Seed Fund Research Call for Proposals 2025-2026

**“Path to a Sustainable UM: Research Call for Transformative Solutions”**

# Background and purpose

Much like governments, industries, and the financial sector, educational institutions are increasingly called upon to address their role in advancing sustainable practices, particularly within the context of regional and institutional sustainability efforts.[[1]](#footnote-1) Maastricht University (UM) recognizes this pressing need and is positioned to lead this change, using scientific research to deliver innovative solutions for a sustainable future. For this transformative change, UM has recently launched Sustainability Roadmap 2030, a strategic plan that provides guidance on how UM will structurally embed sustainability into all its activities (education, research and operations) in the coming years.

Our sustainability ambitions can be achieved if they are supported by researchers across all UM faculties engaging with issues broadly related to sustainability, with a focus on core themes of climate, circularity and community. The diverse topics can range from sustainable catering, mobility, real estate, energy solutions, to material flow analysis, campus procurement, among others. By translating theoretical knowledge and proof-of-concepts into practical applications, the valorisation of this research will drive UM toward a sustainable future.

**Call for Proposals**

UM aspires to serve as a ‘living lab’ that modes and advances sustainable practices within operational aspects.[[2]](#footnote-2) To bring sustainability research at UM to next level and fostering this transition to a sustainable UM, we invite UM researchers to submit applications for seed fund projects aimed at fostering interdisciplinary and cross-faculty research collaboration, with a focus on advancing sustainable practices to achieve climate-neutral or circular UM operations while improving community well-being.

The research stemming from these projects will be:

* **challenge driven**, addressing the sustainability challenges across UM operations
* **interdisciplinary,** bridging disciplinary boundaries and involve researchers from at least two UM faculties
* **collaborative,** creating ties with external stakeholders within the region
* **impactful**, exploring possibilities to contribute to bachelor, master and PhD programmes of UM
* **visible and relevant,** addressing the needs of research, education, business development, policymaking and the wider society

**Match-making event ‘Transformative solutions to a sustainable UM’**

In order to foster collaboration between researchers of different faculties, SUM2030 will organize a so-called match-making event. Researchers will have the opportunity to discuss and interact with each other to focus on how to make UM operations more sustainable via research.

This match-making event will take place on **Tuesday, September 02th**, from **15:00 – 17:00**.

Location: Tapijnkazerne (exact room will be shared later)

Registration is mandatory and sign-up through this [link](https://maastrichtuniversity.eu.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_datRQWjUpNvm54q).

**Writing your proposal**

Selected proposals in this call will be awarded a seed fund that facilitates:

* establishing strategic collaborations between sustainability researchers within UM
* preparing for external (international) collaboration and research grants.

The seed fund should preferably support new research collaborations or strategically and significantly expand existing research collaborations.

# Who can apply?

The call is open for all researchers with a position at UM.

# What can be applied?

The maximum requested amount of funding per proposal is €75,000. The own contribution per proposal is at least €10,000 (cash or in-kind, to be specified in the proposal).

Total budget: €240.000

**Evaluation criteria**

*Eligibility*

* The proposal is submitted by researchers from at least two UM faculties
* The proposal includes a commitment and a specification for the own contribution to the budget

*Research quality and originality*

The proposal

* demonstrates the added value of the research collaboration and the contributions of different scientific fields, advancing sustainable practices to achieve climate-neutral or circular UM operations
* provides a concrete plan for identifying (further) external stakeholders such as companies and (local) governments

*Team*

The applicants

* have a track record in the proposed research field(s)
* are able to attract and engage top researchers and students from UM
* are able to attract and engage different partners across sectors (e.g. business, government)

*Impact and future potential*

The proposal

* is supported by one or more external stakeholders and/or Brightlands campuses confirmed and specified in a Letter of Support
* clarifies how the researchers will engage with other researchers and/or stakeholders to grow from a seed fund project to a larger research project
* provides a concrete plan for further research support from external funds

**Submission of applications**

Proposals can be submitted using the application form in the appendix to *sustainability@maastrichtuniversity.nl* and should not exceed a maximum of five pages. The submission deadline is October 6th 2025.

**More information**

For additional information, please contact Ahmed Hussain, SUM2030 Sustainability Research Coordinator via [ahmed.hussain@maastrichtuniversity.nl](mailto:ahmed.hussain@maastrichtuniversity.nl)

Appendix - **Application form Call “Transformative solutions to a Sustainable UM” (max. 5 pages after completion)**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Proposal details** | | | |
| Main Applicant: |  | | |
| Title(s), initial(s), name: |  | | |
| Phone: |  | | |
| E-mail: |  | | |
| Department: |  | | |
| Co-applicants (at least 1): |  | | |
|  | Name | Department | School/Institute |
|  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |
| Etc. |  |  |  |
| Title of the proposal: |  | | |
| Project duration (Months): |  | | |

|  |
| --- |
| **Sustainability Research Collaboration and Strategy** |
| Please include the following elements: added value of the research collaboration; the contributions of the different scientific fields with a focus on advancing sustainable practices to achieve climate-neutral or circular UM operations; and a plan for identifying (and further engaging) external stakeholders, such as companies and local governments |
|  |
| **Project Goal, Workplan and Outcomes** |
| Please describe: the goal of the project, project approach, time plan/work plan, and the expected outcomes |
|  |
| **Project Team** |
| Please describe: the members of the research team, the complementary expertise, and the track record of each applicant |
|  |
| **Impact and Future Potential** |
| Please describe: how this seed grant is supported by external stakeholders, how researchers will engage with other researchers and/or stakeholders to grow from a seed fund project to a larger research project, the plan for further research support from external funds, and the type of output/dissemination project is planning. |
|  |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Budget** | |
| Total project costs: | € |
| Specification of the project costs: |  |
| Requested amount of funding (max. requested budget is € 75,000): | € |
| Amount and specification of co-funding (cash or in-kind) by applicants | € |

1. [European Circular Economy Stakeholder Platform (2016)](https://circulareconomy.europa.eu/platform/sites/default/files/17037circulaireeconomie_en.pdf) [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. [UM Sustainability Roadmap 2030](http://maastrichtuniversity.nl/file/um-sustainability-roadmap-2030pdf) [↑](#footnote-ref-2)