



THE UNIVERSITY *of* EDINBURGH  
Social Responsibility & Sustainability

# **Edinburgh Earth Initiative Strategy 2025-2030 (updated July 2026)**



# Mission

The mission of the Edinburgh Earth Initiative is to catalyse bold, globally significant transdisciplinary research, innovation and partnerships at the University in support of the [Research & Innovation Strategy 2030](#) and the [Regenerative Sustainability Strategy](#).

# Outcomes

We are committed to achieving the following outcomes over the next five years:

1. The University has an **international reputation** as world leading in the following six challenges areas: Data for Sustainability, Future Food Systems, Circular Economy, Clean Energy Systems, Sustainable Cities and One Health.

Indicators of success:

- Increasing University-wide funding related to climate and sustainability to £75m per year, a five-fold increase on our current baseline, through a mixture of research grant income, innovation and enterprise investment, and philanthropy.
- Doubling the number of researchers taking leading roles in intergovernmental assessments and negotiations on climate change and the environment.
- Development of a bank of climate and environment-related impact case studies that is enhancing research funding competitiveness, strengthening strategic partnerships, and evidencing impact across the Climate and Environment Challenge Areas of the R & I Strategy.

2. Ambitious transdisciplinary partnerships are **taking our research and innovation to scale** in order to tackle the climate and environment crisis.

Indicators of success:

- Consolidation of our key local, national, and international partnerships with governments, higher education institutions, and NGOs is driving strategic impact and extending our reach.
- A measurable increase in the value of industry collaboration to address the climate and environment crisis.

3. Strategic partnerships are flourishing, equitable and transdisciplinary, **supporting communities most at risk** of being left behind by climate change.

Indicators of success:

- Anchor climate and environment research and innovation partnerships in Africa and Asia are delivering impact at scale and leveraging external investment
- Philanthropic investment is strengthening and expanding the impact of anchor partnerships in Africa and Asia.
- Increase University-wide scholarship funding for those most at risk of being left behind by climate change, particularly those from Africa and Asia, through a mixture of philanthropy and scholarship schemes including Chevening, and GREAT/Study UK.

# Actions

How will we achieve these ambitious outcomes?

Strategically situated in the Department for Sustainability and Social Responsibility and led by a Director and Director of Operations, the Edinburgh Earth Initiative will work as a specialist support unit, focusing on cross-cutting climate and environment research, innovation and partnership activity in support of the Research & Innovation Strategy 2030 and Beyond Net Zero Strategy. Exemplar activities are detailed in the diagram below.

The EEI Team core support team will consist of the following posts: Director of Operations, Head of Research Engagement, Earth Fellows Programme Manager, Scotland Beyond Net Zero, Senior Research Partnership Manager, Communications Co-ordinator (0.3 FTE) and an Administration and Communications Officer (0.5FTE). Close alignment with Edinburgh Innovations and Development and Alumni will provide additional resource to support innovation and fundraising outcomes. Partnership agreements that detail joint ambitions with Edinburgh Global, Edinburgh Research Office and Communications and Marketing will secure further staff capacity across professional functions.

In addition to the core team, central to resourcing our work will be our **Earth Champions** and **Earth Fellows**.

- Earth Champions will be researchers with protected time (0.40 FTE) to collectively lead a joined-up approach to realising ambitions for Data for Sustainability, Future Food Systems, Circular Economy, Clean Energy Systems, Sustainable Cities and One Health.
- Earth Fellows will be postgraduate students (0.20 FTE) who will support Earth Champions and other strategic partnership activities and engagement.

# Our Values

Our core values, aligned with the University's Behaviours Charter and the Department of Social Responsibility and Sustainability's Strategy 2023-2028, are:

## 1. Purpose

- We are motivated by the urgency of the climate and environment crisis and believe that the University can play a leading role in the transition to a more sustainable and equitable society.

## 2. Respect

- We consider future impacts on people and planet when making decisions.
- We acknowledge the experience, expertise and contributions of others.
- We commit to critically examining and addressing systems and processes which may perpetuate power imbalances in our research partnerships.

## 3. Collaboration

- We stand out by helping others stand out.
- We work with diverse groups to co-create appropriate solutions.

## 4. Learning

- We regularly evaluate our activities, adjusting our actions to ensure we provide a clear value-add to climate and environment work at the University.
- We seek others' views, listen, learn and improve.

## 5. Excellence

- We uphold quality and professional standards and take responsibility for our own performance.
- We model sustainability in our actions.

# Governance and reporting

The Edinburgh Earth Initiative will report to a Governing Board who will be responsible for providing strategic advice, approving implementation plans and securing institutional commitment. Edinburgh Earth Initiative will also report annually the Regenerative Sustainability Delivery Board and the Research Strategy Group.

|                              | <b>Governing Board</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
|------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Frequency of meetings</b> | Quarterly                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| <b>Chair</b>                 | Climate and Sustainability lead within the Senior Leadership Team                                                                                                                                                                           |
| <b>Members</b>               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Vice Principal Research and Innovation</li><li>- Deans of Research from the three colleges</li><li>- Directors/their nominated representatives of : EEI SRS, ERO, EI, EG, CAM and D&amp;A</li></ul> |
| <b>Appointment duration</b>  | 5 years                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| <b>Remit</b>                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Ensure institutional alignment and commitment</li><li>- Oversight of progress towards outcomes</li></ul>                                                                                            |

