Growing Together: Western Sydney Connect ImpactMaker 2026

Seed Funding Guidelines and Procedure

ImpactMaker is part of the UNSW Business School's flagship *Growing Together: Western Sydney Connect* initiative led by BUS EDI and supported by the UNSW Business Insights Institute, Research and Enterprise, and Impact and Partnership of the UNSW Business School. This initiative is also in partnership with Western Sydney Community Forum.

OBJECTIVE

This initiative is designed to create opportunities for academics to collaborate and co-create with local community organisations and councils across Greater Western Sydney in response to real-world challenges, with the aim of combining academic and societal impact.

Post the Roundtable event on 27 March 2026, matched research teams are required to submit a short proposal to be considered for seed funding.

As funding is competitive (up to seven projects will be funded), proposals should clearly demonstrate **practical impact, research value, and potential for future scalability**.

KEY DATES

'Matched' project selected: Applications open for seed funding	Friday, 27 March, 2026
Closing date for submission of proposal to the UNSW Business Insights Institute *	Friday 10 April 2026 (COB)
Notification of outcomes	Friday 24 April, 2026
Commencement of funding	W/C 27 April, 2026

* Matched teams unable to attend the matchmaking roundtable and who may be selected afterwards may not be able to submit a proposal before the closing date. Late applications can be considered for funding on a case-by-case basis, provided they previously notified the organisers of the matchmaking roundtable about their circumstances.

1. ELIGIBILITY

a) Academics who have been selected by an organisation to collaborate on their proposed project for the ImpactMaker are allowed to apply, following the Roundtable event on 27 March 2026.

b) Each academic can be on two projects but can only lead one.

c) Academics are required to inform and obtain approval from their Head of School or Centre Director before participating in the seed grant program.

2. FUNDING

a) Applicants may apply for, and receive, seed funding of up to $10,000. The funds are required to be spent following UNSW expenditure policy and proposed budget must be expended by the end of UNSW's 2026 financial year.

3. BUDGET ITEMS SUPPORTED

a) Budget items which directly support research projects and/or develop new initiatives may be funded.
   i) Personnel: For example, research assistants. Rates must be in accordance with UNSW Casual Staff Salary Rates (the budget presented for personnel must be calculated by considering the oncosts associated with casual employees of 18.30%). Applications should indicate the level and duration of assistance required and clearly state the nature and extent of the work to be done.
   ii) Infrastructure/equipment essential to the project.
   iii) Knowledge translation cost, including events, hosting workshops/conferences, and people costs for design and writing of white papers/reports.
   iv) Fieldwork-related expenses (e.g. travel expenses related to the collaboration).

b) It is expected that the funding support will be expended in line with the approved budget.

4. BUDGET ITEMS NOT SUPPORTED

a) The following budget items are not allowable:
   i) Salaries of academic staff, including teaching and/or marking buy-out.
   ii) Budget items that should reasonably be supplied by academic units.
   iii) Stipends for postgraduate scholarships.

5. ASSESSMENT AND RANKING

a) To apply for funding, applicants should submit an application via Microsoft Forms. The application must include the following (please see Appendix 1 for full details):
   i. Lead applicant name
   ii. Lead applicant email
   iii. Project title
   iv. Researcher Team and Partner Organisation (10%)
   v. Project overview (30%)
   vi. Expected practical outputs and impact (30%)
   vii. Expected research output and aim (30%)
   viii. Budget outline

Applications for funding will open following the Roundtable event on 27 March 2026, and will close on Friday 10 April 2026.

b) The Selection Committee will use the following criteria to evaluate submitted applications:
   i. **Research Team and Partner Organisation (10%)**
      - List partners, contacts, academic leads & roles
         - Note relevant experience from each of the team members in the topic.

ii. **Project Overview (30%)**
   a. Justification for seed funding
   - Partner challenge addressed (research question)
   - Research contribution & key activities
   - Future scale potential (larger projects/partnerships)

iii. **Practical Outputs & Impact (30%)**
   - Deliverables to partner
   - Societal benefits for partner/Greater Western Sydney

iv. **Research Output & Aim (30%)**
   - Research questions addressed
   - Deliverables for the academics
   - Potential for publishable/fundable research

c) The selection committee consists of:
   i. UNSW Business Insights Institute Director
   ii. Senior Deputy Dean (Impact and Partnerships)
   iii. UNSW Business Insights Institute Research Associate
   iv. Associate Dean BUS EDI
   v. Representative from Western Sydney Community Forum

6. REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

a) Successful applicants must provide two deliverables at project completion:
   - A copy of the deliverables handed to the client, if any, with financial statements
   - A final report including key findings to support showcasing and knowledge-sharing efforts, as well as information about next steps to build on the project outcomes, such as future funding applications.

The report must be submitted within two months of the completion of the project no later than February 28, 2027.

b) Lead applicants and members of the team are expected to acknowledge ImpactMaker in any events or outputs that relate to research/activity conducted as part of this grant.

7. APPLICATION FORM

To submit a seed grant application, use the web form link that will be circulated after the 27th March Roundtable Session.

ENQUIRIES

For further information, please contact the UNSW Business Insights Institute shared inbox:
Email: unswbusinessinsightsinstitute@unsw.edu.au

Below is the list of questions you will be asked to respond via Microsoft Forms.

1. Lead applicant name
2. Lead applicant email
3. Project Title: A clear, concise title reflecting the project's focus.

4. Partner organisation(s) and researcher team (max 150 words) 10%

List each external partner, their primary contact, organisation, and the names and roles of the academic(s). Briefly note any prior experience of each member of the academic team that aligns with the project (for example, research translation, methods, projects, or topic expertise).

5. Project overview: activities, timeline, and potential (250 words max) 30%

- Why should this project be prioritised for seed funding?
- The partner challenge or priority being addressed
- The research team's proposed contribution
- Do you have or have you sought your Head of School or Centre Director's approval before embarking on this project?
- Outline key activities and milestones, including how collaboration will be structured and delivered.
- What is the **potential for future scale**, either:
  - As a larger research project (e.g. funded pilot, academic publication)
  - Or as a long-term strategic partnership with the partner organisation,
  - Or ideally, both.
- Use of bullet points for conciseness is accepted.

Note: While the activities may continue beyond 2026, all funds must be expended by the end of UNSW's 2026 financial year.

6. Expected Practical Outputs and Impact (100 words max) 30%

- What will be delivered to the partner (e.g., report, prototype, framework, recommendations)?
- What practical societal benefits will the partner organisation and/or Greater Western Sydney gain from this work.

8. Expected Research Output and Aim (100 words max) 30%

- What research questions or themes does the project engage with?
- How will the collaboration support the development of publishable or fundable research (academic output)?

9. Budget Outline (up to $10,000)

Brief breakdown of how funds will be used with justification (e.g. RA support, data collection, travel, stakeholder workshops, etc.). Must use the Excel template provided here: https://shorturl.at/8Q1BW

Notes:
- Each researcher can be on two projects but can only lead one.
- Funds must be expended by the end of UNSW's 2026 financial year.
- A final report and summary of key findings will be required at project completion to support showcase and knowledge-sharing efforts led by EDI, BII and Impact and Partnerships.

10. Amount requested