

AIB TRINITY CLIMATE HUB

Seed Funding Schemes 2026–2027: Frequently Asked Questions

Answers to common questions about eligibility, funding, key dates, the application, assessment and outcomes.

1. Eligibility

Q1.1 Who is eligible to apply?

All Trinity College Dublin staff (academic, administrative and professional) and postgraduate research students.

Q1.2 Must an academic staff member be involved?

Yes. Each application must be linked to an academic staff member, who need not be the lead applicant.

Q1.3 What are the requirements for the linked academic staff member?

A contract of more than two years, covering the full duration of the project.

Q1.4 Must the project be a research project?

No. However, all proposals, including equipment, events, training, communications and the application, scale-up or commercialisation of research results, must support climate and nature research at Trinity or its impact. Engagement activities without a research link, and equipment for teaching, are not eligible.

Q1.5 What if a proposal does not fit standard funding categories?

Such proposals are considered on a case-by-case basis.

2. Funding

Q2.1 What funding tiers are available?

- **Sprout:** up to €10,000
- **Seedling:** over €10,000 and up to €50,000
- **Sapling:** over €50,000 and up to €150,000

Q2.2 What is the total budget?

€100,000 (Sprout), €200,000 (Seedling) and €300,000 (Sapling) for 2026–2027. Amounts may differ in subsequent years.

Q2.3 What costs are eligible?

There are no fixed cost categories. All costs must be necessary, proportionate, good value for money and justified in relation to climate and nature research.

Q2.4 May salaries be requested?

Yes, including project time and casual hours, where the work supports climate and nature research.

Q2.5 Does the Hub co-fund applications to other schemes?

On a case-by-case basis. Requests should be sent to amanda.mathieson@tcd.ie

3. Key Dates

Q3.1 When may applications be submitted?

Sprout and Seedling applications are accepted on a rolling basis. Sapling applications are accepted through one annual call (October to December).

Q3.2 What are the large tier deadlines?

- **2 November 2026:** Expression of Interest (EOI)
- **9 November 2026:** invitation to full application
- **26 November 2026:** full application
- **11 December 2026:** final decisions

Q3.3 When will applicants be notified?

Sprout: within 5–10 working days. Seedling: within 15–20 working days, where possible.

Q3.4 What happens when a funding cap is reached?

The call is paused until the next period. Unassessed applications roll over automatically. Fundable applications not funded because of the cap also roll over with their score or may be revised and resubmitted.

4. Application

Q4.1 Where are the application templates available?

On the Climate Hub website from 12 noon, 9 October 2026.

Q4.2 Does the application form differ by tier?

No. Only the word limits differ approximately 2,200 (Sprout), 4,000 (Seedling) and 5,500 (Sapling) words.

Q4.3 Must all sections be completed?

No. Sections that are not relevant should be marked N/A. Reviewers assess each point only where it is relevant, so non-research proposals are not disadvantaged.

Q4.4 Is ethical approval required at the time of application?

No. Ethical considerations should be described in the application. Any required approval should normally be in place before the grant agreement is signed.

Q4.5 How may a submission be made?

By email to soroudim@tcd.ie. An acknowledgement will be sent.

5. Assessment

Q5.1 What are the assessment criteria?

All tiers are assessed against the same five criteria (100 marks):

Criterion	Marks
Interdisciplinarity, Team & Capacity Building	15
Strategic Fit with the AIB Trinity Climate Hub	20
Quality, Innovation & Feasibility	30
Potential Impact & Dissemination	25
Future Sustainability & Value for Money	10

Q5.2 What are the Hub's strategic priorities?

- **We are a college-wide resource:** supporting research or engagement work related to climate and nature that will drive meaningful impact, regardless of school or discipline.
- **We encourage cross-college collaboration:** prioritising inter- and transdisciplinary research that provides holistic solutions to complex climate and nature challenges.
- **We provide agile, specialised support:** identifying gaps in existing research infrastructure and providing support through flexible funding and specialised development.
- **We engage the public proactively:** building relationships with targeted public stakeholders to facilitate engaged climate and nature research and uptake of solutions.

Proposals need not address all four priorities, only those that are relevant.

Q5.3 Who reviews applications?

Sprout: the Climate Hub team. Seedling: reviewers from within Trinity and beyond the Hub. Sapling: external reviewers.

Q5.4 How are scores determined?

Each application is scored independently by two reviewers. Scores within 10 marks are averaged; larger differences are reconciled or referred to a third reviewer.

Q5.5 What score is required for funding?

A score of 75 or above is fundable. Applications scoring 60–74 are offered one-to-one support.

Q5.6 Is previous Hub funding considered?

It does not affect scores. It may be considered only where scores are tied.

Q5.7 Are applications confidential?

Yes. Applications are seen only by the Hub team and review panel, all of whom declare any conflict of interest.

6. Lottery

Q6.1 When is a lottery used?

Only where fundable applications at the funding line are within 3 marks of each other and the budget cannot fund all of them.

Q6.2 How is the lottery conducted?

By the Hub with an external witness, using application numbers only and a documented random method.

Q6.3 Will applicants be informed if a lottery determined the outcome?

Yes. Not being drawn does not reflect on the quality of the proposal.

7. Outcomes

Q7.1 Will unsuccessful applicants receive feedback?

Yes. Reviewer feedback is provided to all unsuccessful applicants.

Q7.2 May an application be resubmitted?

Yes, without limit. Resubmissions are assessed as new applications.

Q7.3 What is the maximum project duration?

12 months, or up to two years for large awards.

Q7.4 When may funds be spent?

Once the grant agreement is signed, normally within about one week or so of the award.

Q7.5 What reporting is required?

Successful applicants may be subject to reporting requirements tailored to their specific proposal. These will be communicated when funding is offered and may be negotiated with the Hub. Requirements may include Final report, Progress updates (where relevant), Acknowledgement of funding, Communications and dissemination, and other proposal-specific requirements

8. Contacts

Q8.1 Who should be contacted with queries?

- **Amanda Mathieson**, Hub Manager: amanda.mathieson@tcd.ie
- **Mona Soroudi**, Research Programme Officer: soroudim@tcd.ie

Early contact is encouraged but not required.