**Signature Project GRANTs**

**– Guidelines & instructions for applicant teams –**

**Deadlines for submission:** 2 April 2024

**Results announced:** 25 April 2024

**PtS Signature Projects**

The Signature Project Grant is our instrument to accelerate change in our university practice working towards transformative, imaginative and long-term goals. The *aim of s*ignature Projects is to enhance our impact through new transdisciplinary collaborations. Signature Projects are unusual and innovative in the sense that the aims, chosen approach, and/or collaboration inspire new ways of thinking, seeing, and working. We particularly invite projects and collaborations that are difficult to get funded via other channels, for instance because of their exploratory or experimental nature.

Our position paper [The Way Forward (October 2021)](https://www.uu.nl/sites/default/files/211030-The-Way-Forward-Pathways-to-Sustainability.pdf) puts forward the ambitions and strategy of the PtS programme. The goal is for our Signature Projects to map onto the outlined aims[[1]](#footnote-2) while enabling ambitious, unusual, and innovative thinking to achieve these aims. Our desire is for Signature Projects to strengthen our contribution as a university to address the sustainability crisis, to be a driver of change, and to offer societal learnings, through the engagement of stakeholders and in a transdisciplinary way. In this sense, Signature projects dare to break new ground in approaching the complex issues related to sustainability and by informing institutional and paradigmatic change in our organization and beyond.

**PtS Mission -** *Propel radical innovation in our university practices by creating vibrant communities fostering collaborations in research and education, both within the university and with societal stakeholders, to enhance our impact on the exploration and development of pathways to sustainability, guided by the principle that scientific rigor meets societal relevance.*

**PtS Vision -** *Joining forces within the university and with society to discover, explore and validate pathways to just and sustainable futures for all.*

Signature Projects provide substance to the PtS agenda and take centre stage in our communication strategy as a way to showcase how the programme is working towards realizing its mission and vision. PtS communication advisors will reach out to Incubator teams to assist and advise them on potential communication and outreach activities while preparing Signature Project Grant applications.

**Conditions and eligibility criteria**

* Only Incubator Grant recipients can apply for a Signature Project Grant.
* Proposals need to fit within the broader PtS strategy. They should be designed in a way that potentially contributes to realizing one or more of the objectives of the PtS programme 2022-2026 (see Appendix II and [The Way Forward](https://www.uu.nl/sites/default/files/211030-The-Way-Forward-Pathways-to-Sustainability.pdf)).
* Applications are expected to stimulate the integration of different types of expertise through transdisciplinary collaborations. The active involvement by scholars from at least three UU faculties and multiple PtS Communities is required, and the active involvement of external partners is encouraged.
* Applications should be challenge-based or centred around a mission that brings different people and perspectives together. In that sense, proposals should be formulated and designed in such a way that they resonate within multiple PtS Communities and inspire collaboration across these Communities.
* Applications should aim to contribute to accelerating change through initiatives that are not yet happening elsewhere in UU and/or are not easily funded via other channels.
* Applications should aim to create time and space for UU scholars (existing staff) to make an active contribution.
* Applicant teams commit themselves to the open and inclusive design process in which initial ideas may change with the input and integration of various types of expertise. They also commit themselves to peer-assessment once they submit an application (see below).
* Trust in our scholars and in the process is key. We aim to facilitate as many promising initiatives as possible. To be able to do so, we encourage applicants to only apply for necessary costs, up to a maximum of $€$150.000 for a period of 24 months. The project must start within three months after the awarding letter is received.
* Project proposals are coordinated within and supported by the departments of the applicants. Confirmation of consent from the applicants’ departments should be included in the application.
* The submitted budget must be verified by the department controller(s) of one/several of the main applicants. Applications should state the name of the controller that has performed this check.
* Applications are to be submitted in pdf or word to pathwaystosustainability@uu.nl by **2 April 2024 at the latest.**

 **Assessment & selection procedure:**

* PtS has reserved budget to fund up to ten Signature Projects in the 2024 round. This means that the assessment and selection procedure is not competitive. Yet please be aware that applications will be assessed on their quality and adherence to the conditions and criteria listed above. It also implies we may decide not to fund proposals that we do not find standing out enough to qualify as PtS Signature Projects.
* A peer review process will be organised during the first week after the submission deadline. Each applicant team will be asked to review and provide constructive feedback to one other applicant team. The input should be focused on how proposals (if awarded) may be strengthened, or suggestions as to how to maximise the potential impact of the proposed project.
* The assessment and selection committee will be composed of three PtS programme board members and three PtS Community Board members. This committee will decide, taking into account the peer assessment feedback.

**Post-award project administration**

* Signature Project Grants need to be spent within 24 months after allocation. Not exceeding this deadline, teams may decide how much time they need to carry out their project.
* During the project, the awarded funding will be made available to Signature Project teams in tranches (see the below table). Any budget shortages are settled annually. At the end of the project, a final calculation will take place based on the actual costs. We have built in this administrative check to allow us to fund as many new initiatives as possible with any unspent funds.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **May 2024** | **September 2024** | **September 2025** |
| 1st tranche | 10.000 euro |  |  |
| 2nd tranche |  | 50% of remaining awarded funding |  |
| 3rd tranche |  |  | Remaining awarded funding |

* Within 12 months after allocation, Signature Project teams are required to provide a concise update regarding (i) the progress of activities carried out and planned, (ii) incurred and expected costs, (iii) any obstacles or concerns, or other comments, questions to the board.
* At the end of the project, Signature Project teams are required to provide a concise update, describing the key activities, outcomes, communication and outreach efforts, and (possible) next steps.
* With our Signature Project instrument we encourage exploratory and experimental avenues. We therefore invite you to share your experiences throughout the project in order to contribute to the further development of our funding instruments.
* Possible scenarios might be that the collaboration does not generate the expected benefits or outcomes, or that people simply turn out to not have enough time. We would appreciate being timely informed about such development so as to create the possibility to allocate the reserved funding to other projects.
* Signature Project recipients can apply for follow-up funding, as we want to stimulate long-term collaborations. However, teams are encouraged to look for (additional) alternative funding resources and cannot rely on PtS funding on a structural basis. The continuation of projects should not become an objective in itself. The PtS Programme Board, Communities and our colleagues at the Research Support Offices can assist in this process.

**Appendix II – APPLICATION FORM SIGNATURE PROJECT GRANT**

Please adhere to the indicated word count and keep the headings of the below form as is. Instructions can be deleted from the final submitted applications. Applications are to be submitted in pdf- or word-format to pathwaystosustainability@uu.nl on **2 April 2024 at the latest.**

**1. Project title and mission statement**

*[Provide a concise title that will be used to communicate about the project]*

*[Provide a mission statement about what the project wants to achieve and/or change. We invite applicant teams to aim high and formulate a bold ambition to which they want to contribute.]*

*maximum 50 words*

**2. Project team & contact details**

*Please note that the active involvement* *by scholars from at least three faculties and multiple PtS Communities is required, and that the active involvement of external partners is encouraged.*

|  |
| --- |
| **Contact person in future communications** |
| *Title+ Name* | *Faculty & department* | *E-mail* |
|  |  |  |
| **Project team members** |
| *Title+ Name* | *Faculty & department* | *Main expertise (keywords)* |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |
| **Non-UU partners** |
| *Title+ Name* | *Organisation and function title* | *Contribution to the project (in cash and in kind)* |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |

**3. Internal coordination**

*Please confirm that the proposal is coordinated within and supported by the departments of the applicants and signed off by the applicants’ head of department.*

|  |
| --- |
| **Coordination with main applicants’ departments** |
| *Title+ Name* | *Faculty & department* | *E-mail address* | *Signature* |
|  |  |  |  |
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**4. Introduction of the project idea and approach**

*Provide a short narrative of the project idea, describing and motivating the importance of the mission/challenge that the project aims to address; the proposed approach, methods, and key activities.*

*(maximum 600 words)*

**5. Fit with the broader PtS Strategy**

* Motivate how the project will potentially contribute to realizing one or more of the objectives of the PtS programme 2022-2026 (see Appendix II and [The Way Forward](https://www.uu.nl/sites/default/files/211030-The-Way-Forward-Pathways-to-Sustainability.pdf)).
* How does the proposal inspire broader interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary collaboration?
* What is the impact the project strives to achieve?
* What type of change does the project aim to bring about?
* How do the aims, chosen approach, and/or collaboration inspire new ways of thinking, seeing, and working? Include the added value and/or unique perspective that this project aims to bring.
* Please note that we particularly invite proposals for initiatives that are not yet happening elsewhere in UU and that are difficult to get funded via other channels.

*(maximum 600 words)*

**6. Timeline**

*Please present the global timeline of the proposed activities in a concise manner, including the intended communication efforts throughout the project*

**7. Budget**

* Please fill in the budget together with your project controller. Confirm that the submitted budget is verified and approved by stating the name of the controller who has performed this check.
* Indicate the investment(s) of non-UU partners in time and cash, if applicable.
* Mention whether you are applying for other funds for this proposal, or (if applicable) include any other acquired funds that you will have at your disposal.
* Please explain the type of personnel costs (7b) and the budgeted material costs (7c).

**7a. Specified budget overview**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **SPECIFIED BUDGET** | **2024** | **2024** | **2025** |
| **Personnel**  |  |  |  |
| *(specify)* |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |
| **Material costs** |  |  |  |
| *(specify)* |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |
| **Total**  |  |  |  |  |

*[Please note that the maximum requested budget is 150.000 for a period of 24 months]*

**7b. Explanation of personnel costs:**

Signature Project Grants may be used to fund, for example, part-time PtS fellowships or short sabbaticals (by existing UU staff members); research or education assistance; compensation for student teams or internships; project management support; other external expertise or support. Contributions by PhD students or post-doctoral researchers (under the guidance of the interdisciplinary project team) can also be compensated but need to be well motivated within the context of the broader PtS strategy. Please note that we specifically seek to support approaches, activities that would be difficult to get funded via other channels.

*[Please explain the type of personnel costs that are included in the budget, and specify whether these refer to existing staff or otherwise]*

**7c. Explanation of material costs:**

Signature Project Grants may be used to fund, for example, outreach and communication activities; organizing events, workshops, small exhibitions or performances; open access publications; field trips and travel/ accommodation costs; buying or hiring materials or services to carry out the project.

*[Please explain the budgeted material costs]*

|  |
| --- |
| **Confirmation –** The budget has been verified and approved. |
| *Title+ Name* | *Faculty & department* | *E-mail address* | *Signature* |
|  |  |  |  |

**Appendix II – Objectives PtS programme 2022-2026**

1. **Fostering sustainable thinking and practice**

*Possible indicators for success:*

* Introducing a new way of thinking to the challenges of sustainability in a compelling way
* Creation and/or strengthening of networks and spaces for innovation, interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary interaction
* Activities bringing together students and scholars from both early to established moments in their careers working on sustainability issues across the many different institutes and departments
* Initiation/funding of innovative, unusual and transdisciplinary collaborations in research, education, (public and policy) engagement and operational affairs
* Building organizational and/or institutional capacity
1. **Fulfilling a critical role through critiquing developments where appropriate and sharing new imaginative ideas related to sustainable futures and how to get there**

*Possible indicators for success:*

* Set the agenda for the debate on sustainability within UU
* Active engagement in public debate on sustainability issues
* Sharing new imaginative ideas and narratives about what sustainable futures may look like and how we could get there
1. **Contributing to processes of societal learning by connecting our proven excellence in research and education**

*Possible indicators for success:*

* Initiation of new interactions with policymakers, societal stakeholders and/or industry
* Maintaining existing relationships with policymakers, societal stakeholders and/or industry
* Contributions to actively engage with the broad general public
* Policy & institutional change
1. Appendix II lists the objectives of the PtS programme 2022-2026 [↑](#footnote-ref-2)