

Mason's Living Lab Research Seed Funding

George Mason University's campuses are dynamic, living learning environments with diverse and growing arrays of buildings, roadways, watercourses, and forests. The university also faces the urgent challenge of becoming more sustainable and resilient. In this context, the creativity and entrepreneurial spirit of Mason faculty, staff, and students are critically important resources. **Mason's new Living Lab program aims to stimulate and support the development of new research and scholarship initiatives that use the campuses and their physical and socio-ecological structures for experimentation and education to develop and advance sustainability solutions.**

With the launch of the Living Lab Program, the Institute for a Sustainable Earth (ISE) seeks to support research projects. **Mason faculty are invited to submit proposals for seed funding to support research projects that utilize Mason's campuses and socio-environmental systems to develop innovative solutions to local or global sustainability challenges and/or advance a novel sustainability-focused research agenda.** Supported activities might include – but are not limited to – initial data collection, implementation of a pilot project, advancing ongoing research, proposal development, testing solution prototypes, and/or implementing a demonstration project of a specific innovation. Proposals must discuss how the proposed work will enable the applicants to scale their research agenda and/or advance entrepreneurial activity. Applicants should also reference the UN Sustainable Development Goals when identifying the sustainability challenge(s) that they seek to address with this funding.

Proposals will be considered from individuals or teams. Applicants may submit proposals for up to one year of funding with a budget not to exceed \$20,000. We expect to fund 2-3 projects this year.

Details about the proposal requirements and process can be found below.

Key Dates

Call for Proposals Released with Q&A: April 12, 2023

Proposal Due Date: May 25, 2023

Funding Decisions: June 15, 2023

Eligibility/Requirements

- All faculty who are currently allowed to submit proposals under Mason's [Principal Investigators Policy 4012](#). Faculty are encouraged to propose projects that integrate multiple PIs, disciplines, and programs.
- Projects may address all stages of research and scholarship from basic/fundamental research and scholarship to applied/translational projects.
- A faculty member may only participate as a member of the proposing team on 1 proposal in this competition.

Proposal Requirements

Participants seeking this support must submit a proposal that includes the following components.

- 1) **Cover Page** (Up to 1 page)
 - a) Title of Proposal
 - b) Names and Affiliations of Proposing Team Members [both Mason members and external partner(s), if any]. For Mason team members, include the Department and College/School.
 - c) Project Summary (200 words maximum) – brief description of the project to be published on the Living Lab webpage
- 2) **Project Description.** (3 page maximum). The project description must:
 - a) Clearly identify and justify how the proposed work will advance an innovative sustainability solution; describe how the proposed work will engage Mason's campus environment and its socio-environmental systems; describe how the proposed project will lead to sustained or scalable research and/or impact; and discuss how the project can advance Mason's strategic goals.

- b) Include a detailed work plan that outlines a timeline for the proposed work, identifies the project team and their roles in the proposed work, and describes the milestones and anticipated outcomes.
 - c) Describe how you will engage student researchers and scholars during the activities.
- 3) **Budget.** (2 page maximum, provide an itemized proposal budget spreadsheet). The project budget must be detailed and well-justified. The total project budget may not exceed \$20,000. Projects with smaller budgets are encouraged. Funds may be used for research support personnel (including students), materials, consultants, training and/or other project-related expenses. Budgets may include small stipends for faculty (\$500 per faculty member) but may not be used for faculty summer salary or release time during the academic year.
- 4) **Biographical statements.** Proposing teams should submit brief biographical statements for each team member (200 word maximum per person).
- 5) **Letters of collaboration (OPTIONAL).** Proposals may include letters of collaboration that confirm the participation of key partners in the proposed work. These letters must be brief (no more than 1 page each) and should not include description of work beyond what is included in the project description.

Format

Margin: No smaller than 1-inch margins

Font Size Font size of no less than 11 point

Line Spacing: No more than 6 lines per vertical inch, single space

Figures are included in the page count.

References are **not** included in the page count and should be listed after the Project Description.

Submission

Applications must be submitted **as one complete PDF document** by 11:59 pm EST (Eastern Standard Time) by May 25, 2023, to malila@gmu.edu, use subject line "Living Labs Grants 2023".

Review Criteria

Reviewers will use the following criteria to evaluate proposals:

- ***Overall quality of the project proposed***
- ***Clarity, feasibility and promise of proposed project goals and outcomes***
- ***Experience and expertise of project team***

Funding decisions will be contingent upon Mason Facilities' approval of the proposed use of the campus environment. APPLICANTS MUST NOT CONTACT MASON FACILITIES SEEKING APPROVAL PRIOR TO SUBMISSION OF THEIR PROPOSAL. Instead, applicants should contact Living Lab program manager (Judit Ungvari) with questions about potential use of the campus environment.

Post Award

- Applicants will be required to submit a brief Final Report.

Please direct questions to malila@gmu.edu or Judit Ungvari at jungvari@gmu.edu. Applicants are encouraged to contact the program manager before sending their proposals.