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## Call for Proposals

### SoE Early Career Research Grant

**Deadline: 15 April 2026**

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### Background and context

As part of its capacity-building mission, the Environmental Policy Research Unit (EPRU) is pleased to invite proposals from early-career researchers conducting empirical research on topics relevant to developing and emerging countries. This initiative aims to strengthen the research capacity of early-career staff from groups under-represented in academia within the School of Economics at the University of Cape Town (UCT).

The initiative is generously funded by the Standing Panel on Impact Assessment (SPIA).

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### Eligibility (ideal profile)

Applicants should ideally meet the following criteria:

- Hold a PhD (or be very close to submitting their PhD thesis).
  - Have been awarded their PhD **no more than five years** prior to the application deadline.
  - Be a **permanent staff member** in the School of Economics, University of Cape Town.
  - Belong to a **group under-represented in academia in South Africa**.
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## Scope

There are **no topic restrictions**. Projects may focus on any issue relevant to developing or emerging countries, provided that they:

- are **empirical**;
- are **methodologically sound** (with a clear and credible identification/empirical strategy); and
- offer **clear implications**, including relevance for policy and/or practice.

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## Mentorship

To strengthen the programme and support high-quality research outputs, EPRU will arrange **external mentors** with relevant topic expertise for successful applicants.

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## Application and selection process

The research team will review all proposals and will contact **short-listed applicants** only by **April 30, 2026**. If deemed necessary, the team may conduct a **second-stage selection process**.

Applicants must submit **both**:

1. A proposal (as outlined below), and
2. A **CV/resumé**.

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## Proposal format and word limits

Proposals must include the following sections:

1. **Title** (10–12 words)
2. **Abstract** (up to 200 words)
3. **Research question(s) and motivation** (up to 400 words)
4. **Literature review and scientific contributions** (up to 600 words)



5. **Data and methods** (up to 500 words)
6. **Implications** (up to 100 words)

**Total length:** The proposal text **must not exceed 2,000 words, excluding references.**

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## Submission

Please send your application package to Felicity Downes, EPRU program administrator at [felicity.downes@uct.ac.za](mailto:felicity.downes@uct.ac.za)

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## Key conditions

- **Submission deadline: 15 April 2026.** Proposals submitted after this date will not be considered.
- **Project duration:** The project must be completed within **12 months**.
- **Research integrity:** Applicants must confirm that they adhere to internationally accepted research codes of conduct and that the proposed work is **original** and **has not** been previously published as a working paper or in a peer-reviewed journal.
- **Grant disbursement:** UCT (EPRU) will disburse the grant in **two tranches**:
  - the first tranche (65% of the grant value) **after a thorough data analysis has been conducted**; and
  - the second tranche (35% of grant value) **after a draft version of the paper has been submitted**.

Applicants can contact the Principal Investigator of the program, Yonas Alem, [yonas.alem@uct.ac.za](mailto:yonas.alem@uct.ac.za) for academic matters, and Felicity Downes ([felicity.downes@uct.ac.za](mailto:felicity.downes@uct.ac.za)) for administrative queries.

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## General

The University of Cape Town (EPRU) reserves the right to disqualify ineligible, incomplete and/or inappropriate applications, to change the conditions of the award and/or to make no award at all.
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