



UC SANTA BARBARA
Bren School of Environmental
Science & Management

BREN SCHOOL GUIDELINES FOR ECO-E PROJECT PROPOSALS

2024-2025 Project Period

The Bren School of Environmental Science & Management at the University of California, Santa Barbara seeks proposals for Eco-Entrepreneurship (Eco-E) Projects to solve environmental problems through new ventures. The Eco-E Project serves as the master's thesis for our graduate students in our Master of Environmental Science and Management program. The projects will be conducted from April 2024 to April 2025.

All proposers must enroll in Value Proposition Design for New Environmental Ventures (ESM 256B) during the winter quarter of their first year, a course which supports proposal development. 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.

Project proposals are due via email to ecotter@bren.ucsb.edu on **February 15, 2024 by 5:00 p.m.** and are limited to three pages (excluding references and, if applicable, budget and justification). Examples of successful proposal submissions and completed projects can be found in the Master's Project Directory on the Bren School website at bren.ucsb.edu/projects.

PROPOSAL FORMAT:

1. Title, descriptive of the environmental problem to be solved and/or new environmental venture.
2. Name and contact information (email and phone) of the proposer(s). Proposers must be Bren students in the MESM Class of 2025. Eco-E Projects do not have clients. If the proposal is selected, the student authors will have the option to be guaranteed membership on the team.
3. Optional: Industry advisor, including name, email, phone, and affiliation. The industry advisor will help guide the project and serve as one of the project's external advisors. For team recruitment, it may be desirable to have an industry expert affiliated with a relevant and well-regarded organization showing support for the project.
4. Proposed Eco-E Project (3 pages)
 - a. Background. In general, how did the environmental problem arise? What has been done to date, if known? What deficiencies exist with current approaches, if known? What needs still exist, if known?

- b. Significance. What is the context for this new environmental venture idea? What specific environmental problem does this project address? Why is it important? Who is the target beneficiary, customer, and/or user? Who else would benefit from the creation of this new environmental venture?
- c. Equity. A project may address a historical environmental injustice, or prevent one from happening. Does the project have the potential to address specific environmental justice issues? If so, in what ways will the proposed business model improve environmental equity? If the business model will involve overburdened and underserved communities, briefly describe the environmental burden, what benefits the business model aims to provide, and a few steps you will take to prevent further negative impacts as you develop the business model. If the business model does not involve specific equity concerns, indicate this here and provide justification for why equity is not being considered in the scope of the project.

The US Environmental Protection Agency defines environmental justice as "the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race, color, national origin, or income, with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies. This goal will be achieved when everyone enjoys: (1) the same degree of protection from environmental and health hazards, and (2) equal access to the decision-making process to have a healthy environment in which to live, learn, and work." (<https://www.epa.gov/environmentaljustice>).

- d. Objectives. What are the science and policy or management questions that need to be answered by the project? Focus on 1 or 2 concrete and achievable objectives.
 - e. Business Model Hypotheses: What are the business model and industry assumptions that need to be tested by the project? What is the project's starting point for business model development? What evidence has been gathered, to date, in support of current hypotheses? How does this project provide an opportunity for innovation (i.e., to test human desirability, technical feasibility, business viability, and business model adaptability)?
 - f. Possible approaches. Briefly describe likely approaches that may be used to address the project objectives and to test the business model hypotheses. Please describe the opportunity for prototype/pilot project development, if known.
 - g. Available data. What data are available to address the environmental problem? How and when can students acquire that data for their analyses? Is there existing industry or market research available to support business model development?
5. Supporting Materials (do not count toward 3-page limit)
- a. Citations. Due to the scientific and technical nature of many interdisciplinary environmental problems, authors are encouraged to include citations to support their proposal. Authors should include citations to support any industry data or market research included in the proposal.
 - b. List of Interviews. The first step of the Eco-E discovery process is to conduct qualitative interviews with industry experts and potential customers. Authors are encouraged to use these interviews as evidence to support their proposal. Include sources for any verbatim statements

cited and sources that were consulted but not cited in this proposal. For the list of interviews, include the date of the interview, whether it was conducted in person by phone or by Zoom, name of interviewee, title of interviewee (if relevant), name(s) of interviewer(s), and location for in-person interviews (or location of interviewee).

- c. Budget and justification. Each project chosen by the Eco-E Project Committee will receive funding from the Bren School: \$1,000 to cover the team's basic operations and \$1,500 to support prototype or pilot project development. This funding will be held at the school and only accessible by the students. The students will determine how to allocate the funds to cover expenses. If the business model is highly dependent upon technical feasibility, please include a budget with a description of anticipated prototype or pilot project development costs to demonstrate that the project can be completed within the budget provided.

Submit Eco-E Project proposals via email by Thursday, February 15, 2024 at 5:00 pm to:

Attn: Eco-E Project Coordinator (ecotter@bren.ucsb.edu)

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