



PROCEDURE INCUBATOR & SIGNATURE PROJECT GRANTS

December 2022

Introduction

This document outlines the aims and procedures tied to the Incubator and Signature Project grant schemes of the strategic theme Pathways to Sustainability (PtS). The different steps involved are addressed in chronological order. The *Incubator Grant* is our instrument to invest in community building, offering interdisciplinary teams of UU scholars the opportunity to take the time to collaborate on innovative interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary ideas. It is an instrument to get to know each other, reflect on the process of collaboration, build trust and understanding for each other's perspectives, and further develop the consortium and the project idea. Only recipient teams of the Incubator Grant (up to 8k for a period of maximum 12 months) can apply for subsequent funding through a Signature Project Grant (50-150k for a period of maximum 24 months). It is important to note that the continuation of an Incubator Grant with a Signature Project Grant is not automatic.

The *Signature Project Grant* is our instrument to spur radical innovation in university practices with the aim of enhancing our impact. Signature Projects are challenge-based, interdisciplinary in nature (preferably cross-community) and directed at fostering the radical innovation that PtS seeks to achieve. PtS encourages out-of-the-box thinking as to the aims and format of, and collaboration within, such projects. We particularly invite projects and collaborations that are new and/or difficult to get funded via other channels, for instance because of their exploratory or experimental nature.

We aim to stimulate an open and inclusive design process in which initial ideas may develop in new directions with the input and integration of various types of expertise. At PtS, we believe that such an open process is key to transformative learning. At the end of 2023 the procedure will be evaluated and announcements will be made regarding the continuation of these instruments.

Aims and criteria

The PtS mission is to propel radical innovation in our university practices by creating vibrant communities and fostering new 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. This mission is carried out, in part, by funding initiatives that adhere to the principles and contribute to realizing the aims defined in the 2022-2025 PtS strategy:

- Be the driver of change fostering sustainable thinking and practice, via the creation of spaces for innovation, interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary interaction, 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; thus



- Fulfilling the critical role that belongs to universities, not only thinking along but also critiquing developments where appropriate and coming up with new imaginative ideas about what sustainable futures may look like and how we might get there.
- Finding new ways to connect our proven excellence in research and education to processes of societal learning, creating more direct links with policy makers and stakeholders and society at large (transdisciplinarity).

To guide both the design of funding schemes as well as the final allocation of funds by the PtS Programme Board, the following principles are followed:

- Applications should contribute to accelerating change through initiatives that are not yet happening elsewhere in UU and/or are not easily funded via other channels;
- Applications will be challenge-based: initiatives are formulated and designed in such a way that they resonate within multiple PtS Communities and inspire collaboration across these Communities;
- Applications will stimulate the integration of different types of expertise through transdisciplinary collaborations;
- Applications should aim to create time and space for (early-career) scholars to make an active contribution;
- Applicants 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;
- 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.

The application procedure

The application procedure takes place in stages, described step by step below. Firstly, a pitch of project ideas inviting others to join will take place during one of the annual Kickstarter events. This event precedes the opportunity to apply for an Incubator Grant (up to 8k for a period of maximum 12 months). The Incubator Grant may, among other things, be used to further develop and grow the project idea and its team and to work towards its implementation. Groups who have obtained an Incubator Grant may together prepare applications for the second-stage and more substantial Signature Project Grant (50-150k for a period of maximum 24 months).

Step 1: Pitching your idea

During the annual Kickstarter events, teams (representing at least three disciplines) can pitch their project ideas. These pitching sessions are followed by 'market-place' rounds during which all participants of the event can stroll along the pitched ideas and informally discuss them with the pitching teams. Our Kickstarter events are intended to provide an impetus to facilitate and expand interdisciplinary exchange and collaboration. The meeting format is intended to enthuse and actively invite others to engage with the project idea and enrich it by adding their expertise and perspectives. This also implies that presenters of project ideas should in principle be open and willing to develop the idea in new directions. At PtS, we believe that such an open process is key to transformative learning.

Conditions to participate:

- (1) Interdisciplinary team: UU scholars from at least three disciplines, with possible (future) collaboration with external scholars and/or stakeholders. Pitching teams are required to invest time in jointly preparing a pitch (see appendix I for the format).
- (2) Challenge-based topic: project ideas are expected to resonate within multiple PtS Communities.
- (3) Open and inclusive attitude: commitment to an open and inclusive design and assessment procedure in which initial ideas may change with the input and integration of various types of expertise.

Step 2: Applying for an Incubator Grant

Following these Kickstarter events, interdisciplinary teams of UU scholars have two weeks to fill out a light format to apply for an Incubator Grant of up to 8,000 euro (see appendix II). Teams are encouraged to connect with and/or seek input from multiple PtS communities. Incubator Grants can be used to fund meetings, workshops, hire external expertise or support such as coaches, facilitators, moderators, conceptual design thinkers, experts, etc.

The application should focus on the process of collaboration and on the potential contribution of the project idea to the PtS mission and objectives. With the Incubator Grants, PtS invests in community building and invites Incubator teams to take the time to get to know each other, reflect on the process of collaboration, build trust and understanding for each other's perspectives, and further develop the consortium and project idea. The outcome of this process can be, but is not limited to, the application for a Signature Project Grant. During the incubating period, other opportunities might come up and be explored.

The selection of Incubator proposals takes place by the PtS Programme Board, based on the following criteria:

- Interdisciplinarity: Composition of the team and outlook for further inter-/transdisciplinary collaboration
- Openness and curiosity: The extent to which a proposal is formulated in an open manner
- Originality in terms of the proposed topic and/or collaboration



- Challenge-based: The extent to which a proposal involves and/or allows for collaboration across PtS Communities
- Potential contribution to PtS mission and aims
- The extent to which we see a development between the pitch delivered during the Kickstarter event and the Incubator application.

The Pathways to Sustainability Programme Board meets to discuss the proposals within two weeks after submission. The decision of the board is communicated to the applicant teams as soon as possible thereafter.

Step 3: The Incubator phase

Once the Incubator Grants have been awarded, we will schedule a meeting between the Incubator team and a delegation of Programme Board members to further discuss the planned activities. In this initiation phase, we seek to stay in touch with Incubator teams to provide feedback and guidance where necessary, answer any questions, explore further possibilities for collaboration, and help teams determine the appropriate next steps. Additionally, we aim to follow the incubation process closely for learning purposes, so as to, in the future, develop tools to facilitate cross-Incubator learning and to improve our procedures.

Incubator Grants need to be spent within 12 months after allocation.

Step 4: Applying for a Signature Project Grant

The continuation of an Incubator Grant with a Signature Project Grant is not automatic. Should the Incubator phase prove fruitful, (part of) the team may decide to apply for a Signature Project Grant (50-150k for a period of maximum 24 months), either after six or after 12 months. The deadlines for submission are listed in the timeline below. Please note that your choice for either of these deadlines does not affect your chances of getting your proposal granted. The application format can be found in Appendix III.

Conditions to apply for a Signature Project Grant:

- Interdisciplinary team (active involvement by scholars from at least three faculties and multiple PtS Communities)
- Adherence to the overarching principles and aims of PtS funding (see above)
- Applications, and most notably the submitted costs, are coordinated within the departments of the applicants and signed off by the applicants' managers/superiors.
- The budget must be verified by your department controller and applications should state the name of the controller that has performed this check.

Assessment of proposals:

Proposals for Signature Project Grants are assessed based on the extent to which proposals adhere to the overarching principles and aims of PtS funding (see above). All applicant teams of Signature Projects are involved



in the assessment procedure. They are asked to provide each other with feedback and input in the week after submission. The ultimate decision is taken by the Programme Board, taking into account these peer assessments.

Eligible costs:

Signature Project Grants may be used, for example, to fund part-time PtS fellowships (e.g. 0.2 fte) - in consultation with the faculties and departments concerned -, research or education assistance; project management support; hiring external expertise or support; education, including involving students, student teams or internships; outreach and communication; organizing events or workshops; fund small exhibitions or performances, open access publications; field trips and travel/ accommodation costs; buying or hiring materials or services to carry out the project.

Communication:

With *Signature Projects* Pathways to Sustainability aims to select original ideas that really showcase how the programme is working towards realizing its mission and ambitions. These projects, therefore, take centre stage in our communication strategy. We already want to start thinking about the potential impact and communication activities during the application and selection phase. PtS communication advisors will reach out to Incubator teams to assist and advise them while preparing Signature Project Grant applications.

Step 5: PtS Signature Projects

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. 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.

Project administration and accountability

Incubator Grant:

- At the start of the Incubation phase, the first tranche of funding (4,000 euro) will be made available to Incubator teams.
- Within Geosciences: please provide a WBS number to Herma van Harten (h.j.vanharten@uu.nl) in consultation with your department manager and within three weeks' time after allocation. The funds will subsequently be transferred to the specified WBS.
- For other faculties: please ask the (project) controller of your department or faculty to send an Intercompany invoice to Herma van Harten (h.j.vanharten@uu.nl) for 4,000 euro. The WBS that can be debited is WA.145140.3.001. You can then arrange with your controller where and how to book your expenses.
- Within six months after allocation, Incubator teams are asked to provide the Programme Board with a concise update, giving a global overview of (i) activities carried out and planned, (ii) specified budget (incurred and expected costs), (iii) any obstacles or concerns, or other comments, questions to the board.



- Based on this update and revised budget, the required remaining funds are transferred, up to a maximum total grant of 8,000 euro. For other faculties than Geosciences: please ask the (project) controller of your department or faculty to send an Intercompany invoice to Herma van Harten (h.j.vanharten@uu.nl) for the remaining funds (i.e. revised budget – 4,000 euro transferred at the start of the Incubation phase).

Signature Project Grant:

- At the start of the project, the first tranche of funding will be made available to Signature Project teams (50% of the awarded amount).
- Within Geosciences: please provide a WBS number to Herma van Harten (h.j.vanharten@uu.nl), in consultation with your department manager and within three weeks' time after allocation. The funds will subsequently be transferred to the specified WBS.
- For other faculties: please ask the (project) controller of your department or faculty to send an Intercompany invoice to Herma van Harten (h.j.vanharten@uu.nl) for 50% of the awarded amount. The WBS that can be debited is WA.145140.3.002. You can then arrange with your controller where and how to book your expenses.
- Within eight months after allocation, Signature Project teams are asked to provide the Programme Board with a concise update, giving a global overview of (i) activities carried out and planned, (ii) specified budget (incurred and expected costs), (iii) any obstacles or concerns, or other comments, questions to the board.
- Based on this update and revised budget, the second tranche of funding is transferred (up to a maximum of the total awarded amount). For other faculties than Geosciences: please ask the (project) controller of your department or faculty to send an Intercompany invoice to Herma van Harten (h.j.vanharten@uu.nl) for the remaining funds.
- 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.

Timeline and submission deadlines 2022-25

Call for ideas 2022: announced in June 2022

Deadline pitches: 29 August 2022

Kickstarter launch event: 8 September 2022 [17 ideas pitched]

Deadline Incubator application: 25 September 2022 [16 applications received]

Decision Programme Board: 10 October 2022 [10 Incubator Grants awarded]

Deadlines Signature Project applications: 3 April 2023, or 3 October 2023

Peer assessments: 5-11 April and 5-11 October

Call for ideas 2023: announced in December 2022

Deadline pitches: 21 February 2023

Decision Programme Board & instructions to pitching teams: 1 week before Kickstarter event

Kickstarter event 2023: 16 March 2023

Deadline Incubator application: 3 April 2023

Decision Programme Board: ~18 April 2023



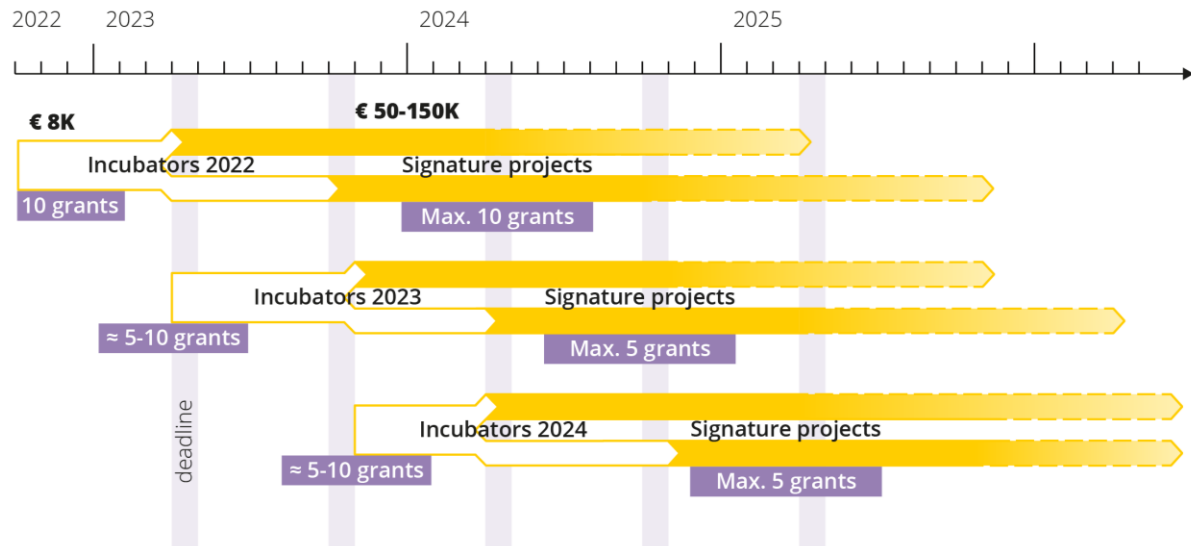
Deadlines Signature Project applications: 3 October 2023, or April 2024 (TBD)
Peer assessments: 5-11 October 2023 and April 2024 (week following submission)

Fall 2023: evaluation of procedure
December 2023: announcement regarding follow-up 2025 onwards

Call for ideas 2024: announced in November 2023

Deadline pitches: 3 weeks before Kickstarter (~Feb 2024)
Decision Programme Board & instructions to pitching teams: 1 week before Kickstarter event
Kickstarter event 2024: March/ April 2024
Deadline Incubator application: 2 weeks after Kickstarter
Decision Programme Board: 2 weeks after deadline for submission
Deadline applications for Signature Projects: October 2024, April 2025
Peer assessments: October 2024 and April 2025 (week following submission)

Figure: Timeline Incubator & Signature Project Grants





Appendix I. Application form – Pitch your project idea

Working title

Pitches are meant to enthuse others to engage with the project idea and to enrich it by adding their expertise and perspectives.

Summary of the challenge to address

Challenge-based topic: project ideas are expected to resonate within multiple PtS. Please formulate ideas in an open manner, not as project proposals. Pitches are intended to invite others to join.

Interdisciplinary team and other disciplines, PtS Communities to include

Please specify pitching teams involving UU scholars from at least three disciplines. Please also indicate possible (future) partners and/or avenues for further collaboration with external scholars and/or stakeholders.

Submission via pathwaystosustainability@uu.nl
(1 A4)



Appendix II. Application form – Incubator Grant

Working title:

Summary of the challenge to address:

Challenge-based topic: project ideas are expected to resonate within multiple PtS Communities and, to a certain extent, be coordinated with those Communities. Please formulate ideas in an open manner, not as project proposals.

Approach & activities

Please focus on the process of collaboration. With the Incubator Grants, PtS invests in community building, inviting Incubator teams to take the time to get to know each other, reflect on the process of collaboration, build trust and understanding for each other's perspectives, and further develop the consortium and project idea. The outcome of this process can be, but is not limited to, the application for a Signature Project Grant. During the incubating period, other opportunities might come up and be explored.

Potential contribution to PtS mission and ambitions:

The 2022-2025 PtS strategy sets out the mission and ambitions. The aims for PtS funding are highlighted in the procedure (pages 1-2).

Interdisciplinary team and the role, contribution of the various team members:

Core team:

Team members:



Other disciplines, stakeholders to include during the Incubator period, and their (envisioned) role, contribution:

Budget outline (up to a maximum of 8,000 euro):

Incubator Grants can be used to fund meetings, workshops, hire external expertise or support such as coaches, facilitators, moderators, conceptual design thinkers, experts, etc.

Description	Euro

**Please submit via pathwaystosustainability@uu.nl
(Max. 2 A4)**