



BREN SCHOOL ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCE & MANAGEMENT UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, SANTA BARBARA

ECO-E PROJECTS: REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS 2021-2022

OBJECTIVES

Bren School Eco-E Projects solve environmental problems through new ventures. Serving as the program's Master's thesis, Eco-E Projects are nine-month collaborations for teams of highly dedicated Master's students.

Eco-E Projects cultivate innovative and agile thinking, as well as develop analytical capacity. Students learn how to apply an entrepreneurial approach to scientific problems and to create a business case/pitch for a new environmental venture.

This work helps students develop skills in project management, teamwork, leadership, business model development, financial analysis, organization and data presentation, and effective communication. The projects also serve to expand students' professional networks by requiring students to connect with environmental leaders, industry experts and real world entrepreneurs.

DESIRABLE PROJECT ATTRIBUTES

Student-Based. Eco-E Projects should represent an original idea, and students may not collaborate with outside clients. Projects may require students to seek information and guidance from any source, but the concept must be the original creation of the proposers.

Problem-Driven. Projects prepare students to produce meaningful solutions to today's environmental problems through the creation of new products and services. To this end, projects should yield a proposed solution that would help solve an environmental problem and a significant customer problem.

Innovation-Oriented. Innovative business models require deep customer understanding, proven technical feasibility and a viable business model. Projects should provide an opportunity for the team to innovate and develop agile thinking through development of a business model.

Data-Driven. Projects should identify existing industry/market data for students to analyze. Projects should include original data collection and analysis, such as interviews, research surveys, secondary data analysis, and prototype/pilot project development and testing.

PROJECT REQUIREMENTS

A successful project proposal will meet the following criteria:

1. Represent a significant environmental problem that potentially can be addressed by a new product or service
2. Pose clear and substantive research questions, which may include development and testing of a prototype/pilot project

3. Propose sound analytic approaches to identifying a significant customer problem to be solved and specific end-user
4. Provide a pedagogical opportunity through development of a business model
5. Provide a preliminary analysis of the industry, market and customer segment
6. Identify existing sources of research in the field/industry and require the team to conduct primary research
7. Match the interests, expertise and capabilities of students and faculty
8. Present a feasible project scope, given student experience and availability (must propose a manageable scope of work for a team of 3-5 master's students spending about 25% of their time during three academic quarters, or 9 months)

Each of the requirements listed above should be addressed individually. The Eco-E Program Committee will evaluate and score the proposals using these criteria.

SUBMITTING A PROPOSAL

Any MESM student from the Class of 2022 is welcome to submit an Eco-E Project Proposal.

Proposals will be reviewed during Winter Quarter (January – March) by the Bren School Eco-E Program Committee. The Committee will evaluate proposals on the criteria outlined in the Project Requirements section above.

Project proposals are limited to three pages (excluding references). For a complete description of proposal requirements, please see the full proposal guidelines.

Examples of successful proposal submissions are available for viewing on the Bren School website.

TIMELINE

YEAR 1

Fall: Students may enroll in ESM 256A Introduction to Entrepreneurship and New Venture Creation to work on idea generation and write an Eco-E Project proposal.

Winter: Students must enroll in ESM 256B New Venture Opportunity Analysis. Students submit project proposals by 2/12/21. Projects are selected in late February; students and faculty advisors are assigned by end of March.

Spring: Students gather data, review literature, and begin development of a business model.

Summer: Students often continue Eco-E Project work through internships.

YEAR 2

Fall: Students work on analysis, review literature and produce an outline for their Eco-E Project. Students often develop a prototype or pilot project.

Winter: Students complete an academic faculty review and their final reports.

Spring: Students present business model and findings to the public, and create a marketing communication piece and poster.

THINKING ABOUT SUBMITTING A PROPOSAL?

All proposers must enroll in New Venture Opportunity Analysis (ESM 256B), a course which supports proposal development, during the winter quarter of their first year. During this course, Eco-E Project Coordinator Emily Cotter will serve as the instructor and provide guidance regarding proposal content and format. She also connects proposal authors with Bren faculty, staff, and students, as well as industry experts, who can provide additional guidance and assistance in writing proposals. To register your interest in submitting a proposal, please contact Bren School Eco-E Project Coordinator Emily Cotter (ecotter@bren.ucsb.edu).