

Use our noticeboard to:

- Advertise your project idea and seek partners
- Offer your expertise to others
- Browse opportunities from academic and non-academic organisations
- Ask questions not answered in our FAQ's



How does the application process work?

Stage One: Expression of Interest

Option one:

Short application (500 words)

Option two:

Video presentation (max 5 mins)

Option three:

Alternative format (considered on request)

Outcome:

12 projects will be shortlisted to submit full applications of which three will be awarded at each round



How will my expression of interest be evaluated?

- Applications will be scored against the selection criteria.
- Due to the equitable practice of accepting alternative forms of application, Expressions of Interest will not be anonymized.
- Due to expected demand we will be unable to offer individual feedback at this stage but we will publish collective feedback on our website.



How does the application process work?

Stage Two: Full application

- Shortlisted projects will then develop a full proposal with detailed budget and project plan.
- Full applications will need to demonstrate adherence to all six of our Foundational Principles
- Further guidance will be provided at this stage.



Challenge Fund: Seedcorn Projects

Supporting innovative research and impact at the climate-health intersection

Timeline:

- Funding rounds run on a short cycle to support agile responses to emerging challenges.
- Projects must be planned to be completed within **12 months**.

Milestone	Date
Call opens: Partnership webinar & noticeboard live	30 March 2026
Partnership development period	30 March - 11 May 2026
EOI deadline	11 May 2026 5pm
Panel reviews EOIs	11 May- 23 June 2026
Shortlisted candidates notified	25 June 2026
Full application development period	25 June – 10 Sept 2026
Full application deadline	10 Sept 2026
Panel reviews full applications	Sept – Nov 2026
Selected projects notified	12 Nov 2026

Challenge Fund: Future opportunities

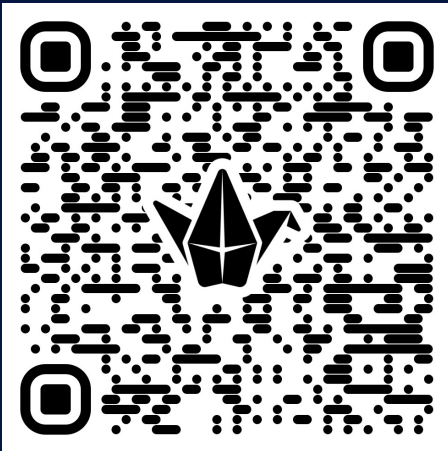
- **Challenge Fund: Seedcorn projects (Scheme A) Round Two** another similar opportunity will be launched in early in 2027.

- **Challenge Fund: Outreach and Engagement (Scheme B)** will also run across two rounds, with the first opening later this year.
- ***Funding available:*** Up to £7,500 per project | up to 5 projects per round | £40,000 total per round @ 80% FEC.

Challenge Fund: participation (Scheme C) fund will run alongside Net+ events to cover travel, child and other caring expenses, to allow for attendance.



Thank You
for attending our webinar.



Please stay on for
our Q&A session or
post your question on
our online noticeboard
using the QR code

This work was supported by the UKRI through its Securing better health, ageing and wellbeing strategic theme, [grant number ES/Z504245/1]



In partnership with:

