



Melbourne Climate Futures Climate Research Accelerator (CRX) 2024 Expressions of Interest

1. Context

Melbourne Climate Futures (MCF) was established by the University of Melbourne in 2021 to lead on climate change, the first 'global challenge' identified by the University under the *Advancing Melbourne 2030* strategy. MCF aims to accelerate the transition to a positive climate future, focusing efforts both nationally and globally, especially in the Indo-Pacific Region. MCF builds on decades of UoM climate research, bringing together academics across disciplines to develop practical outcomes for the challenges ahead.

The MCF Climate Research Accelerator (CRX) is an important part of this solutions toolkit. There have been two previous rounds of funding. It is expected that this round of CRX will fund **up to 4 projects with up to \$50,000 AUD** granted to each successful project.¹

The CRX funding round will focus upon research projects that already have a **level of establishment** (i.e. this is not a seed-funding round). MCF is cognisant that many promising research projects may end prematurely due to the funding 'valley of death'. Thus, this round will focus upon projects that have previously received seed funding, remain promising, but have not yet secured further funding to achieve their full potential.

The projects must also be able to demonstrate a high likelihood of making an immediate impact upon the climate problem. Therefore, the CRX will be looking to realise a project's viability through applied research to support further scaling and stronger implementation. Given the complex nature of the climate problem, the CRX will require interdisciplinary representation within teams.

This current CRX scheme is not intended to be the end point of funded projects. MCF will be invested in the project's success and will work with researchers to support the funded projects thrive within and beyond the CRX. You can find out more about previously funded projects [here](#).

2. Scope of the call

- The long-term project outcome(s) must demonstrate a high likelihood of making a timely and meaningful impact on the climate problem.
- The project must be highly collaborative and demonstrate interdisciplinarity. For example, the project must demonstrate broad intra-faculty breadth or inter-faculty linkages.
- The funding round will focus upon projects that have established funding prior to this application.
- The funding is intended to be used to progress work on an established project. Established projects are those that have completed the foundational research element and require applied research to realise the project's viability for further scaling and implementation.
- Projects must be feasible within the stated timeframe.

¹ Please note, granting funding is at the discretion of the assessment panel and funding may not be disbursed if there are insufficient competitive submissions.



- MCF reserves the right to not disburse all the funds if there are insufficient competitive submissions within the scope of the call.

Short- and long-term project outcome(s) can address both climate change mitigation and adaptation, although addressing both is not a prerequisite for the application. Projects that have existing linkages with stakeholders, including end-users, will be favoured but is not a prerequisite for application. Projects that aim to make well-targeted and tangible interventions to respond to climate change challenges will be favoured. However, projects that include a foundational research element that aims to cover a knowledge gap will not be excluded from the call.

3. Eligibility

- 3.1 Individuals who hold a salaried appointment at the University of Melbourne for the duration of the funding period are eligible to apply.
- 3.2 Team members may include researchers, honorary appointments, and students external to the University of Melbourne.

4. Timeframe

The call for submissions will open on **Monday 29 April 2024** and close **Friday 31 May 2024**. A three-week assessment period will follow the close of submissions, and results will be communicated to applicants by **Friday 21 June 2024**. Funding will be disbursed to the successful applicants by **Monday 1 July 2024**.

The project finish date will be set at 12 months from the date of disbursement unless a time extension has been granted. Extensions will only be granted in extenuating circumstances (i.e. not for project management challenges or other reasons that should be possible to anticipate). Applications for extensions should be sent via email to melbourne-climate-futures@unimelb.edu.au no less than 60 days prior to the project finish date. Extensions of no more than 6 months will be granted.

5. Brokerage/information session

MCF will host a half-hour information drop-in session via Zoom for researchers to attend and discuss their potential projects with MCF. The intention of the session is to provide interested researchers with an opportunity to receive more background details, meet others who are interested in applying, and ask any questions they might have.

The information drop-in session will be held via Zoom on **Tuesday 30 April 2024 at 11.30 AM – 12.00 PM AEST**. We encourage all interested researchers to join. You can register for the Zoom session [here](#)

6. Budget

It is expected that a total of up to **4 projects will be funded**, with between **\$30-50,000 AUD** granted to each successful project. Funding may be used for project research and administration support; convening and workshopping costs; and other applied research. The funding is not intended to pay for laboratory rent or equipment, infrastructure payments or other physical assets. Applicants will be



required to outline anticipated budget items in the application form. Please refer to the Project Funding Guidelines for details.

7. Measuring the carbon footprint of your proposed research activities

MCF takes the position that getting to net zero requires academics to take responsibility for and seek to reduce the carbon emissions associated with our research activities. This is also recognised in the University's Sustainability Plan 2030. As with the previous round, we are taking the opportunity of this grant process to use the University's carbon calculator, developed by the University's Director, Sustainability, Katie Mee. Included within the budgeting of your project, we expect you to use the Carbon Offset Bank to calculate and include the emissions embedded in your research activities and the associated cost of offsetting these emissions (at ~\$30/tonne) within your budget: <https://sustainablecampus.unimelb.edu.au/carbon-offsets-bank/>. We recognise that valid criticisms have been levelled at the usage of carbon offsets. This is, however, the current approach of the University. In addition, MCF has provided guidance to the University on buying high integrity offsets, which was used by the University's Sustainability team to purchase offsets in 2023. Upon completion you will receive a 'carbon offset preview' form. Please attach this to your application. As this is still in early development, we ask that you provide us with any feedback, especially on: ease of use; clarity of information; additional categories of emissions that could be included; and anything else. Please forward feedback to: sustainability-2030@unimelb.edu.au.

8. Evaluation and assessment

Applications will be assessed on a competitive basis by an Assessment Committee comprising the Director and Deputy Directors of Melbourne Climate Futures, and Faculty representatives. The Assessment Committee will assess each application according to its alignment with the Assessment Criteria. Applications will be assessed in a single round. The Assessment Criteria are:

Project outcomes:

- Can the project reasonably achieve the short- and long-term project outcomes?
- What and how much impact will the short- and long-term project outcome likely have?
- When will the short- and long-term project outcome be realised?

CRX impact on the project:

- What project milestone(s) will the CRX funding help deliver?
- What is the likelihood of achieving those milestones within the 12-month timeframe?

9. Submission format

Applicants must complete the relevant application form. In addition, a **project outline of no more than 3 pages** must supplement the application form. The project outline must contain:

- A description of the project including its current state (½-1 page);
- A description of the intended short- and long-term project outcome and timelines (½ page);
- A statement on how the CRX will help you accelerate the short- and long-term project outcomes, and what milestones you can achieve within the 12-month timeframe, **particularly focusing on the impact your project will have** (1-1½ pages);



- A listing and brief justification of the budget items (½ page);
- The output from the University's carbon offsets bank.

The application form and project outline must be attached as a single PDF or Word document and sent to melbourne-climate-futures@unimelb.edu.au.

10. 2024 Key application dates

- Applications open Monday 29 April
- Brokerage/Information session held on Tuesday 30 April (register [here](#))
- Applications close Friday 31 May
- Assessment of applications begins in June
- Notification of results by Monday 24 June
- Disbursement of funds by Monday 1 July

11. Further information

Should you have any queries as to any part of the application process, please contact either Kathryn Bowen or Ben Neville (Deputy Directors, MCF) at kathryn.bowen@unimelb.edu.au banevi@unimelb.edu.au or melbourne-climate-futures@unimelb.edu.au.