



Guidelines

2025 UBC Vancouver Campus as a Living Lab Fund Competition

The 2025 UBC Vancouver Campus as a Living Lab (CLL) Fund Competition invites UBC faculty and staff at the Vancouver campus to develop interdisciplinary living lab projects that respond to global sustainability challenges in our local context. The competition provides a total of \$500,000 in seed funding, awarded in two streams:

- Small Projects: \$10,000–\$30,000 per project
- Large Projects: \$50,000–\$100,000 per project

These Guidelines provide information and directions on the 2025 UBC Vancouver CLL Fund Competition requirements, processes, and documents. For additional information, including updated responses to questions, please visit the [competition page on UBC's CLL website](#).

UBC Campus as a Living Lab

At UBC, [Campus as a Living Lab is a collaborative framework](#) for researchers, students, staff, and external partners to leverage the campus to explore, develop and test new ideas, and to share the knowledge gained from these experiences. UBC living lab projects respond to the world's most urgent sustainability challenges.

Campus Living Lab projects and activities are guided by a set of core values, in addition to those in the UBC Strategic Plan, [Shaping UBC's Next Century](#):

Sustainability: We support and develop projects that contribute to ecological, social and economic sustainability, address the climate and biodiversity crises, and are aligned with the long-term strategic vision for the UBC campus and its community.

Equity & Inclusion: We embed justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion in all our projects and in our engagement with UBC community members and external partners.

Transparency: We build collaborations and partnerships through clear and open processes, and ensure fair, ethical, consensual, and transparent engagement.

Collaborative Learning: We embrace participatory and reciprocal ways of learning and sharing knowledge, reflective of the different communities, knowledge systems, and experiences of those engaged in our projects.

Living Lab Projects

Campus Living Lab projects leverage UBC's academic and operational capabilities to respond to global problems in our local context, in alignment with the UBC Strategic Plan: *Creating vibrant, sustainable environments that enhance wellbeing and excellence for people in their places at UBC and beyond*.

The Campus as a Living Lab Fund supports projects that bring together academic talent and operational expertise to co-create solutions grounded in research, real-world application, and institutional learning. A successful UBC CLL project embodies five core characteristics that define both what the project proposes to do and how it delivers



meaningful impact. The first two characteristics reflect the project's intellectual and creative contribution. The final three describe the project's reach, impact, and long-term potential. Across all five, projects are expected to uphold and reflect the four guiding values of UBC's Campus as a Living Lab: Sustainability, Equity and Inclusion, Transparency, and Collaborative Learning.

1. Innovation

Strong projects bring forward novel or significantly improved ideas, processes, or practices that address real-world sustainability challenges. Innovation can take many forms—technical, social, procedural, or cultural, etc.—and may include new ways of thinking, engaging, organizing, or acting. Projects should have the potential to spark meaningful change at UBC and generate inspiration beyond the university.

2. Research Excellence

Projects should demonstrate academic rigour and contribute new insights to a body of knowledge. This includes clear research questions, robust methodologies, and well-defined processes. Strong proposals will reflect excellence in academic scholarship and show potential to inform future research, policy, or practice across disciplines.

3. Relevance to UBC Campus and Community

Living Lab projects are rooted in the strategic context and operational realities of the university. They should directly align with UBC's sustainability and climate action priorities—such as the Climate Action Plan 2030, the Climate Emergency Task Force Report, and other institutional policies or frameworks. Proposals should clearly identify what will be implemented or improved at UBC, why this change is needed, and how the outcomes will strengthen the university's ability to lead and learn as a living lab.

4. Student Engagement and Learning Opportunities

Student involvement is a defining feature of a Living Lab. Strong projects actively engage students through research, design, implementation, evaluation, or storytelling. They create opportunities for hands-on, interdisciplinary, and mentorship-based learning, enabling students to make meaningful contributions while gaining valuable skills and insights.

5. Potential Impacts and Knowledge Sharing

A strong project has the potential to extend its impact beyond UBC. This may include replicability, adaptability, or opportunities for scale-up in other institutional, municipal, or community contexts. Knowledge sharing should go beyond academic publication, through tools, frameworks, partnerships, or public-facing engagement. Projects should help build capacity for change across sectors and settings.

Within the context of the CLL Fund Competition, projects are also encouraged to pursue opportunities for:

- Regional partnerships with public, private, and community organizations.
- Collaboration and knowledge exchange on or off campus
- Leveraging the competition funding, and a growth pathway beyond the funded project scope.



Competition Theme: Campus as a Living Lab

The theme of the 2025 competition is “Campus as a Living Lab”—reflecting not only the name of our program, but also its core ambition: to facilitate collaboration between academic and operational partners to co-create and co-develop projects that use the university for innovation, learning, and transformative change.

Applicants are encouraged to define and express their own vision of what their living lab project could be. While environmental, ecological, and technical approaches are supported, we also welcome bold, creative, and interdisciplinary interpretations that explore the social, cultural, procedural, and organizational dimensions of sustainability. The aim is to broaden how we think about “Campus as a Living Lab”—recognizing that meaningful change can emerge from many different directions and pathways. Examples of existing living lab projects are available on the CLL website: livinglabs.ubc.ca/projects.

Successful projects will be grounded in real-world application, demonstrate interdisciplinary collaboration, and engage both academic researchers and operational staff. Proposals should clearly articulate how the project contributes to UBC’s strategic priorities—such as the UBC Strategic Plan and Strategic Directions, the Climate Action Plan 2030 or 20-year Sustainability Strategy—while offering pathways for institutional learning, policy advancement, and broader impact on and beyond campus.

Eligibility and Project Leads

The 2025 UBC Vancouver CLL Fund Competition is open to faculty and staff with appointments at the UBC Vancouver campus.

The Project Leads must include one UBC Vancouver faculty member (the Faculty Lead) and one UBC Vancouver staff member (the Staff Lead). Leads co-develop and co-direct the project; and both must be actively involved throughout the entire duration to ensure that the project embodies all five of the characteristics listed above.

- Faculty Leads must be full, Associate, or Assistant Professors in tenure-track positions.
- Staff Leads must be permanent, full-time university staff, in a position to make direct decisions and enable the implementation of the project at UBC.

The Leads must be in different departments, disciplines, or units relevant to the proposed project. Both Leads must be in positions to take responsibility and make key decisions for the project, including holding financial accounts and enabling implementation.

Research Associates, Research Assistants, Post-doctoral Fellows, Lecturers, and Adjunct Professors are not eligible to serve as either Project Lead but may be an Additional Lead (see below) or part of the project team.

Applicants may only serve as a Faculty or Staff Lead on one CLL application. However, they may participate as team members on other applications.



Project Teams and Partners

An optional Additional Lead may be included in the application, which could be any of the following:

- Another UBC faculty member
- A UBC Post-Doctoral Fellow or Research Associate currently working under the supervision of a UBC faculty member
- Another UBC staff member
- A UBC non-operational staff member that works within a UBC academic unit or in an area relevant to the proposed project

The Project Team can be composed of other UBC personnel, including students, post-doctoral fellows, faculty and staff. The proposed project team should be described in the application, along with their roles and functions in the project.

Project teams may include external partners either as project collaborators or knowledge users. Partners may be from other universities, or public, private, or community organizations outside of UBC. Confirmed partners should be identified in the application, including their role and interest in the project and its outcomes. Project teams may also describe how the project will identify and develop partner relationships as part of the project activities.

Indigenous collaborations must be grounded in relationships and led by community. Projects that have Indigenous community partners must demonstrate an established relationship and community support and involvement in the project. A research permit or other documentation of approval from the Indigenous community must be included in the application.

Competition Funding

The 2025 UBC Vancouver Campus Living Lab Fund Competition will provide up to \$500,000 in total seed funding. The funding is available through two streams:

- Small Projects: \$10,000–\$30,000 per project
- Large Projects: \$50,000–\$100,000 per project

There is no fixed allocation between streams—funding will be awarded based on the quantity and quality of the proposals received.

Disbursement of Funds:

- Small Projects will receive the full amount of funding in March 2026.
- Large Projects will receive 75% of awarded funding in March 2026 and a holdback of the final 25% provided upon submission of all final reporting and documentation.

All funds must be spent on project activities by the project end date. A proposed project workplan and budget must be submitted with the application and will be updated as part of both the mid-year and/or the fiscal year-end reporting.



Project teams are encouraged to leverage the CLL seed funds to expand the project through grants, additional external funding, or in-kind contributions. However, applicants are not required to have secured matching funds at the time of application.

Project Timelines

The official project timelines are March 15, 2026 through March 31, 2028. Project activities should be planned to complete prior to this deadline. Extensions beyond this deadline are not guaranteed.

Eligible Expenses

The following expenses are eligible to be covered by this funding

- Compensation of UBC undergraduate and graduate students working on the project, either through stipends or direct hires, such as Work Learn Students and Graduate Research Assistants.
- Project-specific, grant-funded staff costs up to a maximum of 30% of the total funding amount requested.
- Expenses towards the organization of stakeholder collaborations specific to this project.
- Honoraria for Indigenous Elders.
- Purchase or rental of equipment, software, licenses, and other materials relevant to the project.
- Expenses associated with site or facility preparation, operation and maintenance, and the work required to return the site to its previous conditions, if required under the approval process.
- Third-party contractual fees when a vendor is required to do a portion of the work.
- Expenses associated with data collection, evaluation, and monitoring, within the timeframe of the project.
- Expenses towards collaboration and knowledge exchange/mobilization, such as workshops.
- Reasonable transportation and other incidental expenses.

The following expenses are not eligible to be covered by this funding.

- Payment towards the salary/time of regular budget funded UBC staff or faculty, including course buyouts.
- Offsetting of regular operating costs or indirect/administrative costs of operations, research, or lab work.
- Costs towards developing academic curriculum and coursework.
- Project partner operational expenses, excluding vendors.
- Expenses and fees for attending conferences and seminars, printing, and publication fees.
- Expenses beyond the project completion date.



Project Location

Place is a critical component to living lab projects, as the innovation, research, operations, and knowledge exchange are all grounded in the specific, real-world context.

The projects supported by the UBC Vancouver CLL Fund Competition must be located at UBC Vancouver campus and/or associated UBC-owned and operated facilities in the Lower Mainland. These include:

- Academic campus and residential neighborhoods at Point Grey, including UBC Farm and Botanical Gardens
- UBC Robson Square in downtown Vancouver
- Alex Fraser and Malcolm Knapp Research Forests
- Dairy Education and Research Centre in Agassiz
- Additional UBC facilities at medical campuses and in the Vancouver Downtown Eastside

Projects may include additional off-campus sites in collaboration with regional partners, or cross-campus collaborations. However, the core of the project must be based at any of the UBC Vancouver sites listed above.

Project Approvals

Project Leads are responsible for securing the appropriate approvals for the project activities, including academic departmental approval, research ethics, facilities approvals, permits and others. Recognizing that these approvals can take time, applicants are not required to have them as part of the application process but need to have clear understanding of the necessary approval processes, requirements, approving organizations and indicate how they will be achieved. The exception is approval from any Indigenous community partners, which must be included in the application.

Note, if an ethics approval is required for the project, CLL funding cannot be released until the appropriate ethics approvals have been secured.

Justice, Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Indigeneity (JEDI)

Excellence in research, education, and engagement at UBC relies on integrating diverse perspectives and fostering inclusion for those historically, persistently, or systemically marginalized. JEDI is a core pillar of the Campus as a Living Lab Initiative. While not an evaluation criterion in the adjudication process, applicants are encouraged to embed JEDI principles throughout their proposals, including project leadership, team composition, partnerships, and approaches to research, operations, and knowledge exchange activities.

UBC's [Equity and Inclusion Office](#), [VP Research and Innovation](#), and UBC [Climate Emergency Response](#) have resources such as the [Activating Inclusion Toolkit](#) and [Dimensions Action Plan for EDI in research](#) to support integrating JEDI into research and operational activities. Applicants are also encouraged to consult with the Associate Deans of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion or other departmental leadership on unit specific JEDI resources.



Application Process

The 2025 UBC Vancouver CLL Fund Competition application process will involve a Notice of Intent (NOI) and full application. Applicants are required to submit an NOI to be eligible to submit a full application. Competition communication will be sent to the Project Leads' emails listed in the NOI form.

Competition Schedule

Competition formally opens: September 1, 2025

General information session: September 16, 2025; 10-11am on Zoom ([Registration](#))

Notice of Intent (NOI) submission deadline: September 30, 2025

Application information session: October 7, 2025; 10-11am on Zoom

Application submission deadline: November 28, 2025

Peer review and shortlisting: December 2025

Shortlisted interviews: January 2026 (large project stream only)

Final decisions: February 2026

Projects start: March 15, 2026

Notice of Intent

The Notice of Intent (NOI) is non-competitive and will be used to facilitate communication during the competition, register for information sessions, and select peer reviewers.

The NOI form is a fillable PDF available through the [CLL website](#). Applicants will need Adobe Acrobat Reader or Adobe Acrobat Pro to access and complete the NOI form. Applicants should download and save the NOI form to their computer to fill in. Do not complete via a web browser, as some of the form fields may not work correctly.

The NOI submission deadline is on September 30, 2025 at 11:59pm. Applicants must upload their completed NOI form through the online portal on the [CLL website](#). Do not email the forms. Only one Project Lead should upload the NOI on behalf of the team.

Notice of Intent Form:

Project Stream: Indicate whether the application will be submitted under the Small Project Stream (\$10-30K) or the Large Project Stream (\$50-100K). Note that this can change between the NOI and the submission of the full application.

Project Name: Provide a name for the proposed project.



Project Faculty Lead: Provide the name, title, department, and email of the Faculty Lead.

Project Staff Lead: Provide the name, title, department, and email of the Staff Lead.

Project Location: Identify the UBC Vancouver locations and/or associated UBC-owned and operated facilities in the Lower Mainland where the project will take place. (300-character limit)

Project Description: Summarize the proposed project and its key objectives. (900-character limit)

“Campus as a Living Lab” Response: Briefly describe why your project is well-suited to be a Campus as a Living Lab initiative, in alignment with key characteristics of innovation, research excellence, relevance to UBC campus and community, student engagement and learning opportunities, and potential impacts and knowledge sharing. (900-character limit)

Application

Application forms will be provided to Project Leads following the submission and review of NOI forms in September.

The application form is a fillable PDF. Applicants will need Adobe Acrobat Reader or Adobe Acrobat Pro to access and complete the application form. Please save the application form to a computer to fill in. Do not complete via a web browser, as some of the form fields may not work correctly.

The application submission deadline is on November 28, 2025 at 11:59pm. The link to an online submission portal and instructions will be provided to the Project Leads listed on the NOI. Please do not email the application. Only one Project Lead should upload the application on behalf of the team.

Note: All sections of the application are required information, unless they are explicitly noted as optional. If needed, references may be embedded through links in the application. Please use plain language to describe the project and define or explain discipline-specific technical information or jargon.

Application Form:

Project Information

Project Stream: Indicate whether the application is being submitted under the Small Project or Large Project stream.

Project Name: Provide a name for the proposed project. Use the same name as in the NOI. If you are using a different name, please note the original NOI name in the Project Description.

Project Faculty Lead: Provide the name, title, department, and email of the Faculty Lead.

Project Staff Lead: Provide the name, title, department, and email of the Staff Lead.

Additional Leads (optional): If there is an Additional Lead, provide their name, title, department, and email.



Project Location: Identify the UBC Vancouver locations and/or associated UBC-owned and operated facilities in the Lower Mainland where the project will take place. Also, note any important off-campus locations. (300-character limit)

Project Team and Roles: List the project team members (faculty lead, staff lead, additional lead(s), post-docs, students, etc.) and their roles in the proposed project. CV(s) are NOT needed for the application. Also list any confirmed external partners and their contribution. (500-character limit)

Note, if the project has an Indigenous community partner, a research permit or other documentation of approval from the community must be provided as part of the Appendix.

Project Description

Project Overview and Objectives:

Provide a summary of your proposed project, outlining its core objectives, intended approach, and key deliverables. Describe how your team envisions the project to be implemented as a UBC Living Lab project and how it aligns with UBC's sustainability and strategic priorities. Please focus on the big picture here—specific details related to innovation, research, campus and community relevance, impact, and student engagement should be addressed in the following five Living Lab characteristics sections. (3000-character limit)

Living Lab Characteristics:

1. Innovation

Describe how the project will develop and apply novel or significantly improved ideas, processes, or practices to address real-world challenges. Projects should present fresh ways of thinking, engaging, organizing, or acting that inspire positive change at UBC and beyond. (800-character limit)

2. Research Excellence

Describe how the project will advance academic research through clear questions, robust methodologies, and well-defined processes to contribute new insights to a body of knowledge. Projects should demonstrate excellence in academic scholarship and potential to inform future inquiry or practice. (800-character limit)

3. Relevance to UBC Campus and Community

Describe how the project aligns with UBC's strategic priorities and contributes to positive change across its campuses and communities. Projects should clearly articulate: what will be implemented or improved at UBC, why the change is needed, and how the outcomes will help make UBC a better institution. (800-character limit)

4. Student Engagement and Learning Opportunities

Describe how students will be actively engaged in the project—through participating in activities such as research, design, implementation, storytelling, or evaluation. Projects should support hands-on, interdisciplinary, and mentorship-based learning in real-world contexts and enable the students to make



valuable contribution and gain valuable skills and insights from participating in living lab work. (800-character limit)

5. Potential Impacts and Knowledge Sharing

Describe how the project could extend its impact beyond UBC. Explain how knowledge and outcomes may be shared, scaled, or adapted by other communities, institutions, or partners beyond academic publications. If applicable, projects should describe possible replication or upscaling, and show how future work could be expanded beyond the scope of CLL funding. (800-character limit)

Project Activities

Workplan: Provide a high-level description of the planned project activities, date ranges and deliverables for both Year 1 and Year 2 (if applicable). All activities must take place between March 15, 2026 and March 31, 2028.

Project Finances

Budget: Provide a high-level description of your proposed project budget supported by CLL funding, including activities/items, expenses in Canadian dollars, and approximate timeline for the expenses for both Year 1 and Year 2 (if applicable). Please do not include portions of the project expenses funded through other sources in the budget.

Additional Funding Sources: Provide a description of any non-CLL funding that will support the project, if applicable. This may include confirmed and/or anticipated funding but please indicate the funding status (e.g., confirmed, pending).

Appendix (optional):

Appendices should be used to provide supplemental materials that expand the description or understanding of the project proposal. They may include two types of materials:

- Images (e.g., graphs, renders, diagrams etc.) to help explain the project proposal. Image files should be embedded into the PDF.
- Letter of support or other proof of agreement from confirmed partners, matching funding sources and Indigenous community partners (as applicable). Letters of support should be saved as PDFs and added as additional pages at the end of the application. Do not submit letters as separate documents.

For each item, please provide a brief description in the caption. Do not use the appendices to provide additional written responses to the other application sections.



Review Process

The CLL project applications are reviewed in a two-stage process:

- Peer review and scoring by UBC faculty and staff members
- Review and shortlisting by the CLL Steering Committee

The CLL Steering Committee will interview shortlisted applicants to the large projects stream in January 2026, before making a final funding decision. The Project Leads of the shortlisted projects will be notified at least 1 week ahead of the interviews, which will be on Zoom.

The CLL Steering Committee will make final funding decisions for both the small and large project streams in February, 2026.

Award Notifications and Project Set Up

All applicants will be notified of the status of their application via email when decisions are made. Successful applicants will sign a CLL fund award letter and provide a Research Project Information Form. Additional directions or requirements to set up the CLL projects will be discussed on a case-by-case basis.

Support and Resources:

The 2025 UBC Vancouver CLL Fund Competition is supported by the UBC Sustainability Hub. The CLL team is available to help you build collaborations and develop your project proposal.

Please email any questions to the CLL Email (CLL.team@ubc.ca). This email is monitored by staff at the Sustainability Hub. Questions will be answered via email or Zoom meetings.

Additional resources:

CLL Website (livinglabs.ubc.ca):

The CLL website is the primary location for information on the [2025 UBC Vancouver CLL Fund Competition](#), including Guidelines, NOI forms, submission portals, and Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ).

The Competition FAQs on the CLL website will be updated with applicant questions throughout the competition.

Information Sessions:

- A general information session on goals, expectations, applications, and the review process will be held on September 16 at 10am, prior to the NOI deadline. [Registration](#) is required for the session, which will be held on Zoom.
- An application information session for teams that have submitted NOIs will be held on Zoom on October 7 at 10am. Registration information and links will be emailed to Leads listed on NOI forms; any member of the project team may attend.



THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

SUSTAINABILITY HUB

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Vancouver Campus | Musqueam Traditional Territory
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- Project-specific guidance is available for Project Leads and teams to assist in developing full applications. Email the CLL team to arrange these sessions.

Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any questions! Email CLL.team@ubc.ca