

Sustainable Laboratories Grant

Guidance for Applicants

The following document provides guidance in respect of the **1 September 2025 – 6 October 2025** application round of the Royal Society of Chemistry (“RSC”) Sustainable Laboratories Grant.

Please read the following guidance for applicants before making an application.

1. About the grant

- 1.1 Up to £10,000 GBP (“**Grant**”) will be awarded by the RSC to the successful applicant (“**Recipient**”) to undertake a project, initiative or activity (“**Project**”) which helps make chemical sciences research more sustainable by either:
 - a) advancing the understanding of environmentally sustainable laboratory practice; or
 - b) increasing the take-up of environmentally sustainable laboratory practices in the chemical sciences; or
 - c) facilitating the sharing of good practices.
- 1.2 The Project could include, but not limited to, research, data collection, pilot studies, resource development, or activities to support networking, community development and sharing of good practice.

2. Duration and start of award

- 2.1 Funding is available for a period of up to 12 months for Projects occurring after 1 March 2026.
- 2.2 Recipients will be able to request a no cost extension of up to 12 months at any point within the duration of the grant.

3. Eligibility

- 3.1 Applications should be made by one person “**Lead Applicant**”. The Lead Applicant is responsible for the overall delivery of the Project. They are the main point of contact for the RSC and are responsible for the use of the Grant and submission of the Final Report on completion of the Project.
 - 3.1.1 Undergraduate and Masters students cannot be Lead Applicant on an application, but can be Co-applicants (see 3.2).
- 3.2 Applications may also involve a co-applicant “**Co-applicant**”. A Co-applicant should be involved in developing the Project proposal as well as making a significant and essential contribution to its delivery.
- 3.3 The Lead Applicant must be either an Affiliate, Associate Member (AMRSC), Member (MRSC) or Fellow (FRSC) of the RSC before they submit their application and for the duration of the grant period. This means that the Applicant’s RSC membership must have been confirmed by the RSC – it is not sufficient to simply have a membership application in process. Please see our [frequently asked questions](#) for more guidance. Undergraduate Student Members (AFU) are ineligible.
- 3.4 RSC membership will be checked by RSC staff. The Lead Applicant’s RSC membership must be confirmed before the application is submitted – it is not sufficient to have a membership application in process.
- 3.5 Lead Applicants and Co-applicants (“**Named Applicant**”) may only apply for a maximum of one Sustainable Laboratories Grant, either as Lead Applicant or Co-applicant, per application round.
- 3.6 Each Named Applicant must not be a Recipient of another active RSC Sustainable Laboratories Grant, either as Lead Applicant or Co-applicant, i.e. previous Sustainable Laboratories Grant Recipients must have completed and submitted their Final Reports before they can apply for another Sustainable Laboratories Grant.

- 3.7 There are no career stage restrictions associated with this scheme, however Named Applicants must either:
- 3.7.1 Hold a fixed term or permanent contract at an eligible organisation (university; industrial, private or commercial organisation; university spin-out company or research institute) that lasts for the duration of the grant. Or
 - 3.7.2 Be undertaking an undergraduate or graduate course at a Higher Education Institution, for example university.
- 3.8 Any given Project may not receive more than one RSC grant. Named Applicants must inform the RSC if a Project is successful in multiple RSC grant applications.
- 3.9 The Lead Applicant is solely responsible for ensuring they are not under any obligation which prevents them from applying for or receiving the funds, whether the obligations are imposed by the home organisation or otherwise.

4. Application timelines

Applications open: 1 September 2025

Application close: 6 October 2025 14:00 UK time

Initial eligibility decisions: Week commencing 20 October 2025

Funding decisions: Mid-February 2026

5. Application requirements

- 5.1 Lead Applicants must make their application through the RSC's online application system, [SurveyMonkey Apply](#). Before completing the online form, all Named Applicants should check that they comply with the eligibility requirements that are stated in section 3.
- 5.2 Applicants must use their own SurveyMonkey Apply account, under their own name and email address. Applications made under another person's account will not be considered.
- 5.3 The application form will ask the Lead Applicant to provide:
- a) Details of any Co-applicants, partnerships or collaborators.
 - b) A maximum 100-word summary of the Project. The summary should succinctly describe the challenge the Project is aiming to address and the actions to be taken. This description may be used on our website should the application be funded.
 - c) A document of maximum two sides of A4 (at font size 10) describing the proposed Project. The proposal should include:
 - i. background of the specific issue you are seeking to address and why it is important with regards to the aims of this scheme
 - ii. overall aims and expected outcomes
 - iii. a brief description of what you are planning to do
 - iv. timeframes and key dates
 - v. where the Project will take place
 - vi. who will be delivering the Project
 - vii. Any references listed must be included within the two-page limit
 - d) Information on how the Project will benefit environmentally sustainable research practice beyond the grant holder's lab.
 - e) Information on how RSC funding will make a significant difference to the ability to deliver the Project.
 - f) The approximate costings of the Project and a breakdown of how the awarded Grant will be used. This should include quantities and approximate costs for each item (see eligible costs in section 6).
 - g) Approval from a Project sponsor "**Project Sponsor**". A Project Sponsor is someone in the Lead Applicant's organisation who can support or enable the delivery of the Project. For example, someone whose permission is needed for successful delivery of the Project.

They do not necessarily need to be involved in the delivery of the Project. This would typically be a Supervisor/Principal Investigator, Line Manager, Head of Department or another senior member of the Lead Applicant's organisation. The Project Sponsor cannot be a Named Applicant.

- 5.4 Applications will not be considered for funding if any part of the application exceeds length limits specified in the application form.

6. Eligible costs

- 6.1 Applicants may apply for reasonable costs directly needed for their Project.
- 6.2 Sustainable Laboratories Grants will not be awarded to:
- a) Projects which do not focus on improving environmental sustainability in chemical sciences research practice.
 - b) Projects whose primary aim is to generate a financial surplus or for commercial development;
 - c) Projects for which our support would not significantly enhance the Project.
 - d) Projects which are likely to only benefit the applicant and will not help to improve research sustainability beyond the applicant's laboratory.
- 6.3 Funding should not replace or reduce institutional or funding agency support
- 6.4 Applicants may not seek funding for the following within their application:
- a) Costs for of general-purpose hardware, apparatus, or equipment
 - b) Departmental overheads
 - c) Costs for conference attendance
- 6.5 Any contributions to cover staff costs or student bursaries should be appropriate for the Project. They should not include costs that might reasonably be covered otherwise, for example by employers. All costs should be justified in the application.
- 6.6 Costs for consultancy will only be covered where the applicant is explicit about the need for a consultant or specialist to be involved in the Project and can demonstrate how the Project will benefit from the specific expertise or skillset provided. These costs must be fully justified in the application form.

7. Inviting Project Sponsors to provide their support of the application.

- 7.1 Lead Applicants must include confirmation of support from a Project Sponsor. ***Please make them aware of this before entering their details into the application system.***
- 7.2 The Lead Applicant is required to complete all sections of the application form before the Lead Applicant can access the declaration of support section of the application form.
- 7.3 Once applicants enter the details of the Project Sponsor, the SurveyMonkey Apply system will send them an email, which includes a link to the application. Clicking this link will allow them to login (or sign up) to confirm their support. If they have not received a link, it may have gone to their junk folder. Please contact funding@rsc.org if there are any problems.
- 7.4 **Confirmation of support needs to be completed by the grant application deadline.** Please consider the availability of the Project Sponsor. We recommend giving Project Sponsors at least two weeks to complete their section of the application form. The RSC will recommend to the Project Sponsor that their declaration needs to be completed in advance of the Grant deadline. The Applicant will not be able to submit their application form until the status for the declaration shows as 'complete'.
- 7.5 If the Lead Applicant needs to make any final edits after submitting their application before the application deadline, they should contact funding@rsc.org for guidance.

8. Assessment Criteria

- 8.1 The assessment criteria are:

a. Relevance to environmental sustainability of chemical sciences research

The Project and its outcomes must focus on improving the environmental sustainability of research practice in the chemical sciences.

The Project objectives should align with one or more of the scheme aims.

b. Outcomes and impact

The proposal must clearly describe the intended outcomes and/or impact that the Project will have and include a plan to evaluate whether the Project has been successful in achieving these outcomes and impacts.

c. Wider benefit

The proposal must explain how the Project will have wider benefits beyond the grant recipient, including how any outputs and/or learnings will be shared.

This is an important aspect of this scheme, but we do not wish to be prescriptive in defining “wider benefit”. A key finding from the Sustainable laboratories report is the need for communities to share knowledge and best practice.

h) Feasibility of proposal

The Project must be clearly written and costed, be feasible to complete with the resource allocation and/or support and be within the timeframe indicated in the proposal.

i) Impact of funding

Applicants should show that the requested funding will make a significant difference to their ability to deliver the Project.

9. Application assessment process

9.1 All applications will be checked by RSC staff. Applications will not be considered for funding if:

- a) The Applicant(s) does not meet our eligibility criteria (please see section 3);
- b) the application is incomplete (see section 5);
- c) the application does not adhere to the length limits (see section 5);
- d) the Applicant's funding request exceeds £10,000 limit (see section 1);
- e) the application includes ineligible costs (see section 6);

9.2 All remaining applications will undergo peer review by members of the RSC [Researcher Grants Peer Review Group](#). Final funding decisions may be made by the Sustainable Laboratories Grant Decision Panel, taking into consideration the overall portfolio of projects to be funded, with the aim of supporting a broad and diverse range of projects.

9.3 Members of the Sustainable Laboratories Grant Decision Panel are:

- Jan-Willem Bos, University of St Andrews, UK
- Federico Brucoli, De Montfort University, UK
- Vicky Hilborne, University College London, UK
- Sheena Hindocha, Innovate UK Business Connect, UK
- Helen Sneddon, University of York, UK
- TBD
- TBD
- TBD

Please note that due to the volume of applications received, we are unable to give personalised feedback to applicants.

10. Successful applications

10.1 Lead Applicants will be notified by email of any funding decision.

10.2 The funding offer is conditional on RSC receiving in writing from the Recipient the details of the bank account the Grant is to be paid into and agreement to all of the conditions set out in the Standard Conditions of Grant within fifty (50) working days of the date of the RSC's letter confirming the Grant is being awarded (“**Award Letter**”).

10.3 The Grant will be paid in a single payment to the Lead Applicant's organisation. No funds will

be paid directly to individual applicants.

11. Contact information

If you have any questions about this grant please contact funding@rsc.org. Before contacting us please check the [Frequently Asked Questions](#) document for the grant in case this answers your question.