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| SPHERE Seed Funding Grant Scheme 2024 –Partnership Grant Guidelines and Application Form |



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| **INTRODUCTION AND OBJECTIVE** |

Maridulu Budyari Gumal, the Sydney Partnership for Health, Education, Research and Enterprise (SPHERE) combines 15 thought-leading organisations in the Sydney region. Each partner is renowned for research, innovation and education. Each has specialist healthcare knowledge and a heritage of game-changing initiatives to their name. We are building on this work, taking the best from each discipline to change the way we do healthcare – for good. As partners, we are committed to working together in a spirit of collaboration.

The SPHERE Seed Funding Grant Scheme 2024 (Investigator initiated Partnership Grant) builds on from our Big Ideas model and 2023 Seed Funding that is intended to encourage new large-scale, ambitious programs of work that bring people together across and beyond the SPHERE partnership. Submissions should focus on ideas that foster broad collaboration across Platforms (previously Strategic Platforms), Clinical Themes (previously Clinical Academic Groups) and ideally should include groups or organisations outside SPHERE.

Project ideas should connect discrete knowledge and skills and capitalise on SPHERE’s strengths. Proposals must be substantive, cross-disciplinary initiatives with evidence of a clear pathway to attract significant additional funding from other internal and/or external sources to sustain and build ongoing research.

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| **ELIGIBILITY**  |

In order to be successful in acquiring SPHERE Seed Funding (Investigator initiated Partnership Grant) Support, applications will need to:

* Identify who the industry partner is
* Provide evidence of cash support for the project from the partner organisation
* Show how the research will leverage a larger funding opportunity.

In order to be successful applications will need to demonstrate:

* How they have involved collaborations across the SPHERE network and beyond;
* Active participation of consumers in the design and delivery and policy setting implications arising from the project;
* EMCR involvement and career progression in their proposal. EMCRs are researchers within 10 years of their most recent relevant highest degree;
* How the research is a Big Idea that solves a wicked problem or is the “missing link” in their journey to a larger funding opportunity. A missing link may refer to feedback from an earlier “near miss” grant applications that implied a critical knowledge gap and/or how ALL data arising from the study (confirming or rejecting the research question) will lead to meaningful and significant progression of the proposal.

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| **FUNDING** |

Total funding of $500,000 is available in this round of SPHERE’s Seed Funding Grant Scheme to support up to 2-5 grants of $100,000-$200,000 according to merit. Funding is contingent on obtaining partnership success within eight months of the SPHERE award. The total funding will not exceed the cash co-contribution provided by the industry partner. Awards that are unsuccessful in achieving the partnership grant will return to the following year funding pool. All applicants will have the opportunity to reapply, potentially building on feedback or further collaboration that has strengthened the original submission for partnership success.

Payment of grants awarded under the SPHERE Seed Funding will be made directly to the Chief Investigator A who must be employed by a SPHERE partner. The funds must be spent in accordance with the budget proposed in the grant application. Only direct research costs will be covered. No on-costs or indirect costs will be covered. Applicants should consider any on-costs while preparing their application.

Grants are non-renewable and must be completed by agreement within the timeframe for which the funding is granted. No additional funding will be provided to complete the project.

All projects funded under the scheme will be required to submit annual progress reports with the final report against the key performance indicators developed by the applicants as part of the submission process (see section ‘Project Plan’).

SPHERE reserves the right not to award any grants if applications do not meet a minimum quality.

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| **SUPPORT** |

SPHERE can facilitate networking opportunities and offer guidance to applicants seeking to form partnerships. This support may include, but is not limited to, organising workshops to foster connections with platforms and/or clinical themes for collaboration, and providing valuable insights and advice on potential partners that align with specific objectives.

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| **TIMELINE** |

The milestones for the Seed Funding Grant Scheme 2024 are:

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| **Milestone** | **Deadline** |
| Call for applications | Friday, 12 January 2024 |
| Close of applications | Friday, 26 April 2024 |
| Eligibility and essential criteria check for applications received | Early May 2024 |
| Applications sent to review panel | Early May 2024 |
| Review panel scores received by SPHERE | Early June 2024 |
| Meeting with the review panel to discuss recommended projects for funding | Mid-Late June 2024 |
| Review panel recommendations reported to Council | Early July 2024 |
| Notification to applicants  | Mid July 2024  |
| Disbursement of funds; project commencement | According to grant agreement |
| Progress report due – annually (depending on project duration)  | According to grant agreement |
| Final report due 3 months following project completion | According to grant agreement  |

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| **APPLICATION EVALUATION** |

Upon receipt, applications will be reviewed for completeness and adherence to submission requirements. Those that do not meet essential eligibility requirements, or word and page limits will be deemed ineligible for review. Eligible applications will be reviewed by a review panel, consisting of independent members and representatives of the SPHERE Council/ Executive, through a competitive process based on merit and strategic value. The final decision will be notified to the SPHERE Council. Applicants will be notified in writing of the evaluation outcome.

Applications will be assessed based on the following criteria:

* Potential translation of research into practice change and/or improve service delivery and/or health outcomes.
* CIA is a SPHERE member.
* The project must engage broad collaboration and confirms co-production and delivery with at least three (3) other SPHERE Platforms and/or Clinical Themes. Partners outside SPHERE (state, national and international) should have demonstrated capacity to adhere to NHMRC principles governing RTC accreditation.
* Includes Consumer and Community representation with clear evidence of co-design and participation as an investigator.
* Includes Biostatisticians, Health Economists, Implementation Scientists as Investigators, where appropriate.
* Demonstrates capacity to leverage additional funding.
* A detailed and justified budget.

Applications will be scored based on the following criteria:

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| **#** | **Criteria** | **%**  |
| 1. | Project Significance and Impact* Relevance to the aims of the SPHERE Seed Funding Scheme
* Justification for consideration as a “Big Idea” or the “Missing Link” in an unfunded big idea
* Potential translation of research findings into practice
* Improves health outcomes
* Nationally and internationally competitive
 | 20% |
| 2. | Project Plan * Feasible
* Appropriate
* Innovative
 | 20% |
| 3. | Potential to leverage future funding * Use of Seed funding necessary to accelerate Big Idea
* New leverage investment
* Clear pathway to sustainable future funding
* Identifies risks (eg COVID/workforce/ethics delays) and strategies to mitigate where possible
 | 40% |
| 4. | Team * Inclusion of early and mid-career researcher(s) in the project leadership team
* Involvement of at least three (3) Clinical Themes and/or Platforms
* Consumer and Community Involvement
* Multi-disciplinary including Biostatisticians, Health Economists and Implementation Scientists
* Involvement of groups or organisations beyond SPHERE (state, national and international)
 | 20% |

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| **SUBMITTING AN APPLICATION** |

The following application template must be used to complete your application. Applications should provide all requested information and not exceed the word count and page limits, use single spaced 11-point Arial font. Only information provided in the application will form the basis of the review process.

Completed applications must be submitted by email to infoatsphere@unsw.edu.au and received by **Friday, 26 April 2024**. Incomplete or late submissions will not be accepted.

Applications should be submitted as one PDF file AND one editable Word document (supporting documents only required for cash contributions from leveraged partners). Please label the application using the following format:

* SPHERE\_Seed Funding Grant Scheme 2024\_Partnership Grant Application\_ CIASurname.pdf
* SPHERE\_Seed Funding Grant Scheme 2024\_Partnership Grant Application\_ CIASurname.docx

Please ensure that the combined size of attached files does not exceed 20MB. Emails with attachments greater than this may not be received. Undeliverable emails will not be considered as a reason to accept late applications.

If you have any questions or would like to discuss your submission, please contact Professor Chris White, Executive Director SPHERE at christopher.white@health.nsw.gov.au

# SPHERE SEED FUNDING GRANT SCHEME 2024

# (INVESTIGATOR INITIATED PARTNERSHIP GRANT)

# APPLICATION TEMPLATE

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| **SECTION A – PROJECT OVERVIEW** |

1. **Project Title**

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1. **Project Description**

Provide a scientific description of the project aims and methods. 500 words

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1. **Justification of the Project as a Big Idea**

Identify how the project aligns to the SPHERE Seed Funding Scheme which aims to support innovative, ambitious programs of work that foster collaborations among Platforms and Clinical Themes. 300 words

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1. **Improving Outcomes**

Outline how the project will improve health outcomes. 300 words

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1. **Collaboration**

Outline how the program aligns with the aim to bring together researchers (including early and mid-career) from multiple disciplines across different organisations, at state, national or international level. Confirm the co-production and delivery of the collaboration with other Platforms and Clinical Themes. 300 words

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| **Platforms Engaged**(tick all that apply) | [ ]  Clinical Trials and Data[ ]  Implementation Science[ ]  Knowledge Translation [ ]  Healthy Populations and Environments (previously Healthy Urban  Environments)[ ]  Innovation (previously Frontiers Technology) |
| **Clinical Themes Engaged**(tick all that apply) | [ ]  Aboriginal Health and Wellbeing[ ]  Age and Ageing[ ]  Cancer[ ]  Cardiac and Vascular Health[ ]  Child UnLimited (Kids to Adults)[ ]  Diabetes, Obesity and Metabolic Disease[ ]  Early Life Determinants of Health[ ]  Genome Connect[ ]  Infectious Disease, Immunity and Inflammation[ ]  Maternal and Women’s Health[ ]  Musculoskeletal Health[ ]  Neuroscience, Mental Health and Addiction[ ]  Palliative Care[ ]  Respiratory, Sleep, Environmental and Occupational Health |
| **Other Partners Engaged**(tick all that apply) | [ ]  Sydney Health Partners [ ]  NSW Regional Health Partners [ ]  Other national[ ]  Other international |

**SPHERE Platforms and Clinical Themes Executive Lead** confirming consumer or clinician/ research co-production and alignment with their membership and its priorities

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| 1) Platform/ Clinical Theme Exec name |  |
| Signature |  | Date |  |
| 2) Platform/ Clinical Theme Exec name |  |
| Signature |  | Date |  |
| 3) Platform/ Clinical Theme Exec name |  |
| Signature |  | Date |  |

1. **Potential for funds leverage**

Outline how the funds will be leveraged to ensure long term sustainability of the project. 200 words

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1. **Translation of Research Outcome**

Outline how findings of research might be translated into practice change and/or improve service delivery and/or health outcomes. 200 words

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1. **Consumer and Community Involvement**

Outline how the project involved consumers in its design and continued participation in the review and dissemination of results. 300 words

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1. **Project Plan (Maximum 2 pages)**

Detail the project plan from inception to completion. Where possible, include SMART objectives (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and time-bound) and consider knowledge translation.

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|  | **Project Objective** | **Activity** | **Timeframe** | **Evaluation Measure(s)** |
| Project initiation |  |  |  |  |
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| Research activity related to project aimaimsAims |  |  |  |  |
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| Project dissemination and future steps |  |  |  |  |
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| Project completion |  |  |  |  |
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| **SECTION B – INDICATIVE TOTAL FUNDING REQUEST AND JUSTIFICATION** |

1. **Project Budget and Justification**

Provide the total funds sought and a breakdown of how the grant funds will be spent. A budget justification should be included for each line item. Personnel should be justified by salary level using award/university pay scales and FTE/hours. Provide details of any in-kind contribution and new leveraged investment (including source and dollar values), where applicable. Include the expenditure attributable to the leveraged partner and confirmation of support.

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| **SECTION C – PROJECT TEAM** |

1. **Chief Investigators and Associate Investigators**

Please complete all fields for a maximum of 10 CIs and a maximum of 5 AIs.

**Chief Investigator A**

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| --- | --- |
| Full name (including title) |  |
| Early-Mid Career Researcher | [ ]  Yes [ ]  No |
| Primary institutional affiliation  |  |
| Email |  |

**Chief Investigators**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Full name (including title) |  |
| Early-Mid Career Researcher | [ ]  Yes [ ]  No |
| Primary institutional affiliation  |  |
| Email |  |

<Add more rows as needed>

**Associate Investigators**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Full name (including title) |  |
| Early-Mid Career Researcher | [ ]  Yes [ ]  No |
| Primary institutional affiliation  |  |
| Email |  |

<Add more rows as needed>

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| **SECTION D – APPLICANT(S) DECLARATION** |

1. **Approval and Sign-off**

The Chief Investigator A confirms that the information provided is correct, that all team members have reviewed and approved the submission and collaborations across platforms and clinical themes have included coproduction principles that align with the mission and activities of groups.

**Chief Investigator A**

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| Full Name |  |
| Signature |  | Date |  |

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| **SECTION E – CHECKLIST** |

Application does not exceed word count and page limits [ ]

Budget does not exceed matched contributions up to $200,000 [ ]

Chief Investigator A have approved the submission on behalf of the team [ ]

Collaborating Platforms and/or Clinical Themes have endorsed the submission [ ]