King's Climate & Sustainability
King's Food

Sustainability Projects Fund
Application guidance and selection criteria 2025-2026

1. Background

The King's College London Sustainability Projects Fund (SPF) is a prize fund to support staff and/or student-led projects to enhance sustainability on campus. It is funded by a 20p 'levy' placed on single-use disposable coffee cups sold at King's College London catering outlets. The initiative was introduced in response to staff and students' concerns regarding the volume of single use coffee cups being disposed of. The Fund is run jointly by the King's Food and King's Climate & Sustainability teams.

King's Climate & Sustainability team is committed to working with each project to ensure that the work carried out is documented and where practical can be continued into future years.

2. Aims and guidelines

The SPF aims to contribute to the holistic advancement of sustainability at King's, covering environmental, social and economic sustainability and the interconnections among the UN Sustainable Development Goals. The project may target positive impact on campus, in residences or in our local communities.

The SPF also aims to enhance the King's community's engagement with sustainability issues, and so is open to all King's and KCLSU students and staff. It actively seeks to support those who would not normally be involved in sustainability as well as those who do not have the resources to undertake such projects.

Students and staff are invited to submit an application in one or more of the following categories, but are not restricted to only these categories:

- Sustainable food

- Waste reduction and promotion of a circular economy

- Carbon and energy reduction

- Biodiversity

- Water use reduction

- Sustainability education and awareness

- Sustainable and ethical procurement

- Climate justice

- Sustainable travel (commuting, business, end-of-term)

- Community engagement

Note: King's Climate & Sustainability are running sustainable travel and waste reduction campaigns throughout 2024-26, so we particularly encourage applications in these areas.

Applicants are encouraged to submit an application that covers more than one aspect of sustainability. For example, using sustainable technology to reduce waste or expanding King's existing biodiversity to provide a sustainable/ wellbeing service to society.

You can find a non-exhaustive list of project ideas in 8. Example project ideas.

3. Application process

Follow these steps to access up to £5,000 in funding for your sustainability project.

1. **Timelines**

    o Applications for the Sustainability Projects Fund has two rounds in 2025-26:

    1. Round 1 deadline will be 24 November 2025 at 17:00.

    2. Round 2 deadline will be 23 March 2026 at 17:00.

    After each round a judging panel will review the applications and you may be invited to pitch your project to the panel.

2. **Eligibility**

    o Check that you are eligible to apply.

    o Any current King's students & staff, and KCLSU staff can apply for funding. Alumni can apply if their projects can improve sustainability on King's campuses and/or local communities.

3. **Review funding restrictions**

    o Review the [Funding exclusions](#) to make sure the expenses you need qualify. Reach out to SPF@kcl.ac.uk if you have any doubts.

4. **Stakeholder consultation**

    o Consult with the community. Reach out to relevant stakeholders (internal and/or external) to find out whether others are already doing something similar, to explore opportunities for collaborations and to assess feasibility of the project.

    o If you struggle to find the contact details of relevant King's departments, please email SPF@kcl.ac.uk for support.

5. **Review evaluation criteria**

    o Read the [Evaluation criteria and tips](#) to make sure you can justify your project in all areas.

6. **Complete the application**

    o Fill out the application form (this can be found on [MS Forms](#))

    o Please explain your project ideas clearly and concisely.

    o Carefully review the examples of successful past submissions (can be found [on the website on the website)](#).

7. **Submit**

    o Complete the application form on [MS Forms](#) . If you have any issues accessing the form please email SPF@kcl.ac.uk.

8. **Judging panel**

The judging panel, composed of King's and KCLSU staff and student representatives, will evaluate the written applications according to the [Evaluation criteria and tips](#). The shortlisted applicants will then be invited to pitch their idea to the judging panel for a final decision. Initial feedback and judges' questions will be provided to the

shortlisted applicants prior to the presentations. Applicants are not allowed to submit two or more applications for the same project.

The judging panel will be chaired by Sustainability Engagement Manager, in the King's Climate & Sustainability team, and may further comprise of the following representatives:

- Staff members in the King's Food team

  Staff members in Estates and Facilities Sustainability team

- KCLSU Representative

- Student Representative

- Academics in fields related to sustainability

- Additional stakeholders may be consulted to assess feasibility of the project

The Chair of the judging panel will announce the final decision of the judges and notify all awardees via email.

4. Funding exclusions

The following will **not** typically be funded by the SPF:

1. Research- or education-focused projects by academics. Please explore the [KCS seed fund](#) and the [King's Academy Education for Sustainability fund](#) in the first instance.

   - The SPF may still be used by professional services staff and students for these purposes.

   - The SPF may still be used with an explanation why the other funds are not applicable or were unsuccessful.

   - The funds are mutually compatible, so you can apply for more than one at a time with different foci.

2. The SPF does not compensate project leaders for their time

   - The SPF can compensate professional services support with receipts.

   - The SPF can compensate guest/external speakers at a maximum of £250 per application.

   - The SPF can fund prize money at a maximum of £250 per application (e.g. surveys and prize drawers, vouchers).

3. Travel, accommodation and conference registration fees, unless an essential part of a larger project.

   - Funding for travel and accommodation for guest/external speakers will be considered.

   - Air travel will not be funded.

4. Catering will be funded at a maximum of £20/person per meal and only for events, not team meetings.

   - Events where food education is the main focus can be exempt from this exclusion.

5. Alcoholic beverages or liquor licenses.

6. One-off events will be funded only if there is evidence of long-term impact or if they kick-start a long-term initiative.

7. Projects that solely benefit an individual and not the community, group or project.

8. The SPF generally funds projects and events, but operational expenses that support multiple projects/events to happen will also be considered.

9. The SPF cannot fund projects retrospectively. Project leaders should submit their application well in advance to ensure it can be reviewed before the project start date.

10. Projects requesting ongoing operating expenses.

11. Funding for unsustainable materials (particularly if the items can be purchased second hand)

5. Monitoring and reporting

1. The project start date will be agreed upon by the awardees and the King's Climate & Sustainability team once the application is approved. Funding must be spent within 12 months of the agreed start date. If you need an extension, please contact SPF@kcl.ac.uk.

2. Once the project has been accepted, SPF recipients and King's Climate & Sustainability team will sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for completion of each project.

3. The recipients will deliver on the approved projects with guidance and advice from King's Climate & Sustainability team where sought. This includes a workshop and networking session for successful applicants.

4. Recipients are required to provide termly progress reports to SPF@kcl.ac.uk, including but not limited to updates on project milestones, challenges faced, and outcomes achieved. A template will be shared for this.

5. Funding recipients are required to share photographs and/or videos of their project activities as part of the funding report.

6. A final report detailing the overall success and impact of the project and a summary overview (e.g. graphic, slide, video) are due no later than 2 months after the completion date. Projects that include events must include the estimated number of attendees. A template will be shared for this.

7. Project teams may also be asked to present their work to various audiences.

6. Reimbursement

1. SPF panel meets to review projects and agree whether to fund projects and applicable amounts.

2. SPF applicants must not spend their own funds in advance. The SPF team will advise applicants on the method of claiming expenses.

3. The reimbursement process will depend on the awardee and the type of project. Make sure you keep all receipts.

4. To simplify the administrative process, only the primary and secondary applicants will be directly reimbursed. Please make sure that your primary and secondary applicants are the ones that will be paying for the expenses at first.

5. Projects have two months after their project's stated completion date to file receipts. The SPF team holds the right to reject reimbursement if it is too far past the project's stated completion. However, discretion is applied with regards to project extensions and special circumstances as they arise.

6. The SPF team will arrange for payment of funds due to the applicants if the reimbursement form is filled properly and all expenditures are accompanied by receipts. Applicants must allow plenty of time for funds to be transferred through the system.

7. Any requests for additional payments or changes to a project—including repurposing existing budget for other items—will be subject to review by the SPF panel. Any remaining funds not spent for the approved project and/or costs spent deemed unapproved and/or not related to the approved project will be returned to the SPF for reallocation to future projects.

7. Evaluation criteria and tips

This section sets out guidelines by which to evaluate applications to the Sustainability Projects Fund. The purpose of this is to guide discussion, and bring clarity, transparency, and a degree of consistency to the judging panel's decision-making. However, it is also intended to allow a high degree of flexibility in the panel's approach.

Overall project requirements

1. Must take place on a King's campus or have significant benefits for the King's community (this includes our campus boroughs of Westminster, Southwark and Lambeth).
2. Must improve the King's community's engagement with sustainability issues (directly or indirectly).
3. Must contribute to environmental and/or social sustainability (ideally both) in line with King's Climate & Sustainability Action Plan and the UN Sustainable Development Goals. Examples include but are not limited to:
   - Carbon and energy reduction
   - Sustainable and ethical procurement
   - Sustainable travel
   -
   - Sustainable food
   - Waste reduction and promotion of a circular economy
   - Biodiversity
   - Water use reduction
   - Sustainability education and awareness
   - Community engagement & climate justice

Evaluation criteria

The evaluation criteria are scored on a scale of 1 to 5, with a total possible score of 50 points.

Environmental and social impact
1. What is the tangible environmental and social impact?
2. What is the potential for scaling up the project and amplifying the impact? (e.g. starting with one solar panel, then scaling up to 20.)

Engagement*
3. What is the breadth of impact/collaboration? (Number of people involved/impacted)*
4. What is the potential for scaling up engagement with the project? (e.g. target 50 students this year, but 500 next year)
5. What is the depth of impact on individuals affected?*

Viability
6. Alignment with King's institutional and sustainability priorities.
7. Value for money.
8. Logistical feasibility: integration with existing campus infrastructure, etc.
9. Well planned: - Budget includes start-up and operating costs.   - Reasonable timescale.   - Handover plans if needed.   - List of students involved (where applicable) and a clear outline of each team member's responsibilities.   - Relevant stakeholders have been consulted.
10. Evaluation: Are appropriate methods for evaluation identified? These should be outlined before the project begins in the application.

Additional points will be given based on Widening Participation and EDI criteria (only applicable for student applications).

* Breadth vs. depth of engagement: A broad but shallow project reaches many people but doesn't affect them much - e.g. a poster campaign. A narrow but deep project has a strong impact on a small group of people, e.g. an environmental volunteering programme.

Tips for making a strong application

Examples of previously successful applications can be found [on the website](#).

- Demonstrate how your project supports [King's Climate & Sustainability Action Plan](#) and is in line with [King's Vision 2029 and Strategy 2026](#) and the [United Nations (UN) Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)](#).

- Check that your project idea does not already exist. If it does, explain how it expands/enhances an existing project or collaborate with the existing project team.

- Connect with the relevant staff members ahead of your application to assess feasibility. For example, if you are proposing a food-related project, you should reach out to the King's Food team beforehand. Include their views in your application.

- Contact groups that may be impacted by the project and invite them to provide feedback and express any concerns.

- Where relevant, include in your application King's current sustainability data and make clear where cost and/or resource efficiencies can be made. Look at King's Environmental Sustainability Reports.

- Demonstrate how you would ensure reach and impacts will continue beyond the duration of the project.

Reasons why past submissions were not granted funding include:

- They did not demonstrate sufficient impact for the required resources.

- Risk of generating more waste rather than saving waste (focus should always be waste reduction).

- They were not feasible/practical or did not take into consideration ongoing projects. For example, it may not be possible to bring in a new supplier. Therefore, check with the relevant team before applying.

- Not enough consideration of potential negative side-effects (e.g. on social sustainability).

- Project should be funded by departmental budgets.

8. Example project ideas

This non-exhaustive list is based on past applications, projects elsewhere and potential project ideas.

For more inspiration, check out [King's Climate & Sustainability Action Plan](#).

Project	Description	Funding needs
Behaviour change campaign (e.g. on energy, food, waste, travel)	This could consist of: 1) communication; 2) distribution of educational material; and 3) monitoring. Please note that King's Climate & Sustainability will be running a waste & circular economy campaign and travel campaign in 2024-25 that you could consider tying into.	Communication and educational materials, workshops, events
Repair and upcycling projects	This could include mending workshops, repair cafes and more.	Workshops, materials
Slow travel fund	Set up a slow travel fund in your department/group to support low-carbon travel. This could function as a pilot for wider roll-out across the university.	Fund (contribution per journey), research assistant
Tackling food/energy/general waste in residences	This could include competitions, educational components, end-of-term donations/swap shops, etc.	Competition prize, educational materials, materials/charity to support donations, representative in each hall of residence
Indoor greening/increasing biodiversity	Roll out indoor plants across campuses/in your office Please connect with the relevant teams/campus managers to assess feasibility.	Plants, gardening materials, seeds, compost, planters, pots
Zero waste shop/pop-up on campus	Encourage the use of packaging-free shopping	Venue, materials, purchases, stock

Interactive travel map	Develop an interactive travel map that shows low-carbon routes to frequent destinations from King's	Research assistant, tool, IT support
Carbon calculator	Develop an integrated tool on King's pages/ systems to calculate carbon footprints, for example for business travel	Research assistant, tool, IT support
Arts exhibition on climate and sustainability	Develop an exhibition on campus focused around climate and sustainability topics	Artist collab, production, printing/ materials, venue