



Data for Change Training Fund Open Call Guidelines

Failure Modes of Engineering

Failure Mode 3: Connected Engineering

feme.ac.uk/failure-modes/connected-engineering

Key Open Call details:

- Online application form: <https://forms.office.com/e/EbJm8rbSe6>
- Deadline: 13th February 2026 at 5pm GMT
- Further information: feme.ac.uk/feme-seed-fund/
- Contact information: feme@ed.ac.uk

Data for Change Training Fund Guidelines

1. Purpose

Data for Change Training Fund supports projects that address critical training gaps limiting progress toward climate resilience, environmental justice, and inclusive engineering practice. This fund specifically backs training projects that:

- Strengthen underrepresented communities' ability to use low-tech climate data tools or data storytelling techniques.
- Build skills in low-resource and Global South contexts where access to training is often limited.
- Produce open, reusable training materials for widespread impact across the FeME network.

This call invites people from any background - not just engineers - to strengthen inclusive, accessible, community-rooted engineering practices. "Engineering" is defined broadly as the collaborative, values-driven work of helping communities use technical knowledge and tools, especially in low-resource or Global South contexts. Applicants may be data or software specialists, technologists, community practitioners, educators, or anyone building capacity around data and climate resilience; what matters is that their training supports more equitable and socially connected ways of creating and sharing engineering-related knowledge.

About Failure Mode 3

A workstream within the wider FeME network, *Failure Mode 3: Connected Engineering* focuses on improving how engineering knowledge, tools, and practices are shared across communities and regions, especially where access to training and data is limited. FM3 aims to close skills gaps that hinder meaningful participation in climate resilience and environmental justice, particularly in low-resource and Global South contexts. By supporting training in low-tech climate data tools, data storytelling, and accessible digital methods, FM3 strengthens the capacity of underrepresented groups to collect, interpret, and communicate climate information, ensuring engineering is socially connected, equitable, and responsive to diverse community needs.

2. Funding Provision

- Maximum award: up to £5,000 for training, plus £2,000 per applicant for travel (if required).
- Expected number of awards (with potential of multiple people per application): 4.
- Project duration: *TBC* — applicants will propose a start and end date.
- Earliest possible start date / latest end date: 1st April to 16th August
- Eligible and ineligible costs follow FeME-wide rules (see Section 9).
- Payments will be made in lump sum at the start of the project. All awardees will be required to provide receipts with the final report.

3. Eligibility

- People from any background - not just engineers - are invited to apply. Applicants may be data or software specialists, technologists, community practitioners, educators, or anyone building capacity around data and climate resilience.
- Open to early career researchers, practitioners, academia, industry, charities, and community partners (≤ 10 years post-first role/PhD). Collaborative teams encouraged.
- We are particularly interested in supporting participants from the Global South. Applications outside of the Global South or low-resource contexts must demonstrate ethical collaboration, including local relevance, fair recognition, and avoidance of extractive data or training practices.
- Applicants do not need to be based at a university. Independent practitioners, community organisers, NGOs, social enterprises, and grassroots groups are eligible to apply, either as lead applicants or as equal partners.
- Priority will be given to applications where underrepresented communities are involved as leaders, co-designers, trainers, or decision-makers, rather than solely as participants or beneficiaries.

4. Scope of Priority Topics

Applications must address one of the two seed fund training priorities:

1. ***Low-tech climate data tools for the Global South.*** Communities with minimal internet access or limited computing resources often face the greatest climate risks. Training should focus on offline-first, solar-powered, or mobile-based tools (e.g., KoboToolbox, OpenStreetMap, Raspberry Pi).
2. ***Data storytelling for climate advocacy in the Global South.*** Communities lack training to transform data into compelling stories for advocacy and policy

influence. Training should include data visualisation, narrative methods, participatory mapping, and accessible storytelling tools (e.g., Datawrapper, Canva).

Projects must be shaped by the expertise and needs of underrepresented groups and grounded in equity, accessibility, and ethical collaboration.

5. Expected outputs

Data for Change Training Fund projects are expected to:

1. Deliver training in-person where appropriate, otherwise online.
2. Promote the training opportunity, with FeME supporting dissemination through the FeME website and LinkedIn.
3. Develop training materials, including slides, activities, exercises, or recordings.
4. Ensure all materials are open source and shared on the FeME website.
5. Provide user guides or video walk-throughs so the training can be taken asynchronously.
6. Deliver a final short report summarising participation, impacts, and lessons learned.
7. Priority will be given to projects that build equitable partnerships with underrepresented groups and communities.

6. Training for Awardees

The award includes bespoke training, and participation is mandatory for the lead applicant or lead trainer. This will be delivered online by Anelda Van der Walt over at least 8 hours between 31st March and the end of April, 2026. The training is designed to enhance project delivery, inclusive practice, and technical confidence.

All applicants will also be invited to participate in wider FeME network activities.

About Trainer

Anelda van der Walt is an eResearch consultant whose work focuses on capacity development, mentoring, and support for digital and computational research practices. With a background in bioinformatics, she has worked in interdisciplinary and cross-sectoral contexts for nearly two decades, supporting researchers and educators in the use and development of research software and digital methods. She founded Talarify, a South African training and consulting company, in 2015, through which she became a

Carpentries Instructor and Instructor Trainer and supported the introduction of Carpentries workshops in Africa. She has also been involved in the design and delivery of national capacity development initiatives, including the ESCALATOR programme at the South African Centre for Digital Language Resources, and remains actively engaged in open science and open education initiatives locally and internationally.

7. Key Dates

- Call opens: 13 January 2026
- Webinar for applicants: TBC
- Submission deadline: 13 February 2026 at 5pm GMT
- Award announcement: TBC
- Training dates: April 2026 (specific dates to be confirmed)
- Earliest possible start date / latest end date: 1 April to 16 August 2026
- Final report deadline: End of October 2026

8. What We Are Looking For

We encourage proposals that:

- Clearly define the training gap and topic of interest and its importance for climate resilience and inclusive engineering.
- Demonstrate co-design with the audiences who will benefit.
- Show thoughtful planning and realistic delivery.
- Include equitable partnerships including community partners or Global South collaborators.
- Create training materials with strong potential for reuse and adaptation.
- Align with FeME's principles, EDI commitments, and values (see Section 14).

9. Eligible & Ineligible Costs

We will fund:

- Staff time (including lead, co-lead, specialists, administrative support) based on local rates.
- Networking and partnership-building linked to training provision
- Workshops, conferences, and training events linked to training provision
- Travel and subsistence.

- Equipment/software necessary for training or online delivery (not standard laptops).
- Accessibility support, including caring responsibilities via FeME's Caring Pot.

We will not fund:

- Studentship fees or stipends.
- General facilities costs.
- Conference attendance with no clear link to training delivery or impact.
- Alcohol or luxury hospitality.

All awardees will be required to provide an indicative detailed costing with the proposal and receipts with the final report.

10. Application Requirements

Applications will open on the 13 January 2026. Applications will be submitted via an online form. If applicants struggle with submitting online, please contact feme@ed.ac.uk.

Applicants will be asked to provide roughly 200 words per question which will include:

- Project summary
- Aims and training gap and alignment with FeME
- Intended audience, numbers, backgrounds
- Demand and advertising plan
- Risks and mitigation, including how success will be measured
- Team skills and experience
- Budget and justification (total full economic costs, up to maximum allowed)
- Internal approval and contact for finance admin
- Checkbox confirming participation in FeME training
- Checkbox agreeing to share open training materials
- Optional: accessibility, participation, or EDI considerations (FeME Caring Pot available)

Application Criteria and Assessment

Applications will undergo:

- Eligibility and scope check by the programme team.
- Internal FeME panel review with conflict-of-interest management and EDI-aware assessment.

Assessment Criteria (aligned across FeME):

- Relevance (20%) - addresses an important training gap, Global South relevance.
- Inclusivity (20%) - equitable approach and lived experience where appropriate.
- Impact and sharing (20%) - reusability and wider benefits.
- Innovation and learning (20%) - creativity, novelty.
- Feasibility (10%) - realistic plan, timeline, budget.
- Ethics, EDI & safeguarding (10%) - responsible, proportionate planning.
- Additional lens: lived-experience, leadership and co-creation (unweighted but important).

Application support and accessibility

- FeME provides a small fund to support caring responsibilities for participants of seed funding activities. This may include covering childcare, eldercare, travel support, or other costs that enable fuller participation in FeME activities. Requests are confidential and considered on a case-by-case basis.

11. Reporting & Knowledge Sharing

Awardees must:

- Submit a final report.
- Participate in at least one FeME sharing event.
- Contribute training materials and other outputs to the FeME website and, where relevant, the FeME Tapestry.

12. Safeguarding, safety, and equitable participation

- Seed Fund recipients are responsible for the safety and wellbeing of all participants during travel and fieldwork, including following local laws, obtaining insurance, and completing risk assessments where needed. All engagement must follow recognised safeguarding and ethical standards, with consent and responsible data handling.
- FeME expects equitable collaboration - partners and communities are co-creators, not subjects - with fair recognition, shared benefits, and transparent decision-making. Projects and teams should ensure accessibility and inclusion for diverse needs and, in Global South or low-resource settings, prioritise local leadership and avoid extractive practices.

13. Conditions of Award

- Adherence to FeME Code of Conduct and ethical standards.
- Acknowledgement of FeME & EPSRC funding in all outputs.
- Open and inclusive data and authorship practices.
- Compliance with UK Data Protection Act (2018) & GDPR.
- Submission of final report and participation in evaluation.
- Non-transferability of funds without prior written approval.
- Engagement and attendance with the training provided.

14. About FeME Seed Funding

Failure Modes of Engineering (FeME) is a network for future inclusivity, sustainability and global impact. Our mission is to create an inclusive, resilient, and adaptable engineering to better confront climate change and biodiversity loss, recognising their disproportionate impact on women, children, and underrepresented communities. We champion and support their roles as agents of change across Scotland and around the world through education, partnership, research, and advocacy.

FeME is a collaboration between the University of Edinburgh, the University of Glasgow, and Heriot-Watt University, funded by the UK Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council (EPSRC) with £2.2 million through the Tomorrow's Engineering Research Challenges Network Plus Programme (2025-2028).

FeME Guiding Principles

Our guiding principles reflect the shared commitments of the FeME Network:

1. We prioritise wellbeing, accessibility, and mutual respect in all our work.
2. We remove barriers to participation and elevate underrepresented voices.
3. We act with integrity, fairness, and shared responsibility.
4. We make socially and environmentally responsible choices for lasting impact.
5. We stay curious and adaptive, learning from experience, feedback, and failure.

FeME Code of Conduct

The FeME Code of Conduct outlines the shared standards and behaviours that guide how we work together with respect, inclusion, and care. It ensures all members, partners, and participants help create safe, equitable, and supportive spaces built on integrity, openness, and trust.

1. All members, staff, and participants are expected to act with respect, integrity, and inclusivity. Our community expectations are:
2. Treat everyone with respect, kindness, and professionalism.
3. Value and actively listen to diverse perspectives, particularly from underrepresented groups.
4. Work collaboratively and share credit for successes.
5. Be transparent in your actions and decisions and take accountability for mistakes.
6. Communicate openly and constructively, avoiding exclusionary or harmful behaviour.
7. Create accessible and inclusive spaces, both online and in-person.
8. Use resources responsibly, with care for environmental and social impact.

FeME Commitments

1. **Ethical Data Practice** - All projects funded through FeME must uphold the highest standards of data ethics and integrity. This includes compliance with GDPR and the UK Data Protection Act (2018), responsible data collection and storage, and anonymisation of any sensitive equality, diversity, or inclusion (EDI) information.
2. **Open Knowledge and Attribution** - FeME is committed to open, transparent, and collaborative research. Wherever possible, project outputs, data, and materials should be made openly available through FeME's digital platforms, with clear recognition and credit for all contributors and partners.
3. **Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI)** - EDI principles are integral to every FeME funding call. We ensure diverse and trained assessment panels, accessible application processes, and inclusive authorship practices. Teams are encouraged to embed EDI in their own project design and delivery, with funding available through FeME's Caring Pot to support caring responsibilities or participatio needs.
4. **Wellbeing and Care** - FeME recognises that equitable collaboration depends on care and flexibility. Funded activities should prioritise participant wellbeing and accessibility, including consideration of time zones, caring responsibilities, and access needs. Hybrid and flexible participation should be standard practice wherever feasible.



5. **Climate and Sustainability** - All FeME-funded work contributes to addressing the interconnected crises of climate change and biodiversity loss. Projects should model sustainable practices in their operations and travel, and consider the long-term environmental and social impacts of their methods and outcomes.

These guidelines sit alongside FeME's Terms of Reference and apply to all funded activities under the FeME network.