



## A Call for Expressions of Interest

# Innovating for a Sustainable Future

The 2015 United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are a set of 17 global goals making up the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development: an agenda for action to achieve human well-being, equitable prosperity and a healthy planet. The SDGs span many dimensions, including economics, society, culture, environment, and technology.

The Oxford Martin School invites Expressions of Interest for interdisciplinary research projects on the interconnections between the Sustainable Development Goals. We are interested in projects that explore synergies or trade-offs between two or more goals, and in doing so help deliver better outcomes. We are looking to receive proposals that investigate or identify leverage points whereby progress on multiple goals can be achieved simultaneously, or which show how actions to achieve one goal may hamper progress on another and how this might be avoided. Successful proposals must demonstrate clearly how their outcomes could make a meaningful and timely contribution to the delivery of the goals.

The Oxford Martin School aims to support new ways of conceptualising, analysing and addressing the problems of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century in an interdisciplinary manner. The School judges research projects by their scale, excellence, impact and additionality. In the context of this call, **scale** means addressing an important aspect of achieving multiple SDGs. The projects need to demonstrate outstanding research **excellence** and that, if successful, they will have significant **impact** on the delivery of SDGs. The School looks to demonstrate **additionality**, bringing together innovative research groups and supporting projects that could not be funded from existing sources.

### Background

The Oxford Martin School strives to be a world-leading centre of pioneering research that addresses global challenges. We aim to increase understanding of the most pressing challenges of our time, and we support interdisciplinary teams to address issues that cannot be understood by work in any one academic field alone. We invest in research that conventional funding channels cannot, or will not yet, take on but which could have a major impact on the wellbeing of this and future generations.

The Oxford Martin School will make a new round of grants available in 2019. We are now seeking short Expressions of Interest from eligible academics as the first stage of our selection process. Shortlisted candidates will be requested to submit a full proposal.

The School will give preference to proposals that are able to demonstrate a commitment and ability to secure matching and other funds. The School will actively work with successful applicants to achieve this.

We anticipate that projects will be of two to five years in duration and that the Oxford Martin School will contribute up to £1 million per project depending on its length.

## **A systemic approach to Sustainable Development**

James Martin intended that the Oxford Martin School support research into the great challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century with an explicit focus on solutions. [The Sustainable Development Goals](#) comprise a 21<sup>st</sup> century charter aimed to stimulate action for:

- People: ending poverty and hunger, in all forms, and ensuring that human beings can fulfil their potential in dignity and equality and in a healthy environment.
- Planet: protecting the planet from degradation, including through sustainable consumption and production, sustainably managing its natural resources and taking urgent action on climate change, so that it can support the needs of the present and future generations.
- Prosperity: ensuring that all human beings can enjoy prosperous and fulfilling lives and that economic, social, and technological progress occurs in harmony with nature.
- Peace: fostering peaceful, just and inclusive societies which are free from fear and violence.

This charter for human well-being, economic prosperity and a healthy environment encapsulates much of James Martin's vision.

The 17 Sustainable Development Goals and the 169 targets were explicitly designed to promote integrated thinking. The charter stresses the importance of identifying opportunities for synergies amongst the goals and the importance of identifying trade-offs between achieving different targets and trying to identify solutions. It expressly counsels against "silo-thinking", or concentrating on single goals to the exclusion of others.

**The School is looking for research proposals that ask insightful questions about the interactions between different goals, and that propose novel research to accelerate and amplify the achievement of the SDGs.**

### **How will we decide?**

First and foremost, we will judge your expression of interest against the School's research funding criteria:

- Scale and significance: does the project address an important aspect of achieving multiple SDGs and will the results of the project, if successful, significantly affect interventions at scale?
- Academic excellence: does the project involve research of the highest international standard?
- Impact: will this research make a major positive difference in the world beyond academia by delivering progress towards the SDGs, and how will this be achieved?
- Additionality: what is novel about the proposed research; why should this research be funded by the Oxford Martin School, rather than by another funder?

Your Expression of Interest should demonstrate in summary form that you:

- Are addressing a key research question that will provide novel and significant insights into the relationship between two or more Sustainable Development Goals.
- Have the academic expertise and leadership in the relevant area and are eligible to apply.
- Have a clear pathway of impact so that the results of the project, if successful, will be taken up by policy-makers and practitioners seeking to achieve the SDGs.
- Wish to be associated with the Oxford Martin School and are able to commit to being part of its community of interdisciplinary and impact-focussed programmes.

## **Eligibility**

Applicants must be in a permanent or long-term (five-years plus) research post in the University. Please be aware of your Department or Faculty's policies; if you are not eligible to apply for research funding as a Principal Investigator in your own name, you are not eligible to submit an Expression of Interest.

At this stage we are interested in the subject to be researched, approach to be taken, and your suitability to lead this. If we decide to request a full proposal, we will then need more details of the research, the timetable and the team.

## **More than a funder**

Please note that an Oxford Martin research programme is not solely a funding arrangement but will entail a partnership between the School and you. We view the selection of the Programme's Director(s) as vital to the success of the programmes; successful applicants will become key members of the Oxford Martin School. The School anticipates providing further opportunities for support, including with fundraising and outreach, but also expects active engagement of the Directors in the School's community.

## **Matched funding**

Where other potential matching funds are available or highly likely, this should be made clear and will be considered positively by the committee. Where other funding has not been identified the School will work with you to identify and secure further resources, and your active engagement in this fundraising stage is therefore essential.

## **What we offer**

The Oxford Martin School is looking for exciting and novel research programmes. As a Director of a programme within the Oxford Martin School, you will become an important part of the School's community. The School expects to provide funding for at least 20% of your time as a Principal Investigator – we do this because we want this programme to benefit from your full involvement and for the School to benefit from your membership. We are aware that leading academics have a number of ongoing demands and commitments, and so remain flexible and open to discussing this requirement, though it is important that the commitment to the research and to the School is understood.

## **The process**

At this stage, we request that you provide a short (**maximum of four pages**) description of the proposed research and a short CV for each proposed Principal Investigator. The vast majority of projects funded by the School have multiple Principal Investigators from different Departments and we are particularly interested to receive expressions of interest from consortia that span different divisions.

We are not prescriptive about the structure of the Expression of Interest, but a typical one might comprise:

- A non-technical summary (300 words);
- The context and statement of the problem, and how the solution involves consideration of multiple SDGs;
- A description of the proposed research and anticipated outputs (~2 pages);
- An outline of how the work, if it is successful, will affect intervention, such as policy;
- Detail of matching funds (if available) and plans for funding continuing work; and

- A statement of your future anticipated interactions with the School.

The proposals will be considered by the Management Committee of the Oxford Martin School. All information will be treated in strict confidence.

**Deadline for Expressions of Interest: 5pm on Monday 5<sup>th</sup> November 2018**

Requests for full proposals will be issued in mid-December. The deadline for full proposals will be in early February, and it is hoped that final decisions will be made in March. It is envisaged that the first research teams would start work in Michaelmas term 2019.

Please submit Expressions of Interest to Claire Jordan, [claire.jordan@oxfordmartin.ox.ac.uk](mailto:claire.jordan@oxfordmartin.ox.ac.uk)

If you have queries, please contact Dr Ella Adlen, [ella.adlen@oxfordmartin.ox.ac.uk](mailto:ella.adlen@oxfordmartin.ox.ac.uk), ext 87367

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