Shared Green Societies - Research Awards

The **Shared Green Societies - Research Awards** celebrate PhD Researchers and Early Career Researchers (ECRs) in the Social Sciences and Humanities (SSH) whose work contributes to Europe's green transition. Coordinated by Anglia Ruskin University, Fraunhofer ISI, and ICS-ULisboa, the awards highlight innovative approaches at the intersection of sustainability, society, and policy.

These awards directly feed into the purpose of the **Shared Green Societies** Forum, bringing together SSH researchers, policymakers, and practitioners to bridge research, policy, and practice for sustainability. Officially launching in Brussels in January 2026, the forum has backing from networks representing over 4 000 NGOs and municipalities across Europe.

By showcasing best practices, the awards will spotlight how SSH research can foster citizen participation, enable mutual learning, and advocate for more inclusive public policies—helping ensure that diverse voices and experiences shape Europe's green future.

Eligibility: Applicants must be PhD candidates or ECRs based in Europe and focusing on European challenges, utilising SSH perspectives on one or more of the eight European Green Deal policy areas. ECRs are defined as those who have not led projects exceeding €100 000. Applicants cannot have worked on the SHARED GREEN DEAL project.

Award Themes

1. *Supporting citizen and/or professional participation* (page 2)
2. *Promoting mutual knowledge flows* (page 3)
3. *Advocating for inclusive public policies* (page 4)

Evaluation: Applications are assessed anonymously against theme-specific criteria, with emphasis on clarity, critical reflection, and demonstrated impact.

Prizes: Each theme will have one winner (€500 and an expenses-paid trip to Brussels for the Shared Green Societies Forum launch, 28 January 2026) and two runners-up (book prize worth up to €85). Winners will be showcased on the website of the future Shared Green Societies Forum or on the SHARED GREEN DEAL website.

Key dates

- *Deadline: 12 November 2025. 23.59 CET*
- *Virtual awards ceremony*: 12 December 2025, 12:00–13:00 CET
- *Brussels launch event of Shared Green Societies: 28 January 2026*

Apply: Applications can be submitted via this form.

Theme 1 - Supporting citizen and/or professional participation

This theme is dedicated to recognising PhD and Early Career Researchers in the Social Sciences and Humanities (SSH) who support participatory processes with citizens and/or professionals through community initiatives for greater inclusivity. Community initiatives may bring together diverse actors—such as citizens, professionals, civil society organisations, associations, and representatives from municipal authorities—to address challenges in the Green Deal topic areas within that community. We highly value research and engagement work that seeks either to establish new community-led initiatives with citizens and/or professionals, with transformative impacts for the community, or to realign existing initiatives to better engage underrepresented groups. This theme emphasises the importance of participatory, inclusive and reflexive processes within the initiatives. We seek best practice examples of PhDs/ECRs acting as facilitators and enablers, bridging the gap between different interests. This includes reflecting on the most suitable process designs, techniques, and methods for engaging citizen and/or professional groups and engaging in reflexive discussions within community initiatives.

Evaluation criteria:
- Clear rationale on how their participation processes create transformative impacts for their target community.
- Clarity in explaining the approaches, methods, and techniques, that were applied in specific contexts to engage citizens and/or professionals.
- A critical reflection on one's own role in the process, including the challenges encountered.
- Presenting the work in a clear and engaging way.

Judges:
- Sarah Seus, ISI
- Sarah Royston, ARU

Theme 2 - Promoting mutual knowledge flows

This theme supports PhD and Early Career Researchers in the Social Sciences and Humanities (SSH) who foster genuine, at least two-way knowledge flows between academic researchers and civil society organisations (e.g. NGOs, community associations, trade unions) or local actors (e.g. municipal authorities, grassroots groups, cooperatives). It values research that integrates academic insight with lived, practical, and community-based knowledge, to help bridge theory and practice to create tangible social impact. The focus here is on mutual learning, not for example one-way dissemination that transfers knowledge from academia to practice, nor is it about solely extracting data from practitioners. As such, this theme recognises policy and practice actors as experts in their own right and emphasises the need for reciprocal engagement. This theme does not cover collaborations that are purely academic, even if interdisciplinary or transdisciplinary in nature; its defining feature is sustained learning between SSH researchers and societal actors.

Evaluation criteria:
- Clear explanation of how the specific groups detailed in the submission (academics and non-academics) benefit from mutual knowledge flows
- Clearly identified and explained mutual learnings
- Critical reflections on the knowledge exchange and learning processes
- Presenting the work in a clear and engaging way

Judges:
- Chris Foulds, ARU
- Rosie Robison, ARU
- Antje Disterheft, ICS

Theme 3 - Advocating for inclusive public policies

This theme supports PhD and Early Career Researchers in the Social Sciences and Humanities (SSH) whose research advocates for inclusive public policies. We see inclusive public policies as those which capture the diverse experiences, needs and priorities of different groups in society, and those that ensure equal opportunities to participate and access resources. Whilst it is not a requirement for the PhD/ECR's research or engagement work to have already had a tangible impact on policy, there is the expectation that clear processes for raising awareness and evoking impact will have been set out. There is an expectation that the work will have supported pathways to more inclusive public policies, through the greater involvement of different voices, particularly those from marginalised backgrounds. For the purpose of this award, marginalised groups are those who experience exclusion or discrimination based upon their characteristics, for example, race, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, disability, and religion. The research or engagement work undertaken can focus on one marginalised group, or take an intersectional approach. In the application, it is expected that applicants will define their understanding of inclusivity, and their expectations and/or recommendations for how inclusivity can be integrated into public policies. The representation of marginalised communities is considered a central component of the research undertaken.

Evaluation criteria:
- Demonstration of research that engages with marginalised groups in a considered and meaningful way.
- Clear definition of what is meant by inclusivity, and how this is applied in the context of their research.
- Presentation of feasible, coherent, and relevant expectations and/or recommendations for how marginalised groups can be incorporated into public policies related to contemporary debates on sustainability.
- Presenting the work in a clear and engaging way.

Judges:
- Monica Truninger, ICS
- Ami Crowther, ARU

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Version 1

1. What are the eligibility requirements?

- Applicants must be either PhD Researchers or Early Career Researchers (ECRs).
- Applicants must be working on sustainability research topics, and specifically in at least one of the eight European Green Deal policy areas (as stated in the application form).
- Applicants must be utilising Social Sciences and/or Humanities (SSH) perspectives. If working interdisciplinarily (e.g. with the natural or technical sciences), then SSH must be leading.
- Applicants must be currently based at an European research organisation (or, if a self-employed researcher, must be living in Europe).
- Applicants must be referring to research work focusing on European challenges.
- Applicants cannot have worked on the SHARED GREEN DEAL Horizon project.

2. When is the deadline?

The deadline is on 12 November 2025 at 23.59 CET.

3. Where is the form to apply?

It is [here](). Note that you will need to have a google account in order to be able to upload your one-pager. If for any reason you are having issues with uploading a file please email it to seprojects@aru.ac.uk ahead of the deadline.

4. How do you define an Early Career Researcher (ECR)?

Early Career Researchers must not have received more than €100,000 for a research project that they have led (this does not include stipends received when undertaking a PhD programme).

5. How do you define a PhD Researcher?

PhD Researchers are currently enrolled in PhD programmes at a relevant European Higher Education Institution.

1. Are there any formatting requirements for the one-pager?

Yes. Please note:
- Your application may not exceed 1 page.
- Please use font size 11 or larger.
- Please set margins to be 2.54cm.
- Your 1 page can include text, tables and figures.
- Please write in English.
- Ensure you read the evaluation criteria for the Theme you are submitting to, when preparing your one-page summary.

6. How will applications be evaluated?

Part 1 of the application form (on applicant information) will be separated off, leaving only Part 2 of the application form (i.e. the one-page overview of your research). It is that Part 2 which will be evaluated only, to help establish a blind review process. Please therefore, in your Part 2, do not mention your specific name or personal details that would reveal your identify; we acknowledge that project details must inevitably be included.

All applications will be evaluated in line with evaluation criteria that has been transparently published. Note that these criteria are different for each award theme.

There will be three evaluation panels; one for each award theme. Each application will be evaluated by a minimum of two evaluators.

We will not be able to offer evaluation feedback to unsuccessful applicants, given the anticipated number of applications.

7. Can I apply to multiple awards?

No, you can only apply to one single award. We appreciate that there are similarities between all three award themes, but we encourage you to pick the theme that best resonates with the aspect of your work you wish to highlight. Essentially, theme 1 concerns participatory processes with citizens and/or professionals; theme 2 concerns dialogue and mutual learning between researchers and non-academics; and theme 3 concerns inclusivity agendas within policies and politics.

8. Who can I contact if I have queries about the awards and in particular the award applications?

For questions about the overall awards, contact chris.foulds@aru.ac.uk. For questions about submission of the application form specifically, contact seprojects@aru.ac.uk.

9. What are the award prizes?

Each award theme will have one winner. These three winners will each receive €500 paid to them personally and the opportunity to visit Brussels (Wednesday 28 January 2026) for the Shared Green Societies network launch event (expenses paid).

In addition, each award theme will have two runner-up winners. These six winners will each receive a book (up to the value of €85, including delivery costs).

The prizes will be managed by the European Association for Local Democracy (ALDA).

10. When will the awards ceremony be?

The virtual award ceremony will be held over Zoom, at 1200-1300 CET, on Friday 12 December 2025.

11. What will happen in the awards ceremony?

The hour-long awards ceremony will be a moment to celebrate the excellent work undertaken by the shortlisted applications. The expectation is that a number of (especially impressive) applicants will be notified in advance of the event that they have been shortlisted for an award, and thus will be asked to doubly confirm their plan to attend. This said, the event has an open invitation and therefore all applicants (as well as others) are welcome to also attend.

During the event, each evaluation committee will briefly explain what they enjoyed about all shortlisted applications, before announcing the nine winners.

12. If successful, how will my application be used for dissemination purposes?

All nine winners will have a dedicated webpage on the www.sharedgreendeal.eu website, to showcase their work. The SHARED GREEN DEAL communications team, led by ICLEI, will be in touch to arrange this.

13. Why are you running these awards?

We feel that PhD and ECR research is too often undervalued. We recognise the need to promote and showcase the excellent work done by junior researchers.

14. What is the Shared Green Societies forum?

'Shared Green Societies' is a forum for SSH researchers, policymakers and practitioners, all of whom have a shared interest in what is broadly called, the green transition. The forum is being launched formally in Brussels in January 2026, and already has support from a range of high-profile founding members. The forum is to be led by Anglia Ruskin University's Global Sustainability Institute and the European Association for Local Democracy

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(ALDA). It already has support from network organisations that cover over 4000 European NGOs and municipalities, including but limited to e.g. Energy Cities, ICLEI, Women Engage for a Common Future, Bankwatch, Mediterranean Office for Environment, Culture and Sustainable Development.

Given the forum's keen interest in spanning the boundaries between SSH research and policy/practice, these awards will help us identify areas of best practice to showcase to our forum members.