



# New South Wales Decarbonisation Innovation Hub Electrification & Energy Systems Network (EESN) Seed Grant Funding Scheme Guidelines

Window 1 – 2024/25

## 1. Purpose

The **Electrification & Energy Systems Network (EESN) Seed Grant Scheme (Seed Grant Scheme)** has been established to provide an impetus for technological innovation at network universities and the wider eco-system, in the pursuit of developing solutions for widespread deployment of the energy economy in the State of NSW. The seed funding is primarily aimed at technology innovation (Technology Readiness Levels (TRL) 3–5), development, and impact projects at universities and start-ups that typically face challenges in securing funding within competitive schemes run by NSW and Federal Government.

## 2. Definitions

The following definitions are used within this document and within the information provided as part of the grant application:

**Application Form** – means the document template supplied to Project Leads to complete and submit to EESN, containing their Bid.

**Application Package** – means the bundle of documents and artefacts supplied by EESN in association with this Seed Grant Funding Scheme.

**Application Window Close** – means the notified date after which Bids will no longer be considered by EESN.

**Assessment Criteria** – means the parameters used to score the Bid to assess its value and decarbonisation impact. This will be used to adjudicate and select the successful Bids for Seed Grant Fund Award.

**Bid** – means a proposal submitted in response to the Seed Grant Call.

**Community Organisation** – means a body representing residents of a geographic area or special interests, recognised by a NSW Government Agency.

**EESN** – The Electrification & Energy Systems Network, a unit of the NSW Decarbonisation Innovation Hub dedicated to electrification and the decarbonisation of energy systems in New South Wales and beyond.

**EESN Partner** – means an organisation as listed under “EESN Partners” in the Appendix 1 of this document.

**Eligibility Criteria** – means the minimum requirements of the Bid for it to be considered under the Seed Grant Scheme.

**Executive Officer** – means a representative from an organisation who is authorised by that organisation to sign-off contracts of a value no less than the total cost of the Project submitted.

**Government Agency** – means a branch, department or business unit of a State or Territory or Commonwealth government of Australia.

**Headquartered** – means the State or Territory the Project Participant has registered under their main business location via the [Australian Business Register](#).

**Hub Partner** – means an organisation listed under “Hub Partners” in the Appendix 1 of this document.

**Industry Body** – means an organisation that is a commercial entity or which represents a group of commercial entities.

**NSW** – means the State of New South Wales, Australia.

**NSW Decarbonisation Innovation Hub** – means the coalition of Hub Partners, supported by the Environmental Trust of NSW, administered by University of New South Wales and University of Western Sydney.

**Project** – means the activities, deliverables, resources and governance that make up the proposal contained in the Bid.

**Project Lead** – means the party that is responsible for coordinating and submitting a Bid to this Seed Fund Grant Scheme and, if successful, responsible for the subsequent Project and allocation of Seed Grant Funding.

**Project Participant** – means a party represented in the Bid and intending to contribute to the Project and its implementation.

**Seed Grant Fund Award** – means the selection by EESN of a Bid to receive Seed Grant Funds.

**Seed Grant Call** – means public notice made by EESN requesting submissions for the Seed Grant Scheme.

**Seed Grant Funds** – means the monies provided to the Project Lead, awarded by EESN as a result of a successful Bid.

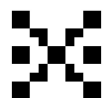
**Seed Grant Scheme** – means the program administered by EESN to dispense the Seed Grant Funds and oversee the outcomes of the Projects awarded with Seed Grant Funds.

**Technology Readiness Level (TRL)** – means the position on the globally accepted benchmarking tool for tracking progress and supporting development of a specific technology through the early stages of the technology development chain. The Seed Fund Grant Scheme recognises the [TRL definitions as stated by ARENA](#).

**Translate** – means to increase Technology Readiness Level or Commercial Readiness Index of a technology or innovation or product.

### 3. About the Grant

The **Seed Grant Funds** are administered on behalf of the NSW Environmental Trust and Hub Partners, and are intended to promote the development of innovative, collaborative research projects that represent a translation of energy-related technologies. The total amount of funds available for the **Seed Grant Scheme** is \$400,000. Seed Grants of between \$50,000 and



\$200,000 (GST exclusive) are available per project. Projects will run for a maximum period of 18 months (subject to Eligibility Criteria and Application Timeline below) following execution of contracts.

The quantum of funding requested is expected to be proportionate to the achievable abatement and co-benefits, with medium-term benefits weighted highest.

**The Seed Grant Scheme** is intended to:

- Translate electrification and energy systems technologies and innovations, or
- support activities positively impacting impediments within the dimensions of regulations, policy, community transition, or economy, leading to positive decarbonisation outcomes.

For a technology that attracts a Technology Readiness Level (TRL), it needs to sit within the band TRL 3 through to and including TRL 5 – bridging the gap in funding for research and commercial potential.

The **Seed Grant Scheme** will encourage Projects with Industry Bodies through a defined pathway to genuine impact. It is observed at higher TRLs, the technology becomes viable and can be spun off as a commercial venture.

#### 4. Bid Application Timeline:

<b>2024 Applications open</b>	29 July 2024
Applications Close for First Assessment Round	2 September 11:59 AEST
2024 Application Window Close	10 November 2024, or when funds for award are exhausted, whichever is the sooner
Eligibility Review Commences	3 September 2024 and every 3 months where there is more than one submission to assess.
Application Assessment Commences	September 2024
Grants Applicants Selected	Rolling from October 2024
Contracting & Funding	Rolling from November 2024
Outcome Evaluation	From July 2025 (or later, depending on timing of project completions)
Projects must commence by	28 February 2025
Projects must end by	30 June 2026

#### 5. Eligibility Criteria for Project Participants

Seed Grant Bids **must** meet each of the following Eligibility Criteria:

- a. Each Bid must have a Project Lead.
- b. Each Project Lead must:
  - i. be an EESN Partner or Hub Partner.



- ii. hold and comply with all necessary authorisations that are material to the conduct of the business of the Project Participant(s).
  - iii. agree to administer the Seed Grant, lead the collaboration on the Project and be accountable for deliverables stated as part of the Project. This must be stated in the letter of support from the Project Lead signed by the relevant Executive Officer.
- c. The **Project** must be a collaboration between the Project Lead and at least one Industry Body or Community Organisation or Government Agency.

Note: The Bid may include other Australian and international universities, a maximum of 10% of seed funds in aggregate can be allocated to Project Participants that are Headquartered outside of NSW, subject to Section 7.

Note: Project Leads awarded with a Seed Funding Grant that are Hub Partners and not EESN Partners will be encouraged to join the EES Network.

## 6. Eligibility Criteria for Bid

### a. **Project Bids** must:

- i. involve participation by at least one Industry Body, Community Organisation or Government Agency having an operational footprint in NSW;
- ii. be submitted using the prescribed application form, must include required attachments as specified on the form, adhere to formatting and length parameters specified on the application form, and be submitted by the advertised deadline, if applicable;
- iii. demonstrate direct or indirect benefit to New South Wales in terms of economic, community or capacity building;
- iv. involve either:
  - the development of an electrification or energy systems technology project currently classified between TRL 3 and 5 inclusive; or
  - a means to improve, accelerate or de-risk electrification or decarbonisation of energy systems, across one of the dimensions of regulations, policy, community transition, technical or economy; or
  - a Project aligned with the Eligible Themes as described in the EES Network Scope (Appendix 2) may be considered if a strong case for significant long-term potential decarbonisation and co-benefits can be made and a strong link to existing capabilities within the EESN Partners is demonstrated.
- v. contain a forecast budget; using the Budget Template provided in the Application Package; breaking down the costs to which the Seed Grant Funds will be allocated
- vi. contain a letter of support from all Project Participants, each signed by an Executive Officer representing the Project Participant



- vii. contain a letter of support from all parties co-contributing funding to the Bid, each signed by an Executive Officer representing the Project Participant, specifying the commitment to the funding co-contribution.

## 7. Eligibility Criteria for Seed Grant Fund Allocation

The Bids will be assessed against the following criteria by EESN and its delegates:

- a. The Seed Grant Funds **can** be used for the following:
  - i. Direct salary costs for Hub Partner staff specifically employed for the proposed Project (including part-time work on the proposed project by staff also involved in other tasks).
  - ii. Salary on-costs for Hub- Partner staff, consistent with Hub Partner policies up to a maximum of 26.5% of the salary item.
  - iii. For Project Participants that are Headquartered in NSW, equipment, software, materials and consumables specifically related to the Project.
  - iv. For Project Participants that are not Headquartered in NSW, equipment, software, materials and consumables specifically related to the Project up to a maximum of 10% of Seed Fund Grant awarded.
  - v. Domestic travel costs of Project Participants that are specifically related to the Project. This is subject to all stipulations of Section 7.
  - vi. Stipends for higher degree research students and undergraduate thesis students working on the Project, substantively supervised by Hub Partners. This is subject to all stipulations of Section 7.
  - vii. Direct administrative costs up to a maximum of 10% of Seed Fund Grant awarded.
- b. The Grant Funds **cannot** be used for the following:
  - i. Salary costs of staff allocated to activities not associated with the proposed Project.
  - ii. Salary costs of staff of Project Participants that are not Headquartered in NSW.
  - iii. Indirect and other costs incurred that are not related strictly, explicitly and demonstrably to the delivery of the Project.
  - iv. Overseas travel expenses.

**Bids will be rejected by EESN which do not meet the Eligibility Criteria. Bids submitted after the Application Window Close will not be considered.**

## 8. Assessment Criteria for Seed Grant Fund Award

Bids will be assessed against the following Assessment Criteria:

Assessment Criteria Theme	Maximum Scoring Contribution	Criteria
Impact to Net-Zero Targets	30%	The Bid reflects the mission of the NSW Decarbonisation Innovation Hub in supporting the NSW Government's goal of



		reaching net zero emissions by 2050 and is able to demonstrate direct or indirect impact to the target.
<b>Project Quality and Innovation</b>	<b>15%</b>	The Bid is unique and novel and is not a duplication of an existing grant, bid or project. The Bid involves the development or implementation of an innovative approach or solution.
<b>Collaboration</b>	<b>15%</b>	The Bid demonstrates genuine collaboration between Hub Partners and Industry Bodies, Community Organisations or Government Agencies. Favourable consideration will be given to the involvement of two or more EESN Partners.
<b>Delivery</b>	<b>10%</b>	The Bid is definitive and realistic in its goals, demonstrating a pathway to realising milestones, taking account of identified risks.
<b>Additional Benefits</b>	<b>30%</b>	<p>The Bid contains one or more of the following attributes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i) Align with one or more of the Priority Focus Areas (see Appendix 2) (up to 20% of Scoring Contribution).</li> <li>ii) Matched Funding: The Bid contains co-contribution of funding from sources other than the Seed Grant Funds. Assessment Criteria per below (up to 20% of Scoring Contribution).</li> <li>iii) Translation Opportunity: the Bid demonstrates a pathway to commercialisation of the technology (up to 10% of Scoring Contribution).</li> </ul> <p>The Additional Benefits are additive up to a maximum of 30% Scoring Contribution.</p>
<b>Maximum Score</b>	<b>100%</b>	

The scoring against the criteria will be upto the maximum of 100%. The Additional Benefits contribution is capped at 30%.

## 9. Requirements of the Assessment Criteria

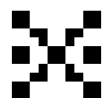
- a. Matched funding bids will be scored more favourably with matching 1:1 cash co-investment from a Project Participant or Project Participants. The following will be considered within the Assessment Criteria:



- i. Matching cash contributions cannot be from a NSW Government Agency, with the exception of NSW Department of Primary Industries.
  - ii. Matching cash contributions shall be at least equal to the requested Seed Grant Fund amount.
  - iii. Commitment to co-contribute cash by the Project Participant shall be confirmed in writing by an Executive Officer of the Collaborating Party at the time of the application.
  - iv. Matching cash contributions are transferrable to the Lead Partner Organisation of the Project.
  - v. Matching cash contributions are sourced from Industry Body(ies), Government Agencies outside of NSW, NSW Department of Primary Industry, or Community Organisations only. Note: University funds will not be considered eligible for consideration as matching cash contributions.
  - vi. Matching cash contributions are new funding, specific to the Project in the Bid (not re-allocation from existing grant funding).
- b. In-kind contribution will not be considered as part of the Assessment Criteria.
  - c. Note: Matched funding is not subject to the conditions of use that the Seed Grant Funding is subject to.

## 10. Assessment and selection process

- a. The assessment of the Eligibility Criteria for the Bids will be undertaken by members of EESN, making recommendations to the Director of Electrification & Energy Systems Network.
- b. The adjudication of the Assessment Criteria against the Bids will be undertaken by an Industry Advisory Board (Board).
- c. The members of the Board will be eminent members of industry, valued for their expertise and understanding of electrification and energy systems associated technological innovations, and the pathways to commercialisation that they present.
- d. The Director of EESN in consultation with the EESN Steering Committee, will appoint the Chair and members of the Board. Should further expertise be required in the assessment of applications for funding in the Seed Grant program(s), this additional expertise will be similarly appointed, on a case-by-case basis.
- e. The Board is empowered by the EESN Steering Committee to review and assess Bids and recommend funding in accordance with the Assessment Criteria. The Board can make recommendations on the level of funding offered for each project. The Director of EESN, after consultation with the EESN Steering Committee, will consider the Board's recommendations, and makes the final decisions on whether to fund projects and by how much.





- f. The Board, at the discretion of the Board Chair, may seek clarification from any Project Participant in relation to their application, including seeking further information on the Eligibility and Assessment Criteria, prior to a recommendation for funding being made.
- g. All Project Leads will be informed of the outcome promptly upon the final funding decision being made as per the stipulated Application Timeline. Unsuccessful Project Leads will receive a summary statement outlining the reason(s) their Bid was not chosen for funding, and, if appropriate, any suggestions for improvement for possible resubmission in a future Funding Call.
- h. Successful Seed Grant Project Participants will be published on the decarhub.au website

## **11. Board Reporting and Accountability**

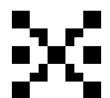
- a. The members of the Board will report to the Director of EESN for Seed Grant related activities.
- b. The NSW Decarbonisation Innovation Hub will act as the Seed Grant Secretariat in providing all the administrative support for the Seed Grant processes and the Committee.
- c. Members of the Board must declare conflicts of interest matters with regard to individual applications for funding under the Grant. Management of conflict of interest declarations will be undertaken by the Board Chair, and the Seed Grant Secretariat.

## **12. Information on Intellectual Property:**

- a. The NSW Decarbonisation Innovation Hub and EESN will not hold any rights to Intellectual Property (IP), royalties or financial returns resulting from the project. IP relating to the project will be owned, as negotiated, by the Project Lead and Project Participants named on the project.
- b. The IP relating to each project will be negotiated on a project-by-project basis at the time of contract negotiation. The NSW Decarbonisation Innovation Hub and EESN encourages discussion of IP expectations between partners as soon as practicable in the project planning process.
- c. Access to background IP necessary to implement project IP will be negotiated between the owner of the project IP and the owner of the background IP on a project-by-project basis. Generally, it is agreed that owners of background IP will provide access to such background IP, subject only to the terms of access negotiated in good faith.

## **13. Project Contracting and Funding:**

- a. Commencement and Funding:
  - i. Funding will be paid to the Project Lead: 80% up front and 20% at the completion of project (defined as acceptance by EESN of final report and



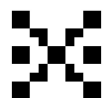


presentation of a knowledge sharing presentation by the Project Lead), subject to the execution of the contract between parties.

- ii. The Project Lead is responsible for distributing funds to Project Participants.
- iii. Projects are expected to commence within 30 days of contract execution (by both parties) and conclude within 18 months of execution, subject to other Eligibility Criteria constraints.

b. Contracts and Reporting:

1. The Project Lead will be the responsible signatory on contracts.
2. Contracts will include agreed quarterly milestones, monitored by the EESN through quarterly reporting.
3. Contracts will specify obligations that relate primarily to the recipient's accountability for the grant, including using the grant for activities occurring in NSW, agreed deliverables by the project team, the return of unspent grant funds and reporting on the use of the grant for the duration of the term. The EESN makes no binding funding or support commitment to a Project Participant unless and until both parties sign the contract, including the Project Lead identified in the Bid.
4. A presentation of progress to EESN members will be required at the mid-point of the project.
5. A final report will be required no later than 2 months after project completion ie no later than 20 months from contract execution. A final presentation on the project will be required no later than 3 months after project completion.



## Summary of milestones, deliverables and payments

Milestone or deliverable	Timing (latest)	Payment
Execution of agreement	Start	80%
Interim report and presentation	No later than Start plus 6 months	
Project completion	No later than Start plus 18 months	
Final report	No later than Start plus 20 months	
Final presentation	No later than Start plus 21 months	
Financial report and acquittal	No later than Start plus 21 months	20% on acceptance by EESN of Final Report, delivery of the Final Presentation.

## 14. Acknowledgement

The EESN will remain actively engaged in the Project, supporting its development, where appropriate, identifying additional funding and partners, and providing advice.

The NSW Decarbonisation Innovation Hub and EESN reserves the right to publicise funded projects for marketing and communication purposes. All proprietary information will remain confidential.

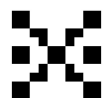
The NSW Decarbonisation Innovation Hub and EESN must be acknowledged as a funder in any publications or reports resulting from the project.

## 15. Privacy and Confidentiality

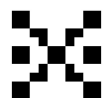
- a. We treat Project Participants' personal information according to the Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998 (NSW).
- b. This includes letting Project Participants know:
  - iv. what personal information we collect
  - v. why we collect your personal information
  - vi. who we give your personal information to
- c. A Project Participant's personal information can only be disclosed to someone for the primary purpose for which it was collected unless an exemption applies.

## 16. Contact details

Any enquiry about the assessment process or the outcome of an application contact us through: [eesn@decarbhub.au](mailto:eesn@decarbhub.au)



# Appendices



## Appendix 1 – Partner Organisations of the NSW Decarbonisation Innovation Hub and its Electrification and Energy Systems Network

Current June 2024

### EESN Partners

- NSW Department of Primary Industries (DPI)
- University of New South Wales (UNSW)
- University of Newcastle NSW (UoN)
- University of Technology Sydney (UTS)
- University of Wollongong (UoW)

### Hub Partners

- Climate-KIC Australia
- Charles Sturt University (CSU)
- NSW Department of Primary Industries (DPI)
- NSW Department of Planning and Environment (DPE)
- Southern Cross University (SCU)
- The University of Newcastle (UoN)
- University of New England (UNE)
- University of New South Wales (UNSW)
- The University of Sydney (USyd)
- University of Technology Sydney (UTS)
- University of Wollongong (UoW)
- Western Sydney University (WSU)



17. EESN Priority Focus Areas

NSW DECARBONISATION INNOVATION STUDY THEME	INITIATIVE NAME	FOCUS AREAS
Future Energy Systems	Consumer Energy Resources (CER) / Distributed Energy Resources (DER)	Flexible demand, demand management, technology adoption market development and social equity
Future Energy Systems	Vehicle to Grid (V2G) / Vehicle to X (V2X)	Grid energy management, energy exchange, flexible demand, market development and circularity.
New generation renewable and storage	Long duration / fast responding energy storage	Mapping technologies to applications, issue mapping, solution optimization and circularity
Future Energy Systems	Clean Energy Power Conversion (includes invertors, convertors, transformers, electrical motor drives, EV battery chargers, grid connection or grid interactive devices, controllers and power optimizers)	Grid stability, energy storage and management particularly batteries, resilience, industrial decarbonisation, local standards development, development of local manufacturing capability and incubation, and concepts that can address the “Future Energy Systems” themes above.
Consumer Sentiment	Renewable Energy Zone Social License Stewardship	Benefits flow, objective credible voices, insights to decisioning, community participation



## 18. Eligible Themes

Eligible Themes as referenced by and defined within the Office of Chief Scientist and Engineer's NSW Decarbonisation Innovation Study 2023:

- Energy: Future Energy Systems (including smart grids)
- Energy: New generation renewable and storage (solar PV, battery, wind and offshore wind)
- Transport: Services and e-mobility
- Transport: Aviation, shipping, long haul transport
- Transport: Non-road vehicle and machinery
- Industry: Electrification, alternative heating/cooling
- Land and Agriculture: Decarbonisation of AgTech

