

AXA Investment Managers Climate Transition Award

***Powering the climate transition: in
partnership with AXA Research Fund***

September 2021

AXA IM Climate Transition Award

The world has begun a decades-long transition towards a more sustainable model. Climate change is at the heart of this transition - the risks it brings but also the opportunities that lie in the scientific, political, and corporate response.

AXA is an industry leader in terms of climate change and biodiversity action, through divestment policies from coal as early as 2015 but also the development of green investment funds and innovative insurance products and financial Instruments in favour of low carbon solutions and natural ecosystem preservation and restoration.

As the investment manager for AXA, and a major global responsible investor, employer and business, AXA Investment Managers ([AXA IM](#)) is determined to tackle the climate-related risks that threaten the future of our planet. We will become a Net-Zero Asset Manager by 2050 or sooner; we are making our product range greener, launching new carbon-focused strategies and building our green investments offering; through active ownership and engagement, we hold companies to account for climate risk; internally, we educate our global workforce to build their climate awareness and, as a business, we are reducing our own carbon footprint by 26% by 2025.

We believe in the power of collective action. That is why we are launching this award, so we can recognise and fund valuable, credible research that this world needs to overcome our collective fight against climate change.

Award Guidelines

These guidelines provide information for researchers applying for the AXA IM Climate Transition Award. **This guide may be used as a reference by applicants. The information presented within overrides any contrary terms that could be found elsewhere.**

AXA IM Climate Transition Award background

Human influence on the climate system is clear and continued anthropogenic emissions of greenhouse gases (GHG), primarily CO₂, remain the highest in history according to the sixth assessment report by the UN's Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), calling the threat "*code red for humanity*"¹. The consequences of such conditions are well known, with some effects previously predicted by science now occurring: loss of sea ice, accelerated sea-level rise, extended heat waves, and depletion of biodiversity and natural ecosystems.

The 2015 Paris Agreement at COP21 saw 195 countries legally bind themselves to collectively hold warming to "well below 2°C" and to "pursue best efforts to limit warming to 1.5°C by 2100". The latest IPCC estimates put the chances of limiting warming to 1.5°C or even 2°C beyond reach unless there are rapid and immediate emissions reductions. To keep our world "well below 2°C", we need to save 20GtCO₂*² by 2030. To reach a 1.5°C scenario, we need to save 35GtCO₂ by 2030³. If inaction prevails, we can expect a temperature increase of approx. 4.8°C⁴. This would trigger the inundation of coastal cities; increasing risks of food production potentially leading to higher malnutrition rates; unprecedented heat waves, exacerbated water scarcity; increased frequency of tropical cyclones and other natural disasters, as well as irreversible loss of biodiversity, including coral reef systems.

¹ IPCC: *Climate Change 2021: The Physical Science Basis*, the 6th Assessment

² *gigatonnes of CO₂

³ IPCC "*Global Warming of 1.5°C*" special report

⁴ COP21 Paris Agreement 2015 UN Climate Change Conference

Avoiding this is a matter of commitment. Numerous studies show that there are technically and economically feasible emissions pathways that can limit warming to “well below 2°C”⁵. The commitments made on the world stage during the Paris Agreement triggered the start of the climate transition. Worldwide, we have seen scientific, legal, political, financial, and technological progression to curb climate change, with many nations now aiming to transition to net-zero by 2050, or sooner.

As of 2021, we are not on track. The IPCC now expects the world to breach the 1.5°C ceiling between 2021-2040. This is revised from an earlier estimation – 2030-2052 – made just three years ago⁶. Under the terms of the Paris Agreement, countries promised to communicate their carbon-cutting ambitions every five years, with the next World Climate Summit at COP26 in Glasgow happening in November.

AXA IM Climate Transition Award focus

Most scenarios to net-zero involve reducing emissions and removing CO₂. The solutions on the agenda of engineers and policy makers include renewable energy technologies, energy efficiency, electrification, bioenergy, Carbon Capture Utilisation and Storage, hydrogen and hydrogen-based fuels and significant behavioural changes⁷. However, science is continuing to provide a number of pathways to climate transition and key areas are yet to be tackled. This is why AXA IM is launching a Climate Transition Award in partnership with the AXA Research Fund, to recognise transformative **research focused on the most effective ways to power the climate transition and reach net-zero, particularly in the following areas:**

1. Innovative solutions and approaches to mitigation to reach net-zero by 2050.
2. Nature-Based Solutions as a key component of our climate transition, **both in terms of mitigation and adaptation**. Effectiveness and co-existence with other proposed solutions.
3. Measurement and tracking as the crux of the climate change issue, both in terms of assessing our limits and the extent of success or failure in reducing CO₂ levels and other pollutants. For example, **carbon pricing** or alternative approaches to **financial and economic incentives to CO₂** (and other warming gas) **reductions** and **measurement methodologies** for both **GHG emissions reduction and CO₂ removal**.
4. Beyond CO₂, the reduction of other shorter lived climate forcers as a **contribution to warming reduction**.

Candidates applying are expected to demonstrate the novelty, innovation, and impact of their research in these areas.

Researchers eligibility

The AXA Climate Transition Award is aimed at supporting an advanced researcher **between PhD + 8 years⁸ and PhD + 12 years maximum⁹**. Candidates should **consider the application deadline i.e. October 6th, 2021 to calculate their PhD date and assess their eligibility**.

The support should be transformative for the researchers and the advancement of their field. **Candidates should be of the highest calibre** and have demonstrated **outstanding research achievements**, as evidenced by the usual indicators for assessing academic excellence such as research outputs (e.g. publications), research activities (e.g.

⁵ “Turn down the heat – Why a 4°C warmer world must be avoided” Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact and Analytics for the World Bank

⁶ IPCC: *Climate Change 2021: The Physical Science Basis*, the 6th Assessment

⁷ International Energy Association (IEA) Net Zero by 2050

⁸ No flexibility for these dates: researchers below PhD+ 8 years and above PhD+12 years are not eligible.

⁹ Career breaks will not be considered, exceptions will only be made for maternity/paternity leave: 6 months per child to be indicated in the CV.

organizing networks, being involved in communities) and research impact (e.g. policy report, specific recognition through awards, etc.).

Award amount and allocation

The total amount of the award is **100 000€**. The **money must be exclusively dedicated to research purposes**. The amount of the award will be paid to the university with which the researcher is affiliated.

Engagement

It is a requirement that the granted researcher would be **proactive in engaging science with society** when supported by the AXA IM Climate Transition Award and commit to share their research with a broad audience including AXA IM and its clients. We will require participation during an event either attended by, or hosted by, AXA and AXA IM.

Ethics

AXA places extremely high importance on the ethics of the work it supports. Programmes are required to comply fully with all relevant ethical review processes and for this compliance to be evidenced. Cases of scientific misconduct (such as fabrication, falsification, plagiarism or of inappropriate behavior towards staff or other parties) will be considered as breaches of the AXA ethical principles¹⁰ and will be excluded from funding.

Timeline & Application process

- Applications must be submitted **in English, on time**, and **complete** through the following link: <https://myaccount.axa-research.org/application-axaim/>
- Additional documents to the ones requested will not be considered.
- The research topic must fall within the scope of the eligible topic focus.

Timeline

Step	Date & Time
Call for applications	Monday 13th September – Wednesday 6th October 2021 at 16:00 CET Applications received after the deadline or that are incomplete will not be considered.
Results announcement	END October Results will be sent by email to researchers and published.
Event	November 9th 2021 Winner will be invited to attend the World Climate Summit during COP26 in Glasgow as a guest delegate of AXA IM.

¹⁰ AXA Group Compliance and Ethics Guide, 2011: <https://www.axa.com/en/newsroom/publications/compliance-ethics-guide>

Application process

Step 1 – Researchers applications

The applicant will provide:

- The application form duly completed in English available on the application platform.
- In addition to basic information, requested supporting documents will include:
 1. Short CV (3 pages maximum including a link to an online full CV)
 2. A self-filmed video explaining your research project (in approx. 2-4 minutes) - please email this separately to your application via WeTransfer to ClimateTransitionAward@axa-im.com. Please ensure your name and research topic is included in the accompanying message.
 3. Main research area with brief explanation (250 words)
 4. Description of three public engagement examples (150 words)
 5. List of 5 most impactful publications, indicating the publication dates and media (e.g. journal, conference etc.)
 6. Number of citations
 7. Google Scholar h-index
 8. Further details on current research projects and motivations (250 words)
 9. **OPTIONAL:** A link to an existing short video presentation e.g. your website or YouTube channel featuring relevant content or evidence of speaking opportunities

Step 2 – Screening

AXA will perform an internal pre-selection to ensure requirements are met.

Step 3 – Selection & results publication

The selection committee will examine the applications. Candidates will be informed of the decisions by email. The selection committee's decision is final and cannot be appealed. It can neither be disputed nor subject to explanations or justifications. Participation to the award process implies acceptance of the rules and guidelines put forth in this document and the requirements that follow.

Awardee Obligations

The researcher and AXA will enter a legal contract for the grant of the award donation. The contract will specify the obligations for the grantee who accepts the award, including involvement in media activities on behalf of AXA IM.

