



**Environmental Change Initiative
2011 Seed Grants and Working
Group Proposals
Deadline: Rolling**

ECI provides working group and seed funding to stimulate new collaborations and support interdisciplinary research and teaching efforts on environmental topics. Past working groups have developed courses, held research symposia and workshops and brought in experts to stimulate new thinking in potential growth areas. Although the nature of funded activities is exploratory, we encourage recipients to have a goal in mind – generally an external funding proposal, course, or publication. Find a description of 2009 and 2010 working groups here: http://brown.edu/Research/ECI/activities/working_groups.html.

In 2011-2012, we expect to support 4-5 working groups with submissions accepted on a rolling basis and decisions returned within 30 days. Working group budgets should range between \$2000 and \$20,000. ECI will continue to consider smaller requests (such as travel to interdisciplinary meetings or workshops) on an ad hoc basis. Contact the Associate Director for additional information.

Successful working group proposals will describe a new or expanded research or teaching agenda, will involve faculty and/or students from two or more departments at Brown or MBL, and will propose a plan to move toward a new course proposal, publication, or external funding proposal. When exploring a completely new area for Brown, working group activities may also result in a white paper describing the potential for growth in this area and detailing opportunities and obstacles to successful implementation.

Eligibility: Brown or MBL faculty, postdoctoral researchers, or graduate students may propose working groups. Previous recipients are eligible to compete, but must propose new projects. Postdoctoral fellows or graduate students must include a letter of support from their mentors. Faculty who are not currently affiliated with ECI are eligible to compete, but will be asked to affiliate with ECI if their proposal is successful. Applicants are welcome to discuss proposal ideas with ECI Director or Associate Director before applying.

Amount and Duration of Awards: Awards range from \$2000-\$20,000. The proposed budget should be appropriate for the activities included (small proposals are welcome). All projects funded before January 1, 2012 must submit a progress report by June 1, 2012. Assuming satisfactory progress, funding may be extended into the following academic year. Projects funded after January 1, 2012 will have progress reports due by June 1, 2013.

Allowed Expenses: Allowed expenses include travel to field sites or for collaborative meetings; living expenses while traveling, lab or field supplies; food for meetings, travel and honoraria for visitors. Salary is limited to the following categories: payments to undergraduate or graduate student assistants, professional assistants; or extensions of postdoc appointments, limited summer salary for faculty. Please inquire about other expense categories. ECI administrative manager Bonnie Horta (Bernadette_horta@brown.edu) can help applicants estimate typical expenses for food, beverages and travel and resolve questions regarding allowable expenses.

Selection Process: Proposals over \$10K will be reviewed by two faculty members in related research areas. All funding is at the discretion of the ECI director with approval of the ECI Executive Committee.

Selection Criteria: Reviewers will judge proposals on the intellectual merit of the proposed project, the potential for launching new research areas, and the feasibility of the work plan. Successful proposals will meet four key criteria:

- Address a novel interdisciplinary question or issue in climate or environmental change
- Describe a new or expanded collaboration between members of two or more departments or institutions
- Present a practical plan to achieve the working group's goals
- We do not expect that every working group will result in a successful major proposal. Working group funding is modest and interdisciplinary collaborations can take some time to develop. At the same time, we have found that having a specific goal in mind results in more substantive interactions. Please describe a possible outcome of the working group, such as:
 - Funding proposal (if possible, cite a specific program and topic)
 - New course proposal
 - Publication (with topic and target journals, if possible)
 - White paper describing the potential for growth in this area at Brown and detailing opportunities and obstacles to successful implementation.

Proposal Format and Submission Process

Items 1-4 should be combined into a single pdf and submitted to Martha_Downs@brown.edu. Please use "ECI seed funding-<<investigator name>>" in the subject line. Postdoctoral associates or graduate students may lead proposals, but the proposer's mentor must submit a letter of support.

1. Cover page: Title, 150 word abstract, and list of participants with name, title and department. A majority of listed participants should be affiliated with ECI or be willing to affiliate with ECI. Please contact Marty Downs (martha_downs@brown.edu; 863-3493) with affiliation questions.
2. Narrative (up to 2000 words) describing the proposed project, its novelty and relevance, background information that is sufficient to permit evaluation by faculty from disparate departments, and the proposed outcome, work plan and timeline.
3. A short list of references may be included beyond the 2000 word limit.
4. A budget (up to \$20K) itemizing general categories of expenses and a brief justification.
5. Postdoctoral associates or graduate students may lead proposals, but the proposer's mentor should submit a letter of support (under separate cover) to Martha_Downs@brown.edu.