

Frequently Asked Questions

Project Proposal

Lead proponent

Do we have to have a lead participant?

Yes, a lead proponent must be specified. The Centre expects that the lead proponent will take responsibility for coordinating and managing the proposal submission and later, if successful, be responsible for project management.

An authorised official from the lead proponent must certify any EoI or Project Proposal submitted.

Budget / funding

What is the expected ratio of cash and in-kind from the project proponents for applied research projects?

The exact ratio will vary depending on the amount of research staff time, operating expenses and equipment value the project proponents contribute, but the Centre is generally seeking to achieve a ratio of cash contributed of 50 per cent of the Centre's cash contribution.

The exception to this was the Centre's third funding round, where proponents were provided the opportunity to submit strategic proposals. No minimum cash was specified for strategic proposals, however, projects with industry contributions were viewed favourably in proportion to the amount of cash contributed

What funding model should we use for calculating expected contributions?

The Centre Board have endorsed a relatively simple funding model for cash, in-kind, salary and operating components in a project. Proposals should seek to meet these requirements, and proposals that exceed these requirements will be favourably received.

- A funding leverage of a minimum of 1:3 (Centre cash: project partner cash and in-kind) is sought.
- Research staff will be eligible to receive Centre funding at a salary multiplier of 1.28 x base salaries.
- In order to achieve a benchmark 1.8 x salary funding multiplier, an additional 0.52 x salary cash contribution is sought from project proponents.
- A cash contribution of 0.2 x the Centre's cash contribution is required to support Centre administration and operational costs.
- In-kind contributions of research facilities will be valued at 1.2 x staff base salary contributions.
- Where a research organisation provides the research participant and research facilities to the project as an in-kind contribution, this in-kind contribution will be valued as 3 x the base salary of the staff member.

The total multiplier for research staff is therefore 3 x base salary (1.28 + 0.52 + 1.2).

Private company participation

How should we include private companies such as engineering consultancy firms who are not considered as research staff?

All sectors of the water recycling industry should be provided the opportunity to participate in Centre Projects. The criteria for their participation are:

- The skills and expertise provided by the private enterprise are essential to successful delivery of the project.
- The costs for such involvement must be only one component of the overall budget. Input from third-party specialists should be viewed as an 'operating cost' and the make-up of the sum offered must be clearly identified in the proposal. It is also important to note that the overall proposal still needs to meet the Centre's Funding Principles requirements; in particular the required cash and in-kind contributions. Therefore any 'operating costs' will need to be matched by relevant contributions from project proponents.

During evaluation of proposals the Centre's Research Advisory Committee (RAC) is required to ensure that the overall project represents good value for money, and will be requested to make specific comment on the value of the private enterprise component.

Intellectual Property

My company/research provider has clear IP requirements that conflict with the guidelines provided.

The Centre has clear contractual obligations to the Commonwealth regarding intellectual property (IP) ownership and commercialisation. Where possible, the Centre will seek to adopt a flexible approach to IP management. The following guidance recognises the Centre's obligations to the Commonwealth, while providing flexibility for project partners:

- Project IP must be owned by the Centre, and if requested the Centre must grant a free non-exclusive license to the Commonwealth for that IP, as well as relevant background IP for internal purposes only.
- Background IP need only be contributed by project proponents for specified projects.
- Project proponents will have rights to the project IP they contributed to (a royalty-free license for internal purposes) and cash contributing partners will have first rights of refusal to commercialisation of that project IP.
- Commercialisation returns will generally be returned to project partners in proportion to their contributions to the project.

Overseas funding contributions

Can we offer overseas funds as project participant contributions?

Yes but the Centre will generally only consider up to 10 per cent of its cash contribution being used to support overseas collaborators.

Why only 10 per cent?

The Centre is funded by the Australian Government to develop a national research capacity and capability for domestic research and industry benefit. Using Commonwealth funds to support overseas research and industry could be viewed as occurring at the expense of developing the Australian research sector.

Commitments from project participants

I do not have firm commitments for support and funding yet.

These are not compulsory for EoIs but are viewed very favourably, and it is expected that the proposal lead entity will indicate levels of commitment in the EoI. Final proposals will not be considered without firm commitments of cash and in-kind support.

Students / publications

Can students take part in the project?

Yes, the participation of students and post-doctoral appointees is encouraged by the Centre, however:

- the project participant must obtain the Centre's approval prior to students being involved (usually through specification in the funding proposal)
- the project participant must ensure that any project IP developed by the student is owned by the Centre (the student retains copyright to their thesis)
- there may be some publication restrictions necessary to protect confidential information and project IP
- The student and their examiner may be required to sign a confidentiality agreement with the Centre
- Scholarships for higher degree students can only be funded at cost.

Equipment funding

Is there a cap on equipment funding within proposals?

Yes, \$30 000 (excluding GST) per item. The Commonwealth requires the Centre to own assets, and keep a register of them, when valued over \$30 000. The Centre would also be required to implement a process for asset insurance and disposal. Disposal of assets over \$30 000 in value requires Commonwealth Government approval and the refund of any undepreciated value to the Commonwealth.

Note: The Centre can support the purchase of assets with a value of greater than \$30 000 but this will require a separate submission to the Centre and a separate agreement with project proponents to address the issues outlined above.

Reporting requirements / Payment against milestones

What are the reporting requirements to the Centre by Project Leads / when will I get paid?

Project proponents will generally be required to provide detailed performance reports to the Centre at six-monthly intervals (e.g. May and November) to align with Commonwealth payment schedules. In addition, quarterly progress reports to the Centre are required.

Funds are released at six-monthly intervals against milestones achieved in the preceding six months, subject to RAC review and Board approval. For example, funds could be released in June after a May report and in December after a November report has been received.

Proposal assessment

How will proposals be evaluated?

The proposals will be assessed by the Centre's RAC using the evaluation criteria provided in the EoI documentation circulated. The Centre may also seek advice from independent reviewers prior to the final project scope and funding being recommended for approval to the Centre's Board.

What is the process and timetable associated with evaluation?

The timetable is published with every EOI template. The Centre has also published its Project Evaluation Criteria which are available for download from its web page.

Meeting the RAC

Can I present my EOI / proposal to the RAC in person?

The Centre will consider the opportunity for presentations and workshops with proponents, subject to the number of final submissions, the nature of the funding round and the timetable for RAC meetings.

Confidentiality

Will my proposal be treated in confidence?

Yes. The proposal will only be reviewed by the Centre's staff and the RAC. Any RAC member that may have a conflict of interest with respect to the proposal will not be involved in the evaluation or decision making process, and will not be provided with any information regarding your proposal.

A proponent can request that individual members of the RAC not be involved in the review of their proposal. Please refer to our Project Evaluation Criteria on the web page.

Will we be required to sign Non-Disclosure Agreements / Would the Centre consider signing our Non-Disclosure Agreement?

Proposal information will be treated in confidence by the Centre and Non-Disclosure Agreements are not seen to be necessary, however the Centre will consider signing a Non-Disclosure Agreement if requested.

Will the Centre advise who else is submitting Eois / proposals?

No, such information will be treated in confidence by the Centre. However, the information sessions hosted by the Centre prior to the submission date will be public events and interested parties are encouraged to discuss potential collaborative efforts at these events.

The Centre may recommend discussions between funding applicants if it sees a potential benefit in collaboration between the teams. The agreement of the submitting parties will be obtained before any such discussions are proposed.

Will RAC members whose businesses are putting in competing Eois / proposals see full budget details of my Eoi / proposal?

Any RAC member that may have a conflict of interest with respect to the EOI or proposal will not see your proposal.

Additional FAQs

Other funding sources

Can a project participant use Centre funds to apply for ARC Linkage Projects?

No, Centre funds (Commonwealth funds) cannot be used to leverage funding from other Commonwealth grants agencies, such as the ARC.

Deadline extension

Can we obtain a deadline to the Eol / Final Project Proposal due date?

No, the deadlines are set to allow sufficient time for final proposal preparation, review and recommendation to the Board prior to contract negotiations.

Australian Competitive Grants Register (ACGR)

Is the Centre on the ACGR?

Yes, the Centre is listed on the ACGR, effective 2011.

Project Agreement

Can I have a copy of the Project Agreement?

The Centre's Project Agreement will be made available to successful applicants. These FAQs and the General Guidelines in the Eol cover some of the key terms that will be in the Project Agreement and further information on these issues can be obtained by contacting the Research and Commercial Manager.

Funding eligibility

Can another Commonwealth Agency apply for funding from the Centre?

Yes, providing they are compliant with the provided Guidelines in the Eol and can contribute cash and/or in-kind contributions to the proposal budget; for example, the CSIRO is a foundation participant in Centre activities and is expected to be a participant in proposals to the Centre.

Future calls for proposals

I am interested in applying for funding for a project in a Goal not covered in the current call for proposals.

The call for Eols and request for proposals will be communicated with reasonable notice by the Centre. All funding calls will be announced on the Centre's website (www.australianwaterrecycling.com.au). Calls will also be announced through the Centre's mailing list. If you are not on the Centre's mailing list please contact us.

Industry participation

I am interested in applying for funding for a project but only have research partners interested, no industry partners.

While the Centre is predominantly interested in research that has industry support and participation, the Centre has made provision for some investment in strategic research. When the Centre calls for strategic research proposals, the reliance on industry contributions is likely to be less than for the calls for applied projects. Strategic proposals will still, however, be encouraged to have industry participation to be competitive.

Size and length of proposal

My proposal idea is for less than \$500 000 and is less than one year / My proposal idea is for longer than three years.

The Centre's investment strategy is to support high impact and significant projects, which will generally deliver outcomes within a one to three year period. If your proposal has clear and demonstrable financial support from the water recycling industry and has clear national benefits and/or commercial returns for the water recycling industry, the Centre may be willing to consider it outside of the formal call for proposals. In the first instance you should contact the Centre's Research and Commercial Manager for initial discussions.

Resubmission of proposals

Can I resubmit my proposal for future rounds if not successful?

Proposal applicants will obtain feedback on their proposals from the RAC and will be able to decide the value of resubmitting their proposal at a later time should the opportunity arise.

Further information

I cannot get to the information workshop on the next call for proposals / Where can I find out more information about the Centre?

Please visit www.australianwaterrecycling.com.au or contact the Centre's Research and Commercial Manager, Sarah Haydon (sarah.haydon@australianwaterrecycling.com.au or 07 3015 9708) for more information.

Where can I find out more information about the Commonwealths 'Water for the Future' initiatives?

Please visit www.environment.gov.au to find out more about the Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities' *Water for the Future* program.