



# **Represent and Innovate Seed Fund**

## **Open Call Guidelines**

### **Failure Modes of Engineering**

#### **Failure Mode 4: Inclusive Engineering**

<https://feme.ac.uk/failure-modes/inclusive-engineering/>

#### **Key Open Call details:**

- Online application form: <https://forms.office.com/e/pexHX0Fx7n>
- Deadline: 11<sup>th</sup> March at 5pm GMT
- Information on FeMe: [feme.ac.uk](https://feme.ac.uk)
- Contact information: [feme@ed.ac.uk](mailto:feme@ed.ac.uk)

## **Represent and Innovate Seed Fund Guidelines**

### **1. Purpose**

The Failure Mode 4 (FM4) Represent and Innovate Seed Fund supports early-career researchers and practitioners to develop inclusive, responsible, and community-centred engineering innovations that address inequalities in climate action, sustainability, and just transitions.

FM4 focuses on representation and innovation supporting work that:

- Centres early-career researchers and practitioners, and enable co-creation of innovative solutions and ideas for underrepresented groups
- Generates prototypes, pilots, methods, case studies and/or influence that improve inclusion and participation in engineering.
- Designs of best practices in firms, industry, communities, third sector and other stakeholders for inclusion of underrepresented voices
- Surfaces and supports innovative, equitable approaches to engineering research and innovation led by people from underrepresented groups.
- Disrupts and creates change in design process to increase inclusivity of (engineering) solutions

Success looks like: diverse participation, high-quality outputs, evidence of adoption or influence, follow-on funding, community impact, and an increased sense of belonging and empowerment for awardees.

### **2. Funding Provision**

- Award size: £2,000–£5,000
- Each project runs for 6 months from award date. The latest start is April 2026.
- 70% of the award will be paid up front with the remaining 30% contingent on mid-term progress report. All awardees will be required to provide an indicative detailed costing with the proposal and receipts with the mid-term and final report.



### 3. Eligibility

- Open to early career researchers, practitioners, academia, industry, charities, and community partners ( $\leq 10$  years post-first role/PhD) encouraged.
- Open to applicants across sectors including academia, industry, third sector; collaborative teams encouraged.
- Projects must align with FM4 goals and be relevant to inclusive (engineering) research and innovation.
- International collaboration encouraged but not required.
- A person from an underrepresented group must be the lead and/or the project should influence underrepresented communities positively with a letter of support from the community. Examples of underrepresented groups include (self-identified and optional): women and gender minorities, racially minoritised groups, people with disabilities and neurodivergence, LGBTQ+ communities, first-generation backgrounds, carers, and others underrepresented in engineering.

### 4. Scope of Supported Projects

Supports inclusive engineering innovation: prototypes, participatory design, community-led insights, accessible processes, toolkits, datasets, policy recommendations, creative outputs, and proofs of concept.

### 5. Eligible & Ineligible Costs

What we will fund:

- Eligible costs include research assistant/practitioner time, materials, prototyping, fieldwork, co-creation workshops, software, community partner honoraria, travel, and accessibility support.

What we will not fund:

- Ineligible costs include major equipment purchases ( $>£1,500$  per item), institutional overheads, salaries beyond project scope, alcohol, purely conference attendance without a research/impact component.



## 6. Application Requirements

The application form includes a series of questions including:

1. Project aims and alignment: Description of the project's aims and how it aligns with the purpose and priorities of the seed fund (150 words).
2. Project plan and activities: Outline of key activities, methods, indicative timing, and intended outcomes, including ethical and inclusive delivery (250 words).
3. Budget and resource justification: Detailed, line-by-line budget breakdown with justification of requested resources (up to 700 words).
4. Inclusivity and equity approach: Explanation of how inclusivity and equity are embedded in project design, delivery, participation, and outputs (250 words).
5. Innovation and impact: Description of the innovation, expected impact, beneficiaries, and potential influence on engineering or climate-related practice (200 words).
6. Dissemination and knowledge sharing: Plans for sharing project outputs and learning, including target audiences, activities, timing, and accessibility considerations (100 words).
7. Ethical considerations: Key ethical issues and how these will be addressed (150 words).
8. Applicant experience and skills: Summary of career background, skills, and lived experience relevant to delivering the proposed project (300 words).
9. Motivation and engagement with FeME: Explanation of motivation for applying, alignment with FeME's values, and anticipated benefits of engagement (150 words).

### Assessment Criteria

- Relevance (20%): Advances equitable participation in engineering and/or solutions
- Inclusivity in approach (20%): inclusive teams, practices, outputs evidenced in project design
- Impact and sharing (20%): Outputs, reusability, and plans for dissemination.



- Innovation and potential (20%): Novelty, creativity, and learning value.
- Feasibility and plan (10%): Clear aims, methods, timeline, and budget.
- Ethics, EDI, and safeguarding (10%): Thoughtful, proportionate consideration.
- Lived-experience leadership and co-creation (not weighted): Meaningful leadership/partnership by underrepresented groups; community involvement.

### **Assessment**

- Eligibility check by programme team.
- Internal FeME Panel Review with conflict-of-interest management, EDI training, and partially anonymised narratives where possible.
- Feedback on request; resubmissions encouraged in later rounds.

### **Application support and accessibility**

- FeME provides a Caring Pot, 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.

## **7. Reporting & Knowledge Sharing**

- Mid-term progress report with pathway to engage project beneficiaries and impact. Note that 70% of the award will be paid up front to successful awardees with the remaining 30% contingent on this report.
- An artefact (prototype, guide, dataset, code, policy recommendation, or case study),
- End-of-project report
- Participation in FeME sharing events
- Contribution to FeME's Tapestry

## **8. Safeguarding, safety, and equitable participation**

- Teams 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.

## **9. 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 mid-term and final report and participation in evaluation.
- Non-transferability of funds without prior written approval.

## **10. 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 participation 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.