## ECR Ideas Catalyst Call Guidance 2025

[**Sustainable Futures**](https://www.sustainablefutures.manchester.ac.uk/) invites applications to the ECR Ideas Catalyst call 2025. The aim of this call is to help Early Career Researchers (ECRs) to **develop ideas for future funding applications** and to **build connections and networks** externally or across disciplines and faculty boundaries, with a focus on **catalysing new interdisciplinary ideas** to combat environmental challenges. These ideas could then form the foundation of future research proposals (UMRI Pump Prime, etc.).

We are offering funds to support training/skill development; events; sandpits; purchase of resources; or other innovative ideas big or small to enable collaboration and interdisciplinary working. Creative and innovative ideas are very welcome, but supported activities could include networking or community building events; lunch and learns; purchasing resources or tools to enable collaboration (e.g. Ketso).

We will be funding projects that relate specifically to research and partnerships that focus on environmental sustainability. Sustainable Futures priority areas include water, energy transitions, climate justice, biodiversity and circular economy, but all proposals across the six platform challenges (Equity, Net-zero, Resilience, Resources, Health & Skills) are welcome.

We expect to fund around 5 projects in total, each award will be for a maximum of £600.

**The funds must be spent and** **all project activities completed by 18th July 2025.**

Please note that we define an Early Career Researcher as someone who is within eight years of the award of their PhD. There are three distinct ECR stages: doctoral; immediately post-doctorate and transition to independent researcher. If you are unsure whether or not you would be eligible, please get in touch with the Sustainable Futures team.

Sustainable Futures will be able to offer some advice and guidance on awarded activities. However, all planning and organisation will need to be managed by the applicant(s).

### Assessment Criteria

* How the proposal will create, enable or support interdisciplinary collaboration around environmental sustainability research.
* Project rationale, clarity of presentation and justification of activity.
* How the proposal demonstrates that it will enable idea generation, with the aim of catalysing future research opportunities.
* Value for money?

### Eligibility Criteria

* This call is open only to University of Manchester employees: honorary contract holders may be included as team members.
* Eligible costs include: travel and consumables, external training services, catering, room hire, printing and materials, resources, public contributor payments, and more: creative and innovative ideas are welcome. Costs may **not** include external subcontracting (payments for goods or services only). Typically costs related to staff time are not eligible.

### Funding Requirements

Successful applicants will be required to:

* Submit a Breakthrough Idea (maximum 2 pages, template provided) within 2 months of the award end date, which will outline an interdisciplinary research idea that has been developed through the ECR Ideas Catalyst and could become the basis for a research project proposal in the future.
* Commit to providing post-award feedback, which may be used as a case study for the programme and shared publicly.
* Provide a breakdown of how the funds were spent.
* Report on follow-on activities and expected outcomes up to 2 years after project end.

### Application

Please complete your application via this link: [Sustainable Futures: ECR Ideas Catalyst](https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=B8tSwU5hu0qBivA1z6kad0EhSH1iBRhBumep86tCCIlUOEVOQjlFRlpaT1VJWFhKUEhYS1gwNVQyOC4u&origin=Invitation&channel=0)

### Key Dates

* Call opens 1st April 2025
* Application submission deadline: Wednesday 30th April 2025
* Applicants notified of decision: Wednesday 7th May 2025
* Deadline for all project spend: Friday 18th July 2025

All applications received by the call deadline will be checked for eligibility by the Sustainable Futures team and reviewed and assessed collectively by a panel to collate a final ranking.

If you have any questions about this call, please contact [sustainablefutures@manchester.ac.uk](mailto:sustainablefutures@manchester.ac.uk)