

## Seed Awards Scoring Rubric

### 1. Narrative Clarity

Is the research question clearly articulated, and are the objectives clearly defined and aligned with the research question? Are the proposed outcomes and milestones realistically attainable within the scope of the research?

1 – Needs Improvement	2 - Average	3 – Very Good	4 - Exceptional
The research question is unclear, vague, or entirely missing, with objectives that are undefined or entirely misaligned with the research question. Outcomes are unrealistic/unattainable, or there is no clear timeline attached.	The research question is somewhat clear but lacks precision or may be overly broad. Proposed outcome(s) may require significant adjustments and/or the timeline may need restructuring, suggesting a need for further refinement.	The research question is clearly articulated, with well-defined and generally-aligned objectives, although there may be some room for improvements in clarity. Outcomes are mostly realistic and attainable, indicating a solid foundation for study.	Research question is exceptionally clear, with well-defined objectives and highly realistic outcomes and milestones, demonstrating a deep understanding of the research area.

## 2. Scientific and Technical Merit

Has the applicant effectively discussed the scientific and technical merit and significance of the proposed scope of work? Does the proposal clearly explain how the research will contribute to the existing body of knowledge or address a gap in the literature?

1 – Needs Improvement	2 - Average	3 – Very Good	4 - Exceptional
Proposal does not effectively discuss the scientific and technical merit of the proposed scope of work. The significance of the research is not adequately explained, nor is it clear how the scope of work will advance scholarship more broadly. Severely lacking in substance.	Applicant lacks some necessary detail or clarity regarding the scientific and technical merit of the proposed scope of work. The case for but the case for its potential impact is somewhat weak or lacks depth. Overall, the discussion is somewhat lacking in depth, indicating a need for further development and refinement.	The significance of the research is adequately explained, with a reasonable case made for its potential impact. The proposal clearly explains how the research will contribute to the existing body of knowledge or address a gap in the literature, although there may be some room for further elaboration or detail.	The significance of the research is compellingly argued, with a strong case made for the project's potential impact on the field. Offers a highly detailed and exceptionally clear explanation of how the research will contribute to the existing body of knowledge or address a significant gap in literature.

## 3. Alignment

Is the proposed research well-aligned with the Trienens Institute's mission/vision to advance global sustainability and energy solutions for *climate and the energy transition*, and *resilient communities*? Does the research itself, or the proposal outcome, support interdisciplinarity and/or build on existing research strengths at Northwestern?

1 – Needs Improvement	2 - Average	3 – Very Good	4 - Exceptional
The proposed research does not align with the Trienens Institute's mission/vision and commitment to	Proposed research shows some alignment with the Trienens Institute's mission/vision, but makes	Alignment with the institute's mission, commitment to interdisciplinarity, and integration	Alignment with the Institute's mission/vision, commitment to interdisciplinarity, and integration

interdisciplinary scholarship at Northwestern. Fails to demonstrate how it will address sustainability and energy challenges effectively.	a limited case for how it builds on existing research strengths at Northwestern, and/or needs greater detail or specificity. Potential for improved alignment.	with Northwestern's research strengths are solid. May be lacking explicit interdisciplinarity within proposed scope of research, and/or not directly align with existing Northwestern research strengths.	with Northwestern's research strengths are exemplary.
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#### 4. Resource Leverage

Does the proposed research leverage other awards, grants, resources, or partnerships to increase the efficacy of the proposed funding, and/or will the proposal position the researcher more competitively to apply for follow-on funding programs?

1 – Needs Improvement	2 - Average	3 – Very Good	4 - Exceptional
Applicant's approach to resource utilization and positioning for future funding is entirely lacking, indicating a missed opportunity to strengthen the proposal.	Makes some effort to leverage existing resources/projects, but there may be gaps or limited clarity in this regard. Future positioning strategy may require more elaboration or a stronger connection to existing resources.	Proposal effectively incorporates other awards, grants, resources, or partnerships to enhance the efficacy of the proposed funding, demonstrating an understanding of the importance of leveraging existing resources. Competitive positioning for future funding is discussed.	Approach to resource/partner utilization and positioning for future funding is of the highest quality, reflecting a comprehensive and well-thought-out strategy.

#### 5. Research Impact

What is the scale of impact that a successful project may potentiate (both in terms of cumulative results – e.g. emissions avoided, money saved, health outcomes, etc. – and the immediacy of that impact)

1 – Needs Improvement	2 - Average	3 – Very Good	4 - Exceptional
The proposal lacks a clear plan for	Cumulative results are outlined, but	Proposal presents a well-planned	Proposal outlines a project with the

achieving a significant scale of impact. Cumulative results, if mentioned, are minimal or not well-defined, and the immediacy of impact is not addressed or is not feasible within a reasonable timeframe.	they may lack detail or clarity in terms of their significance/translation for impact. The project's plan for achieving these results may require further elaboration or refinement.	project with a good balance of articulated, cumulative results and reasonable immediacy in terms of impact.	potential for an exceptional, and well-articulated scale/scope of impact. Project demonstrates a clear and compelling plan for achieving these results in a relatively immediate timeframe.
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**Total score (*cumulative of scores above*):** (out of 28)