



HARVARD

Vice Provost for Climate & Sustainability

HARVARD UNIVERSITY
OFFICE OF THE VICE PROVOST FOR CLIMATE & SUSTAINABILITY
 CLIMATE RESEARCH CLUSTERS
 Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

What is the consultative process for developing a research cluster proposal?

Please refer to the table of events listed below.

Date/Time	Event	Location	RSVP Required
April 8, 4 - 5 PM	Q&A session #1 (in person)	Harvard Center for the Environment, 26 Oxford Street, Room 440	RSVP
April 13, 3 – 4 PM	Q&A session #2 (virtual)	Zoom meeting Password: 578583	RSVP
April 14 – May 19	Consultations by appointment	Request by emailing climate@harvard.edu	N/A
April 25, 3 – 5 PM	Networking Reception for proposers and prospective collaborators.	TBD	RSVP by April 18
May 5, 12:30 – 1:30 PM	Q&A session #3 (in-person)	Smith Campus Center, 8 th Floor, Room 869	RSVP
May 12, 9 – 10 AM	Q&A session #4 (virtual)	Zoom meeting Password: 646732	RSVP
May 20	ROUND 1 DEADLINE		N/A
June 9, 1-5 PM	One-slide proposal presentations and networking reception.	TBD	RSVP by June 1
June 13 – July 8	Consultations with prospective PIs by invitation.	TBD	N/A
July 30	ROUND 2 DEADLINE		N/A
August 12 (tentative)	Invitations for full proposals		N/A
September 15	ROUND 3 DEADLINE		N/A

What are we looking for in a Climate Research Cluster?

Many major climate challenges embrace both the unknown – topics on which academic research is needed – and realities driven by our complex social, legal, and political decision-making process. These two factors make implementing climate solutions difficult. A Climate Research Cluster should tackle a climate challenge that calls on both traditional academic research and the development of actionable proposals derived from that research and related knowledge. The scope of a cluster should be broad enough to have the potential for real-world impact yet narrow enough that the cluster can make significant progress. A research cluster should undertake new and consequential research, not just support an existing research program, although projects that build on existing research and otherwise meet the applicable criteria will also be eligible for funding.

Climate problems typically touch many parts of our economy, political systems, and culture. Many climate problems also raise significant issues of equity, both in the present and in the future from predicted climate change and the energy transition. Thus, research addressing such problems inevitably cuts across academic disciplines. The Climate Research Clusters program aims to develop and to support a community of scholars at Harvard committed to ambitious and meaningful real-world progress on important climate problems. Funded proposals will provide for ways to cultivate such a community through public presentations, holding workshops, and other ways to connect with colleagues across disciplines and schools.

Is there a preference for a specific disciplinary orientation?

No.

How important is interdisciplinary and cross-School collaboration?

An accepted and launched Climate Research Cluster must have co-PIs representing at least two Schools, and ideally the cluster ought to span multiple disciplines. Preliminary concept proposals do not need to have co-PIs from multiple Schools, but should explain what other School(s) and other disciplinary area(s) could be part of the cluster.

Who is eligible to submit a first-stage concept proposal?

All Harvard University ladder faculty are eligible.

How can Principal Investigators (PIs) who are not ladder faculty participate in the program?

PIs who are not ladder faculty may serve as co-PIs with a ladder faculty member in a Climate Research Cluster.

What is the three-step review process?

The first step is an opportunity to pitch a concept for a research cluster. The Office of the Vice Provost for Climate & Sustainability (OVPCS) will engage with first-round proposers to explore collaboration across other proposed clusters, and, if necessary, to modify the scope of the proposal. The purpose of

this step is to work with interested parties to develop an effective team and an impactful proposed project. The process will yield a revised proposal (step 2). From these revised proposals, a small number of clusters will be invited to prepare a detailed proposal (step 3).

May I submit more than one concept proposal in the first round?

Yes.

Will research space be provided?

Members of each cluster will commit to co-locate one or two days per week to facilitate the fruitful exchange of ideas and to hasten the synthesis of research findings. The OVPCS will provide this meeting space at no cost, or the space can be provided by the cluster PIs. Limited space might be provided for postdocs or graduate students; specifics should be discussed with the OVPCS. OVPCS will work with the clusters to identify conference and convening space.

What is the format of the first-stage concept proposal?

Please see the Application Requirements section above.

Could research clusters leverage this funding to raise matching funds?

Yes, the OVPCS encourages using research cluster funding to raise additional resources.

Could research cluster funding be used to seed collaborations with other universities?

Yes, so long as the core criteria of the climate research cluster program are met.

Could research cluster funding be used to purchase instruments or data?

Yes.

Is this the only time that the OVPCS will offer funding for Climate Research Clusters?

No, the OVPCS expects to call for proposals annually.

Where should I address any additional questions?

Please address any other questions to climate@harvard.edu.