

Collaborative Energy Transition Catalyst

2026 Seed Funding Program

GUIDELINES



Melbourne
Energy
Institute



Collaborative Energy Transition Catalyst

The Melbourne Energy Institute (MEI)'s seed funding program fosters cross-faculty collaboration to address the complex challenges of the global energy transition.

The program supports early to mid-career researchers in developing innovative, interdisciplinary projects that integrate technical, economic, environmental, and social perspectives. The aim of the program is to drive innovation, advance Australia's energy future, and strengthen the University's leadership in energy research.

Objectives

MEI's Collaborative Energy Transition Catalyst is designed to:

- encourage bold, early-stage research ideas;
- support early to mid-career researchers (EMCRs) to develop research leadership;
- stimulate collaboration across faculties by leveraging diverse expertise;
- drive real-world impact by addressing Australia's energy transition challenges;
- build capacity for securing larger external grants;
- encourage engagement with industry, government, and community partners; and
- strengthen the University's position as a leader in energy research.

Funding availability and timeframe

Applicants must not request more than \$50k, with a request of \$25-50k typical. Outcomes of the seed-funded projects should be produced within 12 months of seed funding being awarded.

Eligibility

Lead applicants must:

- be early to mid-career researchers (within 10 years of completing their PhD);
- hold an ongoing or fixed-term academic appointment at the University; and
- not hold more than one University of Melbourne seed funding grant simultaneously.

MEI's seed funding program is intended to support the development and leadership of early to mid-career researchers. As such, applications will not be eligible where the lead applicant's proposed collaborators are senior academics who supervise or directly oversee the applicant's research activities.

Project requirements

Whilst MEI will consider many uses of its funds, all requests must satisfy the following criteria:

- the project must be interdisciplinary, involving at least two Departments or Schools. Cross Faculty projects will be given priority;

- the project must show collaboration with external partners; and
- the project must demonstrate how it will achieve real world impact.

Project deliverables

Successful projects are expected to produce at least three deliverables, including:

1. One of the following:

- **Proposal submission:** A proposal to an external funding organisation, aiming for a total planned return on investment (ROI) of at least 10:1 based on all University cash contributions (not limited to support from this program). While achieving a 10:1 return is not mandatory, it is encouraged as a target;

OR

- **Alternative outcome:** Such as an event, communication materials, or another activity that demonstrates impact.

2. Impact demonstration:

Evidence of how the project will create meaningful, real-world impact.

3. Public communication:

As a requirement of all approved proposals, recipients will be required to write ~800 words about the impact or potential impact of the research. This will be made media ready and promoted through MEI's newsletter, website and social media pages, and/ or other publications such as Pursuit or The Conversation. MEI's seed funding support must be acknowledged in all communication.

How to apply

Applications open on **15 June 2026**, and close at **11:59pm on 31 July 2026**. Successful projects will be announced on 28 August 2026. Applicants must complete and submit the application form in the following link:

[APPLY NOW >](#)

Reporting requirements

Successful applicants are required to:

- Submit a progress report every 2 months, using MEI's provided reporting template. The report will outline the current status of your proposed work and delivery against the agreed deliverables. Project reports be reviewed at MEI's bimonthly Executive Committee meeting. Reporting will continue until all deliverables have been met.
- Acknowledge MEI's seed funding support in all resulting outputs.

Contact

For further information, please contact the Melbourne Energy Institute at mei-info@unimelb.edu.au or visit <https://energy.unimelb.edu.au/research-programs/collaborative-energy-transition-catalyst>.

Key dates

Activity	Date
Applications open	15 June 2026
Applications close	11:59pm on 31 July 2026
Funding outcomes announced	28 August 2026
Project completion	Within 12 months of funding being awarded

Contact Us

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