

SILP Experimentation Fund: Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Thank you for your interest in our call for ideas for the SILP Experimentation Fund. This document outlines some FAQs on the Fund.

The Fund

What is the Fund's connection to learning?

As one of the core pillars of the Systems Innovation Learning Partnership (SILP), the SILP Experimentation Fund offers a funding and a peer learning programme to a group of experimental projects that will explore practical approaches to addressing some of the most complex challenges that the world is facing today.

Experiments will be selected to form and play an active part in the first SILP Experimentation Fund cohort. The cohort is supported in continuous collaborative learning and reflection practices as complementary to funding their experiments, playing to the strengths of the cohort's diversity of experience, geography, and context. This learning programme is designed to:

- support knowledge sharing, peer coaching and building the experimenters' capacity for, and capability in, reflection and the practice of leading systemic change;
- continuously surface insights and knowledge around working in and with systems change for the common global and public good.

Focussing on initiatives in the Global South is a priority for the fund, as we acknowledge our homogeneity and North-European bias as founding partners of SILP. Through facilitating such a peer learning community, we aim to enable:

- learning through experimentation (*doing*) how systemic approaches and practices can accelerate positive impact;
- the testing of tools, techniques, processes for this;
- the diversifying and broadening of the systems innovation practice and community; and
- identifying and developing the capabilities needed by individuals and organisations to work systemically.

Why is there a focus on systems-level interventions?

The decisions each of us make and actions we take, as individuals and as members of civil society, corporations, governments, and other groups, combine and interact in complex systems. Many of the biggest challenges we face – the climate crisis, food insecurity, growing inequalities – are difficult to overcome because they are a product of these complex systems.

There is thus a growing need for finding ways of changing systems, rather than business as usual single-point entry approaches to creating incremental change. This might mean collaborating with actors across diverse and

unexpected areas, experimenting with approaches that may have never been tried before, and taking a much more holistic view of the issues we are facing. The SILP Experimentation Fund aims to support this.

What is a community grant-making approach to funding?

‘Community Grant Making’ is the SILP’s variation on the participatory grant making approach. Participatory grant making refers to the process of assessing and selecting activities to fund being placed in the hands of the community that those activities and interventions would serve. In this variation, we are convening a group organisations and individuals with diverse experience, expertise, and interests in systems innovation (and in a Global South context) to participate in the collective assessment and selection of experiments to be supported.

This group involved in ‘Community Grant Making’ is comprised of practitioners, programmers/funders, and designers of systems innovation/change activities, all with an interest in experimenting with new approaches, in new contexts, and emphasising the learning process and experience for participants as well as downstream beneficiaries. Together with SILP, the group takes an experimental approach to sourcing, assessing, and selecting the cohort of experiments over a two-stage application process (ideation and experiment grant application) before themselves undertaking a portfolio composition process to construct the first cohort.

Why are you taking a ‘Community Grant Making’ approach to the fund?

This approach itself is an experiment in how SILP partners could work with a more systems/context sensitive, and distributed approach to grant making. In more detail, taking this approach has two primary purposes:

- i) to experiment with shifting decision-making powers from the primary funder(s) into the hands of a diverse group of practitioners and from a range of backgrounds (locational, organizational, experience) who have a collective vested interest in the outcomes and learning opportunities of the experiments, and
- ii) to share an approach to assessing and selecting projects/experiments that **does not** focus isolated, score- or ranking-based assessment and selection processes, but instead seeks out the complementarities and opportunities within and between a collective of experiments/projects, whose outcomes and impacts can amplify each other’s and provided a broader learning opportunity across systems and communities: what we call *portfolio composition*.

Can you explain what a ‘portfolio composition’ means?

Portfolio Composition is a consensus-based approach to collective decision-making that assesses proposals using EIT Climate-KIC’s Portfolio Composition methodology. In this way, we aim to support many different but connected initiatives as a system, choosing them less on their individual potential but more on the basis of their unified spread and potential in exploring, testing ways forward, and learning in and from each other. The emphasis is on making selection decisions based on proposals’ potential in relation to the other proposals, rather than as a series of individual projects/experiments.

Programme of learning activities

What is the time commitment for programme activities expected from grant receivers?

Participation in the learning programme is expected from all grant receivers. The commitment involves 9 online meetings over a 10-month period (as outlined in the illustration below):

- three 1-2 day long online workshops in April and September 2023 as well as January 2024 (blue)
- two 2-3h long community events in June and November 2023 (green)
- four meetings in a smaller peer learning group in between (grey)



The first, 'Fund kickoff meeting' is set for April 13-14, 2023. Meeting dates in peer groups are self-determined, and all other meeting times will be confirmed at the start of 2023.

How many people from my organisation will be expected to join in the activities?

A minimum of 2 and maximum of 3 people per experiment are expected to take part in the learning programme. In case your experiment is run jointly by multiple organisations, we expect at least 1 person to represent each organisation that is receiving the grant.

Eligibility and Assessment Criteria

What might an experiment look like?

The call for experiments is purposefully broad in order to acknowledge the many interrelated components of so-called systems-level interventions. These could, for example and not exclusively, manifest as:

- community engagement in addressing complex issues;
- participative and challenge owner-/community-led interventions;
- alternative approaches to governance and public accountabilities;
- development of shared understanding of common challenges;
- mapping systems;

- (portfolio) intervention design, implementation, and learning;
- monitoring and impact evaluation of change in complex systems;
- innovations to programme, organisational, and/or funding structures;
- intelligence and insight gathering before, during, and after interventions;
- work with futures and –visioning;
- long-termism/long term programming.

Experiments might test any one or a group of these connected components. Our aim is to learn across a range of system-level interventions to help build our common capacity and capabilities for creating transformational change in addressing the world's most pressing issues.

It is important to underline that we are not expecting applicants to undertake nor achieve any level of systems change in the course of the experiment and granting period: it is the learning, insights, and possible ways forward (or sideways) that we are interested in, across a diverse portfolio of experiments.

What are you not looking to fund?

We are not looking to fund feasibility studies, desk research (except where it is a necessary component of the proposed applied experiment), or solely preparatory activities that would not see implementation within the grant / experimentation period.

Will you accept applicants from outside the ODA country list?

No.

Should experiments be existing or new initiatives?

Either! We will be focusing on your learning question and opportunity, and how this is applied. This could mean starting a new project on its own or introducing a systems-lens approach to an existing project, activity, or portfolio.

What do you mean by ideas that shift power dynamics?

Power dynamics are present across all our systems, and this can be in the form of access or ownership of resources, knowledge, information, or other means that enable a group or community to create new realities they envision. When we ask you to think about these, it also relates to how you as an organisation or group are part of those power dynamics and how the work you do can reinforce or break free from those power dynamics to allow ideas to flourish.

I have an idea but I'm not sure if it's eligible – how do I find out more?



Following the launch of this call, we will be hosting several information sessions to give more information on the fund and to answer any questions you may have. We strongly encourage you to join us for the sessions.

The dates are:

- 26 October 2022, 2:00 PM CET
- 16 November 2022, 2:00 PM CET

How will my data be held and processed?

Your data will be processed using EIT Climate-KIC's privacy policy. Find out more [here](#).

Systems Innovation Learning Partnership (SILP)

What other activities are on the SILP programme?

Besides the Experimentation Fund, SILP also designs and delivers:

- an **Annual Systems Innovation Learning Festival**;
- topical **Deep Dive** sessions;
- System Innovation **Challenge Labs**;
- and a **Thought Leadership** series, drawn from and building upon the learning activities.

Read more about SILP's work [here](#).

What are Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) perspectives?

All of Sida's work, thereby also the SILP Experimentation Fund, is informed by the following central perspectives:

A human rights based perspective

- Human rights and democracy are fundamental to development. The starting point for Swedish development cooperation is the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights from 1948 and the internationally binding agreements. The human rights perspective contributes to people living in poverty to know their rights and gives them tools to defend those rights.

A conflict perspective

- Violence and armed conflict lead to human suffering and material destruction and have a devastating effect on development and the ability of people and countries to get out of poverty. Peace is a prerequisite for sustainable development.

- Therefore, development cooperation must be based on a conflict perspective. Efforts in development cooperation and humanitarian aid must be shaped on the basis of an understanding of how they may affect tensions and conflicts in the surrounding society. On the basis of such an understanding, it must be ensured that all development cooperation supports peaceful development and can never inadvertently counteract its own purposes by exacerbating violence and conflict in any respect.

A gender perspective

- More gender-equal societies create better prerequisites for sustainable development. Therefore, all Swedish aid should have a gender perspective. This means that all Swedish development projects should reflect and take into account the different needs and prerequisites of all people.

An environmental and climate perspective

- Environmental degradation and climate change present the greatest threat to people living in poverty. Our surrounding environment with well-functioning ecosystems and a stable climate forms the basis for development and for all human life. Sustainable use of the Earth's resources is therefore a prerequisite for reducing poverty and building sustainable societies for current and future generations. Therefore, an environmental and climate perspective must be integrated.

Both partners, EIT Climate-KIC and Sida, are based in the Global North. How will you put measures in place to minimise power imbalances due to the cohort being from the Global South?

As organisations both based in the Global North, we are aware of our biases and lack of in-depth knowledge of the contexts we are hoping to fund, i.e., countries in the Global South. To overcome or mitigate the negative consequences of this, we are ensuring that the group of 'Community Grant-Makers' is at least 50% from the Global South and that we are following a co-creation approach to the fund and experimentation phases.

We are also always willing to take on feedback and to work with partners to ensure we are mitigating any consequences of the power dynamics that exist within Global North-Global South funding structures.