

# ARMS 2024 CONFERENCE ABSTRACT

**Theme:** Effective collaboration with external stakeholders

**Title:** Transformative Collaboration: The Impact Labs' Interdisciplinary Model'

**Author:** Shahab Sazegar - Impact Labs Coordinator, Monash Business School, Monash University, Caulfield, Victoria, Australia

**Abstract:**

Responding to the urgent need for enhanced external visibility and the promotion of interdisciplinary research, Monash Business School launched Impact Labs. This initiative, aimed at transcending traditional academic boundaries, aligns with Monash University's Impact 2023 strategic plan to address global challenges like climate change, geopolitical security, and thriving communities.

We identified research areas aligned with these goals and developed a framework emphasising interdisciplinary research and external collaboration. The effort began with strategic consultations across the Business School, engaging researchers to understand their priorities and support needs. A pivotal moment was the launch of a pilot lab, exploring social science questions through the perspectives of computer science, economics, and politics. The pilot enabled us to test a flexible lab structure and troubleshoot organisational challenges, showcasing the potential for diverse academic collaboration in securing external research contracts and practical applications for government, media, and industry.

The initiative revealed significant untapped appetite for interdisciplinary collaborations at Monash Business School and highlighted a support gap for thematically connecting research efforts. The pilot lab's success underscored the benefits of a structured approach within a large organisation to break down silos and align projects with strategic goals.

The establishment of Impact Labs marks a shift towards structured interdisciplinary research at Monash Business School. Involving over 200 academics in major projects, the model has catalysed research, enhanced visibility, facilitated industry partnerships, secured funding, and produced measurable outcomes, demonstrating the effectiveness of strategic leadership in fostering cross-departmental collaboration.