



National Collaborative Research Infrastructure Strategy 2021 Guidelines (to implement the 2020 Research Infrastructure Investment Plan)

| | |
|------------------------------------|---|
| Opening date: | Not applicable |
| Closing date and time: | Not applicable |
| Commonwealth policy entity: | Department of Education, Skills and Employment |
| Enquiries: | If you have any questions, contact: Tony Rothnie Director, National Research Infrastructure Program Management 02 6240 2463 NCRIS@dese.gov.au Questions may be sent at any time. |
| Date guidelines released: | TBA |
| Type of grant opportunity: | Closed non-competitive |

Contents

| | |
|--|-----------|
| 1. National Collaborative Research Infrastructure Strategy 2021 (implementing the 2020 Research Infrastructure Investment Plan) processes | 4 |
| 2. About the grant program..... | 6 |
| 2.1 About the 2021 NCRIS grant opportunity | 9 |
| 3. Grant amount and grant period | 10 |
| 3.1 Grants available | 10 |
| 3.2 2020 Research Infrastructure Investment Plan period | 10 |
| 4. Eligibility criteria | 10 |
| 4.1 Who is eligible for a grant? | 10 |
| 5. What the grant money can be used for | 11 |
| 5.1 Eligible grant activities | 11 |
| 5.2 Eligible expenditure..... | 11 |
| 5.3 What the grant money cannot be used for..... | 11 |
| 6. The assessment criteria | 12 |
| 7. How to submit information | 12 |
| 7.1 Joint (consortia) project delivery | 13 |
| 7.2 Timing of grant opportunity processes..... | 13 |
| 7.3 Questions on the submission process | 13 |
| 8. The grant selection process | 13 |
| 8.1 Consideration of potential grants | 13 |
| 8.2 Who approves the grants?..... | 14 |
| 9. Notification of grant outcomes..... | 14 |
| 9.1 Feedback on your application | 14 |
| 10. Successful grants | 14 |
| 10.1 The grant agreement | 14 |
| 10.2 How we pay the grant | 15 |
| 10.3 Grants Payments and GST | 15 |
| 11. Announcement of grants | 15 |
| 12. How we monitor your grant activity | 15 |
| 12.1 Keeping us informed | 15 |
| 12.2 Reporting | 16 |
| 12.3 Audited financial acquittal report..... | 16 |
| 12.4 Grant agreement variations | 17 |
| 12.5 Compliance visits | 17 |
| 12.6 Record keeping..... | 17 |
| 12.7 Evaluation | 17 |
| 12.8 Acknowledgement..... | 17 |
| 13. Probity..... | 17 |

| | | |
|--|--------------------------------|-----------|
| 13.1 | Enquiries and feedback | 17 |
| 13.2 | Conflicts of interest | 18 |
| 13.3 | Privacy | 18 |
| 13.4 | Confidential Information | 19 |
| 13.5 | Freedom of information | 19 |
| 14. | Consultation | 20 |
| 15. | Glossary..... | 21 |
| Appendix A. The NCRIS Principles | | 24 |
| Appendix B. Grants awarded by the 2020 Investment Plan..... | | 25 |

1. National Collaborative Research Infrastructure Strategy 2021 (implementing the 2020 Research Infrastructure Investment Plan) processes

The National Collaborative Research Infrastructure Strategy (NCRIS) is designed to achieve Australian Government objectives

This grant opportunity is part of the above grant program which contributes to the Department of Education, Skills and Employment (DESE) Outcome 2.6. DESE works with stakeholders to plan and design the grant program according to the [Commonwealth Grants Rules and Guidelines \(CGRGs\)](#).



The grant opportunity opens (2020 Investment Plan)

The 2020 Investment Plan complements the 2018 Investment Plan by refreshing and resetting investment levels to 30 June 2023 by adjusting capital and additional operating funding for priority projects from 2020-21 to 2022-23 only.

Eligible parties are invited to submit information on potential grants.



You submit information to the Research Infrastructure Investment Plan Data Collection

You provide information that addresses the priorities in the Roadmap. You address all eligibility and other criteria to be considered for a grant.



We assess all information received

We assess all data collected during the Investment Plan Data Collection, which may include advice from sources other than submissions from entities seeking grants.



We make grant recommendations

We provide advice to the decision maker on the merits of the funding package based on the merits of each application.



Grant decisions are made

The decision maker decides which applications are successful.



We notify you of the outcome

We advise you of the outcome of your submission if it proposed a grant. We may not notify unsuccessful applicants until grant agreements have been executed with successful applicants.



We enter into a grant agreement

We will enter into a grant agreement with you if successful. The type of grant agreement is based on the nature of the grant and will be proportional to the risks involved. If you have been successful in a previous Research Infrastructure Investment Plan, your previous grant agreement may be varied to include this additional grant.





Delivery of grant

You undertake the grant activity as set out in your grant agreement. We manage the grant by working with you, monitoring your progress and making payments.

We may seek to vary the activity following future Roadmaps and/or Investment Plans.



Evaluation of NCRIS

We evaluate your specific grant activity and NCRIS as a whole. We base this on information you provide to us and that we collect from various sources.

1.1 Introduction

These guidelines contain information for National Collaborative Research Infrastructure Strategy (NCRIS) grants to implement the Australian Government's 2020 Research Infrastructure Investment Plan (Investment Plan).

Grants under NCRIS are awarded through Investment Plans. These Investment Plans respond to recommendations in a National Research Infrastructure Roadmap.

This document sets out:

- the purpose of the grant program and grant opportunity
- the eligibility and assessment criteria
- how potential grants are considered and selected
- how grantees are notified and receive grant payments
- how grantees will be monitored and evaluated
- responsibilities and expectations in relation to the opportunity.

2. About the grant program

Objectives

The objectives of NCRIS are:

- to catalyse and support a national network of research infrastructure projects
- through this network, support high quality research that will drive greater innovation in the Australian research sector and the economy more broadly
- to empower Australian researchers to address key national and global challenges
- to support collaboration between researchers and other end users, such as industry both nationally and internationally.

Context

NCRIS was established by the Government following the March 2004 *Final Report of the National Research Infrastructure Taskforce*. In establishing NCRIS, the Australian Government recognised its role in bringing a more strategic direction to Australia's investment in research infrastructure. In the 2004-05 Budget, the Government announced that NCRIS would be implemented to provide the greater focus and coordination required.

NCRIS adopts a principles-based approach through the development of Roadmaps. The following Roadmaps¹ have been developed and released by the Government:

- 2006 NCRIS Strategic Roadmap
- 2008 Strategic Roadmap for Australian Research Infrastructure
- 2011 Strategic Roadmap for Australian Research Infrastructure
- 2016 National Research Infrastructure Roadmap².

The Roadmaps have been guided by the NCRIS Principles. The principles have evolved slightly

¹ <https://www.dese.gov.au/national-research-infrastructure>

² <https://www.dese.gov.au/national-research-infrastructure/2016-national-research-infrastructure-roadmap>

over time, and were most recently set in the 2018 NCRIS Guidelines³ as:

- Australia's investment in research infrastructure should be planned and developed with the aim of maximising the contributions of the research and development system to foster innovation, economic development, national security, social wellbeing and environmental sustainability
- infrastructure resources should be focussed in areas where Australia is, or has the potential to be, world-class (in both discovery and application driven research) and provide international leadership
- major infrastructure should be developed on a collaborative, national, nonexclusive basis. Infrastructure funded through NCRIS should serve the research and innovation system broadly, not just the host/funded institutions. Funding and eligibility rules should encourage collaboration and co-investment. It should not be the function of NCRIS to support institutional level (or even small-scale collaborative) infrastructure
- access is a critical issue in the drive to optimise Australia's research infrastructure. In terms of NCRIS funding there should be as few barriers as possible to accessing major infrastructure for those undertaking meritorious research, including the use of preferential arrangements for meritorious researchers
- due regard be given to the whole-of-life costs of major infrastructure, with funding available for operational costs where appropriate
- NCRIS should seek to enable the fuller participation of Australian researchers in the international research system
- NCRIS should enable Government initiatives which seek to maximise opportunities for industry and international engagement and commercialisation of research
- data generated, created, captured or stored by NCRIS funded projects will be made available to the wider research community based on the F.A.I.R. principles, appropriately implemented for individual research communities. Data must be stored to an appropriate level of security
- new projects, and additional investment in existing projects, should be based on a robust business case.

As a result of the application of these principles, Australia today is the beneficiary of internationally recognised and highly efficient research infrastructure that consistently delivers outstanding returns. It has been developed through the implementation of strategic roadmaps funded by successive Australian Governments, with support from state and territory governments, universities and research agencies.

The 2016 Roadmap identified the current nine priority areas that underpin research in which Australia can and needs to excel, to deliver long-term national benefit and foster strategic international partnerships. They are:

- Digital Data and eResearch Platforms
- Platforms for Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences
- Characterisation
- Advanced Fabrication and Manufacturing
- Advanced Physics and Astronomy
- Earth and Environmental Systems
- Biosecurity
- Complex Biology

³ See <https://www.grants.gov.au/#> or <https://www.dese.gov.au/national-research-infrastructure/announcements/national-collaborative-research-infrastructure-strategy-ncris-2018-guidelines>

- Therapeutic Development.

The 2016 Roadmap was developed by an Expert Working Group led by Australia's then Chief Scientist through an open consultation process which involved:

- direct consultations with more than 580 stakeholders
- fifty-one site visits
- 320 submission on the EWG's capability issues paper
- 170 comments on the draft Roadmap.

Funding

The funding provided by successive Governments to support NCRIS comprises:

- 2005-06 to 2010-11 – original NCRIS funding of \$527 million
- 2008-09 to 2013-14- Super Science Initiative funding of \$989.4 million
- 2012-13 to 2013-14 - Collaborative Research Infrastructure Scheme funding of \$60 million
- 2013-14 to 2014-15 – NCRIS continuation funding of \$180.2 million
- 2015-16 only – NCRIS continuation funding of \$150 million
- 2016-17 only – NCRIS continuation funding of \$150 million
- 2017-18 - ongoing – National Innovation and Science Agenda funding of \$150 million per annum, indexed)
 - provides base operating funding
- 2017-18 to 2028-29 – Research Infrastructure Investment Plan (Investment Plan) funding of \$1.9 billion
 - which provides capital refresh funding and additional operating funding.

Note that 'capital' refers to the definition of research infrastructure relevant to NCRIS, i.e. "...the nationally significant assets, facilities and services that support leading-edge research and innovation. It is accessible to publicly and privately funded users across Australia, and internationally."

Intended outcome

The intended outcome of NCRIS is to create a networked set of national research infrastructure (NRI) projects that collaboratively, efficiently and effectively address the Government's research infrastructure investment priorities by:

- providing critical services and facilities enabling research across a whole spectrum of research
- maintaining a national research infrastructure system that delivers research excellence to drive innovation
- leveraging on strong long-term industry and research partnerships to deliver future jobs and economic growth.

Current state

The 2016 Roadmap identified 21 NCRIS projects for base operating funding, as well as the continuation of associate membership of the European Molecular Biology Laboratory. The 21 projects are delivered through collaborations with approximately 200 delivery partners comprising universities, publicly funded research agencies and dedicated not-for-profit companies.

The Government considered and responded to the 2016 Roadmap, initially, through the 2018 Investment Plan⁴. The 2018 Investment Plan was released as part of the 2018-19 Budget and

⁴ <https://www.dese.gov.au/national-research-infrastructure/resources/2018-research-infrastructure-investment-plan>

announced specific funding allocations for eighteen existing NCRIS projects. It also provided funding for one new activity and eight scoping studies to explore identified potential new activities. It was implemented by the 2018 NCRIS Guidelines released on 31 May 2018.

Implementation of the 2020 Investment Plan⁵ will update the Government's response to the 2016 Roadmap for the period to 30 June 2023 by refreshing and resetting investments identified in Appendix B of the 2018 Investment Plan.

These NCRIS 2021 Guidelines provide for grants to implement the 2020 Investment Plan by funding priority projects under NCRIS from 2020-21 to 2022-23. The grants comprise capital and additional operating funds⁶. They are additional to grants in the NCRIS 2018 Guidelines and NCRIS earlier Guidelines.

Future grant opportunities

Future grant opportunities may arise through the processes to determine future priorities. These are expected to be:

- a new Roadmap (expected in 2021)
- a new Investment Plan (expected in 2022).

You can register your interest in the processes to develop these at:

researchinfrastructure@DESE.gov.au

We administer the program according to the [Commonwealth Grants Rules and Guidelines \(CGRGs\)](#)⁷.

2.1 About the 2021 NCRIS grant opportunity

The 2020 Investment Plan will refresh and reset NCRIS investments to 30 June 2023 by adjusting capital and additional operating funding only⁸ for investments identified in Attachment B of the 2018 Investment Plan. The 2020 Investment Plan was released as part of the 2020-21 Budget on 6 October 2020.

This grant opportunity is to implement the 2020 Investment Plan through NCRIS⁹.

This funding will maintain the performance of the NCRIS network until 2022-23.

The objective of this grant opportunity is to implement the 2020 Investment Plan by supporting investments identified in Attachment B of the 2018 Investment Plan with funding to meet newly emerged research infrastructure needs.

⁵ <https://www.dese.gov.au/2020-research-infrastructure-investment-plan/resources/2020-research-infrastructure-investment-plan>

⁶ No new base operating funding is being provided under these Guidelines. Consequently, projects will continue to receive base operating funding to 30 June 2023 as set out on the NCRIS 2018 Guidelines.

⁷ <https://www.finance.gov.au/sites/default/files/commonwealth-grants-rules-and-guidelines.pdf>

⁸ NCRIS funding after 2022-23 will be allocated through the Roadmap (expected in 2021) and Investment Plan (expected in 2022).

⁹ The 2020 Investment Plan is the second Investment Plan. The first Investment Plan was released in 2018 and was implemented by the NCRIS 2018 Guidelines.

The intended outcomes of the grant opportunity are to enhance support for world-class research by funding new investment in critical research infrastructure that will:

- allow existing NRI Investments (made through NCRIS projects) to maintain their performance in 2022-23
- implement new activities, through NCRIS, by investments in
 - NRI facilities previously identified for funding post 2021-22, i.e.
 - National Sea Simulator
 - Coastal Vessels (Southern)
 - completed scoping studies, i.e.
 - Enhance Australian Community Climate and Earth System Simulator
 - Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences-Indigenous Platforms
 - Synthetic Biology.

3. Grant amount and grant period

3.1 Grants available

The Australian Government has announced a total of \$4 billion over 12 years for the National Collaborative Research Infrastructure Strategy. From this amount, for this grant opportunity, \$156.414 million is available over 3 years for capital and additional operating costs.

The grant opportunity will run from 2020-21 to 2022-23.

There is no minimum grant amount.

There is no maximum grant amount, but grants cannot exceed the amount of available funds.

You are required to contribute towards the grant activities and seek other contributions. While there is no required minimum level of other contributions to be achieved, it is expected other contributions will approach 50 per cent of the grant for each project and be above 25 per cent of the grant for each project.

3.2 2020 Research Infrastructure Investment Plan period

The maximum grant period is 3 years.

You must complete your grant by 30 June 2023.

4. Eligibility criteria

4.1 Who is eligible for a grant?

This grant opportunity is a closed non-competitive selection process. As the purpose of the Grant Opportunity is to refresh and reset investments made through the 2018 Investment Plan (refer Section 2.1), grants are available for Funded Activities listed in Attachment B of the 2018 Investment Plan, comprising:

- NCRIS projects implementing NRI Facilities
- NRI Investments previously identified for funding post 2020-21
- organisations implementing completed scoping studies.

The projects and organisations eligible for a grant are listed in Appendix B.

5. What the grant money can be used for

5.1 Eligible grant activities

To be eligible your grant activity must:

- implement, operate and/or manage an identified priority NRI facility to effectively support Australian researchers and research groups in line with the Objectives of NCRIS (refer Section 2)
- directly relate to the project
- be agreed to in writing by the Department of Education, Skills and Employment. This is typically done through the Activity Plan format supplied in the grant agreement.

5.2 Eligible expenditure

You can only spend the grant on eligible expenditure you have incurred on agreed project activities.

Eligible expenditure items are:

- operation, management and governance costs
- salaries and on-costs for technical staff
- infrastructure maintenance
- infrastructure upgrades
- utilities
- rent
- consumables
- international travel and engagement
- industry and end user engagement
- outreach activities
- indirect costs of researchers using NCRIS infrastructure, such as researcher accommodation, where it is necessary for the supervision of research experiments and no reasonable alternative exists, for example the infrastructure is located out of a metropolitan area
- project wind-up for any project identified for defunding
- scoping activities required to effectively investigate potential new projects identified in Investment Plans or as otherwise determined by the Minister for Education and Youth
- other, single cost activities that enhance the research infrastructure openly accessible by Australian researchers (examples might include international access or membership fees)
- other agreed expenses necessary for the proper functioning of the national research infrastructure project.

We may update the guidelines on eligible and ineligible expenditure from time to time. The version in place when you received your grant applies to your grant activity.

Not all expenditure on your project may be eligible for grant funding. The Program Delegate makes the final decision on what is eligible expenditure and may give additional guidance on eligible expenditure if required.

5.3 What the grant money cannot be used for

You cannot use the grant for the following activities:

- approval, compliance or other activities associated with Commonwealth Property Management Framework and/or Two-Stage-Capital Works processes

- administrative activities that are not directly applicable to, and additionally incurred for, the operation of the project, unless the primary role of your entity is the management of a National Collaborative Research Infrastructure Strategy project
- the same specific, identifiable costs for which you receive funding from another Commonwealth government source. For example, grant money should only meet residual and unmet costs associated with research infrastructure funded in whole or in part by the Australian Research Council's Linkage Infrastructure, Equipment and Facilities program.

6. The assessment criteria

Potential grants as described in your proposal are considered against the following criteria:

- alignment with Australian Government priorities, including
 - at least one of the nine priority areas in the 2016 Roadmap¹⁰ (refer Section 2)
 - at least one of the priority investments in the 2018 Investment Plan¹¹ (refer Section 2)
 - where relevant, support required for other Government priorities, including the Reef Restoration and Adaptation Plan
 - outcomes of scoping studies funded through the 2018 NCRIS Guidelines and completed¹² (refer Section 2)
- urgency of investment to meet research community needs, including at least one factor showing that funding is required no later than 2022-23
- total cost to maintain or deliver priority national research infrastructure
- benefits to researchers, including, but not limited to, access to improved research infrastructure, access to new types of research infrastructure and the expected impacts on the timeliness, quality and scope of research that can be conducted
- strategic balance of investment across the national research infrastructure network.

These criteria are equally weighted.

7. How to submit information

You should propose to the department how you will expend grant funding on activities. The proposal should address:

- the objective of the activity
- anticipated achievements
- key challenges and risks
- duration
- methodology
- key performance indicators and associated targets and dates
- the budget for the activity.

¹⁰ <https://www.dese.gov.au/national-research-infrastructure/2016-national-research-infrastructure-roadmap>

¹¹ <https://www.dese.gov.au/national-research-infrastructure/resources/2018-research-infrastructure-investment-plan>

¹² See <https://www.grants.gov.au/#> or <https://www.dese.gov.au/national-research-infrastructure/announcements/national-collaborative-research-infrastructure-strategy-ncris-2018-guidelines>

If You were selected to provide information, You are responsible for ensuring that your information is complete and accurate. Giving false or misleading information is a serious offence under the [Criminal Code 1995](#) and we will investigate any false or misleading information and may exclude you from further consideration.

If you find an error in your information after submitting it, you should contact us immediately at NCRIS@dese.gov.au.

You should keep a copy of your information and any supporting documents.

We will acknowledge that we have received your submission within three working days.

7.1 Joint (consortia) project delivery

We recognise that some organisations may want to join together as a group to deliver a project.

In these circumstances, you must appoint a 'lead organisation'. Only the lead organisation can submit the application form and enter into a grant agreement with the Commonwealth. The application must identify all other members of the proposed group.

You must have a formal arrangement in place with all parties prior to execution of the agreement.

7.2 Timing of grant opportunity processes

The 2020 Investment Plan has been approved by the Australian Government and announced.

Negotiation and award of new grant agreements is expected to occur within one month of the release of these guidelines. It is expected they will be executed by 31 March 2021.

Negotiation and execution of grant agreement variations for existing projects is expected to occur prior to 30 June 2021.

If you are awarded a grant, we expect you will be able to commence your grant activity around March 2021.

7.3 Questions on the submission process

If you have any questions, contact the Department of Education, Skills and Employment by emailing NCRIS@dese.gov.au.

The Department of Education, Skills and Employment will respond to emailed questions within five working days.

8. The grant selection process

8.1 Consideration of potential grants

We will assess your application against the assessment criteria (see Section 6). We consider your application on its merits, based on:

- the overall objectives to be achieved in providing the grant
- the relative value of the grant sought
- the extent to which the evidence in your proposal demonstrates that it will contribute to meeting the outcomes/objectives
- how the grant will target support to researchers and research groups in line with the 2016 Roadmap Priority areas

- how the grant will complement research infrastructure funded through the 2018 Investment Plan.

8.2 Who approves the grants?

Financial approval of grants under Section 23(3) of the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act (PGPA)* will be made by the First Assistant Secretary, Higher Education Division, DESE, or other relevant delegate in accordance with DESE's Accountable Authority Instructions and financial delegations, taking into account Government decisions on the package of measures that comprise 2020 Investment Plan and the availability of grant funds for the purposes of the grant program.

The decision is final in all matters, including:

- the approval of the grant
- the grant funding amount to be awarded
- the terms and conditions of the grant.

There is no appeal mechanism for decisions to approve or not approve a grant.

9. Notification of grant outcomes

If your submission included a proposal for grant funding, we will advise you of the outcome in writing. If you were successful, we will advise you of any specific conditions attached to the grant.

You can submit a new proposal for the same grant (or a similar grant) in any future grant opportunities under the program. You should include new or more information to address any weaknesses that may have prevented your previous submission from being successful.

9.1 Feedback on your application

If you are unsuccessful, you may ask for feedback within one month of being advised of the outcome. We will give written feedback within one month of your request.

10. Successful grants

10.1 The grant agreement

You must enter into a legally binding grant agreement with the Commonwealth.

Each agreement has general terms and conditions that cannot be changed. Sample grant agreements are available on GrantConnect.

We must execute a grant agreement with you before we can make any payments. We are not responsible for any of your expenditure until a grant agreement is executed. If you choose to start your grant activities before you have an executed grant agreement, you do so at your own risk.

Your grant agreement may have specific conditions determined by the assessment process or other considerations made by the Program Delegate. We will identify these in the agreement.

The Commonwealth may recover grant funds if there is a breach of the grant agreement.

Standard Grant Agreement

We will use a standard grant agreement.

You will have 30 days from the date of a written offer to execute this grant agreement with the Commonwealth ('execute' means both you and the Commonwealth have signed the agreement). During this time, we will work with you to finalise details.

The offer may lapse if both parties do not sign the grant agreement within this time. Under certain circumstances, we may extend this period. We base the approval of your grant on the information you provide in your application.

You may request changes to the grant agreement. However, we will review any required changes to these details to ensure they do not impact the grant as approved by the Program Delegate.

10.2 How we pay the grant

The grant agreement will state the:

- maximum grant amount to be paid
- schedule of payments
- schedule of deliverable milestones
- reporting requirements.

We will not exceed the maximum grant amount under any circumstances. If you incur extra costs, you must meet them yourself.

We will make payments according to an agreed schedule set out in the grant agreement. Payments are subject to satisfactory progress on the grant activity.

10.3 Grants Payments and GST

Payments will be 'GST Inclusive'. If you are registered for the [Goods and Services Tax \(GST\)](#), where applicable, we will add GST to your grant payment and issue you with a [Recipient Created Tax Invoice](#).

Grants are assessable income for taxation purposes, unless exempted by a taxation law. We recommend you seek independent professional advice on your taxation obligations or seek assistance from the [Australian Taxation Office](#).¹³ We do not provide advice on your particular taxation circumstances.

11. Announcement of grants

Grants will be listed on the GrantConnect website 21 calendar days after the date of effect as required by Section 5.3 of the [CGRGs](#).

12. How we monitor your grant activity

12.1 Keeping us informed

You should let us know if anything is likely to affect your grant activity or organisation.

We need to know of any key changes to your organisation or its business activities, particularly if they affect your ability to complete your grant, carry on business and pay debts due.

You must also inform us of any changes to your:

¹³ <https://www.ato.gov.au/>

- name
- addresses
- nominated contact details, and/or
- bank account details.

If you become aware of a breach of terms and conditions under the grant agreement, you must contact us immediately.

You must notify us of events relating to your grant and provide an opportunity for the Minister or their representative to attend.

12.2 Reporting

You must submit reports in line with the grant agreement. We will provide sample templates for these reports as appendices in the grant agreement. We will expect you to report on:

- progress against agreed grant activity milestones and outcomes
- contributions of participants and other parties directly related to the grant activity or project
- expenditure of the grant.

The amount of detail you provide in your reports should be relative to the size, complexity and grant amount.

We will monitor progress by assessing reports you submit and may conduct site visits or request records to confirm details of your reports if necessary. Occasionally we may need to re-examine claims, seek further information or request an independent audit of claims and payments.

Progress reports

Progress reports must:

- include evidence of your progress towards completion of agreed activities and outcomes
- show the total eligible expenditure incurred to date
- be in the format provided in the grant agreement
- be submitted by the report due date (you can submit reports ahead of time if you have completed relevant activities).

We will only make grant payments when we receive satisfactory progress reports.

You must discuss any reporting delays with us as soon as you become aware of them.

Ad-hoc reports

We may ask you for ad-hoc reports on your grant. This may be to provide an update on progress, or any significant delays or difficulties in completing the grant activity.

Final report

When you complete the grant activity or project, you must submit a final report.

Final reports must:

- identify if and how outcomes have been achieved
- include the agreed evidence as specified in the grant agreement
- identify the total eligible expenditure incurred
- be submitted within 90 days of completion in the format provided in the grant agreement.

12.3 Audited financial acquittal report

We may ask you to provide a declaration that the grant money was spent in accordance with the grant agreement and to report on any underspends of the grant money.

NCRIS 2021 (2020 Research Infrastructure Investment Plan) Minister approved Guidelines

We may ask you to provide an independently audited financial acquittal report. A financial acquittal report will verify that you spent the grant in accordance with the grant agreement. The financial acquittal report template is attached to the sample grant agreement.

12.4 Grant agreement variations

We recognise that unexpected events may affect your progress. In these circumstances, you can request a variation to your grant agreement. You can request a variation by sending a written request to NCRIS@dese.gov.au

You should not assume that a variation request will be successful. We will consider your request based on provisions in the grant agreement and the likely impact on achieving outcomes.

12.5 Compliance visits

We may visit you during or at the completion of your grant activity to review your compliance with the grant agreement. We will provide you with reasonable notice of any compliance visit.

12.6 Record keeping

We may also inspect the records you are required to keep under the grant agreement.

12.7 Evaluation

We will evaluate the grant program to measure how well the outcomes and objectives have been achieved. We may use information from your application and reports for this purpose. We may also interview you, or ask you for more information to help us understand how the grant impacted you and to evaluate how effective the program was in achieving its outcomes.

12.8 Acknowledgement

The program logo should be used on all materials related to grants under the program. Whenever the logo is used, the publication must also acknowledge the Commonwealth as follows:

‘NCRIS – an Australian Government initiative’.

If you make a public statement about a grant activity or project funded under the program, we require you to acknowledge the grant by using the following:

‘This activity received grant funding from the Australian Government through the National Collaborative Research Infrastructure Strategy.’

13. Probity

The Australian Government will make sure that the grant opportunity process is fair, according to the published guidelines, incorporates appropriate safeguards against fraud, unlawful activities and other inappropriate conduct and is consistent with the CGRGs.

These guidelines may be changed from time-to-time by the Department of Education, Skills and Employment. When this happens, the revised guidelines will be published on GrantConnect.

13.1 Enquiries and feedback

The Department of Education, Skills and Employment’s Complaint Handling Policy, found at www.dese.gov.au/about-us/contact-us/complaints, applies to complaints about this grant opportunity. All complaints about a grant process must be provided in writing.

Any questions you have about grant decisions for this grant opportunity should be sent to ResearchInfrastructure@dese.gov.au.

If you do not agree with the way the Department of Education, Skills and Employment has handled your complaint, you may complain to the [Commonwealth Ombudsman](#). The Ombudsman will not usually look into a complaint unless the matter has first been raised directly with the Department of Education, Skills and Employment.

The Commonwealth Ombudsman can be contacted on:

Phone (Toll free): 1300 362 072
Email: ombudsman@ombudsman.gov.au
Website: www.ombudsman.gov.au

13.2 Conflicts of interest

Any conflicts of interest could affect the performance of the grant opportunity or program. There may be a conflict of interest, or perceived conflict of interest, if the Department of Education, Skills and Employment staff, any member of a committee or advisor and/or you or any of your personnel:

- has a professional, commercial or personal relationship with a party who is able to influence the grant selection process, such as an Australian Government officer or member of an external panel
- has a relationship with or interest in, an organisation, which is likely to interfere with or restrict the entities from carrying out the proposed activities fairly and independently or
- has a relationship with, or interest in, an organisation from which they will receive personal gain because the organisation receives a grant under the grant program/ grant opportunity.

You will be asked to declare, as part of your application, any perceived or existing conflicts of interests or that, to the best of your knowledge, there is no conflict of interest.

If you later identify an actual, apparent, or perceived conflict of interest, you must inform the Department of Education, Skills and Employment in writing immediately.

Conflicts of interest for Australian Government staff will be handled as set out in the Australian [Public Service Code of Conduct \(Section 13\(7\)\)](#) of the [Public Service Act 1999](#). Committee members and other officials including the decision maker must also declare any conflicts of interest.

13.3 Privacy

We treat your personal information according to the [Privacy Act 1988](#) and the [Australian Privacy Principles](#). This includes letting you know:

- what personal information we collect
- why we collect your personal information
- who we give your personal information to.

Your personal information can only be disclosed to someone else for the primary purpose for which it was collected, unless an exemption applies.

The Australian Government may also use and disclose information about grant applicants and grant recipients under this grant opportunity in any other Australian Government business or function. This includes disclosing grant information on GrantConnect as required for reporting purposes and giving information to the Australian Taxation Office for compliance purposes.

We may share the information you give us with other Commonwealth entities for purposes including government administration, research or service delivery, according to Australian laws.

NCRIS 2021 (2020 Research Infrastructure Investment Plan) Minister approved Guidelines

As part of your application, you declare your ability to comply with the *Privacy Act 1988* and the Australian Privacy Principles and impose the same privacy obligations on officers, employees, agents and subcontractors that you engage to assist with the activity, in respect of personal information you collect, use, store, or disclose in connection with the activity. Accordingly, you must not do anything, which if done by the Department of Education, Skills and Employment would breach an Australian Privacy Principle as defined in the Act.

13.4 Confidential Information

Other than information available in the public domain, you agree not to disclose to any person, other than us, any confidential information relating to the grant application and/or agreement, without our prior written approval. The obligation will not be breached where you are required by law, Parliament or a stock exchange to disclose the relevant information or where the relevant information is publicly available (other than through breach of a confidentiality or non-disclosure obligation).

We may at any time, require you to arrange for you; or your employees, agents or subcontractors to give a written undertaking relating to nondisclosure of our confidential information in a form we consider acceptable.

We will keep any information in connection with the grant agreement confidential to the extent that it meets all of the three conditions below:

- you clearly identify the information as confidential and explain why we should treat it as confidential
- the information is commercially sensitive
- revealing the information would cause unreasonable harm to you or someone else.

We will not be in breach of any confidentiality agreement if the information is disclosed to:

- Commonwealth employees and contractors to help us manage the program effectively
- employees and contractors of our department so we can research, assess, monitor and analyse our programs and activities
- employees and contractors of other Commonwealth agencies for any purposes, including government administration, research or service delivery
- other Commonwealth, State, Territory or local government agencies in program reports and consultations
- the Auditor-General, Ombudsman or Privacy Commissioner
- the responsible Minister or Parliamentary Secretary, and
- a House or a Committee of the Australian Parliament.

The grant agreement may also include any specific requirements about special categories of information collected, created or held under the grant agreement.

13.5 Freedom of information

All documents in the possession of the Australian Government, including those about this grant opportunity, are subject to the [Freedom of Information Act 1982](#) (FOI Act).

The purpose of the FOI Act is to give members of the public rights of access to information held by the Australian Government and its entities. Under the FOI Act, members of the public can seek access to documents held by the Australian Government. This right of access is limited only by the exceptions and exemptions necessary to protect essential public interests and private and business affairs of persons in respect of whom the information relates.

All Freedom of Information requests must be referred to the Freedom of Information Coordinator in writing.

By email: FOI@dese.gov.au

Due to the impact of COVID-19, the department is currently unable to action FOI requests received via post.

14. Consultation

Stakeholder consultation activities which informed the 2020 Research Infrastructure Investment Plan included:

- The 2020 Research Infrastructure Investment Plan Data Collection
- The 2018 Research Infrastructure Investment Plan Data Collection
- The 2016 National Research Infrastructure Roadmap

The Department of Education, Skills and Employment also consults with projects in the existing NCRIS network on project and program improvements.

15. Glossary

| Term | Definition |
|--|---|
| accountable authority | see subsection 12(2) of the Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013 |
| administering entity | when an entity that is not responsible for the policy, is responsible for the administration of part or all of the grant administration processes |
| assessment criteria | are the specified principles or standards, against which applications will be judged. These criteria are also used to assess the merits of proposals and, in the case of a competitive grant opportunity, to determine application rankings. |
| commencement date | the expected start date for the grant activity |
| completion date | the expected date that the grant activity must be completed and the grant spent by |
| co-sponsoring entity | when two or more entities are responsible for the policy and the appropriation for outcomes associated with it |
| date of effect | can be the date on which a grant agreement is signed or a specified starting date. Where there is no grant agreement, entities must publish information on individual grants as soon as practicable. |
| decision maker | the person who makes a decision to award a grant |
| eligibility criteria | refer to the mandatory criteria which must be met to qualify for a grant. Assessment criteria may apply in addition to eligibility criteria. |
| Commonwealth entity | a Department of State, or a Parliamentary Department, or a listed entity or a body corporate established by a law of the Commonwealth. See subsections 10(1) and (2) of the PGPA Act |
| Commonwealth Grants Rules and Guidelines (CGRGs) | establish the overarching Commonwealth grants policy framework and articulate the expectations for all non-corporate Commonwealth entities in relation to grants administration. Under this overarching framework, non-corporate Commonwealth entities undertake grants administration based on the mandatory requirements and key principles of grants administration. |

| Term | Definition |
|------------------------------|---|
| grant | <p>for the purposes of the CGRGs, a 'grant' is an arrangement for the provision of financial assistance by the Commonwealth or on behalf of the Commonwealth:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. under which relevant money¹⁴ or other Consolidated Revenue Fund (CRF) money¹⁵ is to be paid to a grantee other than the Commonwealth; and b. which is intended to help address one or more of the Australian Government's policy outcomes while assisting the grantee achieve its objectives. |
| grant activity/activities | refers to the project/tasks/services that the grantee is required to undertake |
| grant agreement | sets out the relationship between the parties to the agreement, and specifies the details of the grant |
| GrantConnect | is the Australian Government's whole-of-government grants information system, which centralises the publication and reporting of Commonwealth grants in accordance with the CGRGs |
| grant opportunity | refers to the specific grant round or process where a Commonwealth grant is made available to potential grantees. Grant opportunities may be open or targeted, and will reflect the relevant grant selection process. |
| grant program | a 'program' carries its natural meaning and is intended to cover a potentially wide range of related activities aimed at achieving government policy outcomes. A grant program is a group of one or more grant opportunities under a single [entity] Portfolio Budget Statement Program. |
| grantee | the individual/organisation which has been selected to receive a grant |
| PBS Program | described within the entity's Portfolio Budget Statement , PBS programs each link to a single outcome and provide transparency for funding decisions. These high-level PBS programs often comprise a number of lower level, more publicly recognised programs, some of which will be Grant Programs. A PBS Program may have more than one Grant Program associated with it, and each of these may have one or more grant opportunities. |

¹⁴ Relevant money is defined in the PGPA Act. See section 8, Dictionary.

¹⁵ Other CRF money is defined in the PGPA Act. See section 105, Rules in relation to other CRF money.

| Term | Definition |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| publicly funded research organisation | these include Australian higher education providers listed in the Higher Education Support Act 2003, and federal, state and territory government departments or agencies which undertake publicly funded research. |
| selection criteria | comprise eligibility criteria and assessment criteria. |
| selection process | the method used to select potential grantees. This process may involve comparative assessment of applications or the assessment of applications against the eligibility criteria and/or the assessment criteria. |
| value with money | <p>value with money in this document refers to ‘value with relevant money’ which is a judgement based on the grant proposal representing an efficient, effective, economical and ethical use of public resources and determined from a variety of considerations.</p> <p>When administering a grant opportunity, an official should consider the relevant financial and non-financial costs and benefits of each proposal including, but not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the quality of the project proposal and activities; • fitness for purpose of the proposal in contributing to government objectives; • that the absence of a grant is likely to prevent the grantee and government’s outcomes being achieved; and • the potential grantee’s relevant experience and performance history. |

Appendix A. The NCRIS Principles

The key principles underpinning NCRIS are that:

- Australia's investment in research infrastructure should be planned and developed with the aim of maximising the contributions of the research and development system to foster innovation, economic development, national security, social wellbeing and environmental sustainability;
- infrastructure resources should be focussed in areas where Australia is, or has the potential to be, world-class (in both discovery and application driven research) and provide international leadership;
- major infrastructure should be developed on a collaborative, national, nonexclusive basis. Infrastructure funded through NCRIS should serve the research and innovation system broadly, not just the host/funded institutions. Funding and eligibility rules should encourage collaboration and co-investment. It should not be the function of NCRIS to support institutional level (or even small-scale collaborative) infrastructure;
- access is a critical issue in the drive to optimise Australia's research infrastructure. In terms of NCRIS funding there should be as few barriers as possible to accessing major infrastructure for those undertaking meritorious research, including the use of preferential arrangements for meritorious researchers;
- due regard be given to the whole-of-life costs of major infrastructure, with funding available for operational costs where appropriate;
- NCRIS should seek to enable the fuller participation of Australian researchers in the international research system;
- NCRIS should enable Government initiatives which seek to maximise opportunities for industry and international engagement and commercialisation of research;
- data generated, created, captured or stored by NCRIS funded projects will be made available to the wider research community based on the F.A.I.R. principles, appropriately implemented for individual research communities. Data must be stored to an appropriate level of security; and
- new projects, and additional investment in existing projects, should be based on a robust business case.

Appendix B. Grants awarded by the 2020 Investment Plan

This table displays the grants that have been awarded (subject to indexation) through the 2020 Research Infrastructure Investment Plan.

It contains:

- the name of the NCRIS Project;
- the grantee, also known as the Lead Agent, for the project;
- the type of the funding, which may be base operating, additional operating and/or capital; and
- the GST exclusive amount that will be paid in each financial year during the grant period.

| NCRIS Project Name | 2020-21 | 2021-22 | 2022-23 |
|---|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| Lead Agent name (Grantee) | | | |
| Type of funding | | | |
| Astronomy <i>Astronomy Australia Ltd</i> | | | |
| • Base operating | \$- | \$- | \$- |
| • Capital (ATNF – ASKAP) | \$- | \$- | \$- |
| • Operating (ATNF - ASKAP) | \$- | \$- | \$264,826 |
| Atlas of Living Australia <i>CSIRO</i> | | | |
| • Base operating | \$- | \$- | \$- |
| • Additional operating | \$- | \$- | \$1,161,871 |
| • Capital | \$- | \$- | \$1,256,646 |
| AuScope <i>AuScope Ltd</i> | | | |
| • Base operating | \$- | \$- | \$- |
| • Additional operating | \$- | \$- | \$2,493,579 |
| • Capital | \$- | \$- | \$3,278,750 |
| Microscopy Australia, formerly named the Australian Microscopy and Microanalysis Facility <i>University of Sydney</i> | | | |
| • Base operating | \$- | \$- | \$- |
| • Additional operating | \$- | \$- | \$373,568 |
| • Capital | \$- | \$- | \$4,245,846 |
| Australian National Fabrication Facility <i>Australian National Fabrication Facility Ltd</i> | | | |
| • Base operating | \$- | \$- | \$- |
| • Additional operating | \$- | \$- | \$2,960,557 |
| • Capital | \$- | \$- | \$272,351 |
| Phenomics Australia, formerly the Australian Phenomics Network <i>Australian National University</i> | | | |
| • Base operating | \$- | \$- | \$- |
| • Additional operating | \$- | \$- | \$970,721 |
| • Capital | \$- | \$- | \$938,398 |

| NCRIS Project Name | 2020-21 | 2021-22 | 2022-23 |
|--|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| Lead Agent name (Grantee) | | | |
| • Type of funding | | | |
| Australian Plant Phenomics Facility <i>University of Adelaide</i> | | | |
| • Base operating | \$- | \$- | \$- |
| • Additional operating | \$- | \$- | \$1,471,315 |
| • Capital | \$- | \$- | \$4,660,186 |
| Australian Urban Research Infrastructure Network <i>University of Melbourne</i> | | | |
| • Base operating | \$- | \$- | \$- |
| • Additional operating | \$- | \$- | \$2,867,979 |
| • Capital | \$- | \$- | \$2,271,259 |
| BioPlatforms Australia <i>BioPlatforms Australia Ltd</i> | | | |
| • Base operating | \$- | \$- | \$- |
| • Additional operating | \$- | \$- | \$3,142,028 |
| • Capital | \$- | \$- | \$11,271,709 |
| Australian Research Data Commons <i>Australian Research Data Commons Ltd</i> | | | |
| • Base operating | \$- | \$- | \$- |
| • Additional operating | \$- | \$- | \$3,087,549 |
| • Capital | \$- | \$- | \$12,933,125 |
| Integrated Marine Observing System <i>University of Tasmania</i> | | | |
| • Base operating | \$- | \$- | \$- |
| • Additional operating | \$- | \$- | \$1,265,822 |
| • Capital | \$- | \$- | \$4,688,982 |
| Marine National Facility <i>University of Tasmania</i> | | | |
| • Base operating | \$- | \$- | \$- |
| • Additional operating | \$- | \$- | \$6,048,715 |
| • Capital | \$- | \$- | \$1,600,000 |
| National Deuteration Facility <i>ANSTO</i> | | | |
| • Base operating | \$- | \$- | \$- |
| • Additional operating | \$- | \$- | \$123,335 |
| • Capital | \$- | \$- | \$140,000 |
| National Imaging Facility <i>University of Queensland</i> | | | |
| • Base operating | \$- | \$- | \$- |
| • Additional operating | \$- | \$- | \$2,700,903 |
| • Capital | \$- | \$- | \$- |

| NCRIS Project Name | 2020-21 | 2021-22 | 2022-23 |
|--|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| Lead Agent name (Grantee) | | | |
| • Type of funding | | | |
| Nuclear Science Facility (ACNS and CAS) <i>ANSTO</i> | | | |
| • Base operating | \$- | \$- | \$- |
| • Additional operating | \$- | \$- | \$1,352,693 |
| • Capital | \$- | \$- | \$4,483,980 |
| Population Health Research Network <i>University of Western Australia</i> | | | |
| • Base operating | \$- | \$- | \$- |
| • Additional operating | \$- | \$- | \$739,778 |
| • Capital | \$- | \$- | \$506,449 |
| Therapeutic Innovation Australia, formerly named Translating health discovery <i>Therapeutic Innovation Australia Ltd</i> | | | |
| • Base operating | \$- | \$- | \$- |
| • Additional operating | \$- | \$- | \$3,315,650 |
| • Capital | \$- | \$- | \$3,652,582 |
| Terrestrial Ecosystem Research Network <i>University of Queensland</i> | | | |
| • Base operating | \$- | \$- | \$- |
| • Additional operating | \$- | \$- | \$3,874,516 |
| • Capital | \$- | \$- | \$2,078,988 |
| Australian Community Climate and Earth-System Simulator (ACCESS) <i>Australian National University</i> | | | |
| • Base operating | \$- | \$- | \$- |
| • Additional operating | \$1,694,835 | \$2,683,044 | \$3,312,133 |
| • Capital | \$- | \$- | \$- |
| Synthetic Biology <i>BioPlatforms Australia Ltd</i> | | | |
| • Base operating | \$- | \$- | \$- |
| • Additional operating | \$710,000 | \$1,292,698 | \$2,648,599 |
| • Capital | \$1,080,000 | \$1,121,012 | \$1,465,828 |
| Humanities, Arts and Social Science Platform <i>Australian Research Data Commons Ltd</i> | | | |
| • Base operating | \$- | \$- | \$- |
| • Additional operating | \$1,330,417 | \$1,915,236 | \$2,036,995 |
| • Capital | \$670,000 | \$1,112,202 | \$995,752 |
| SeaSim <i>Australian Institute of Marine Science</i> | | | |
| • Base operating | \$- | \$- | \$- |
| • Additional operating | \$125,000 | \$2,899,602 | \$7,141,250 |
| • Capital | \$13,097,000 | \$11,563,000 | \$1,505,000 |

| NCRIS Project Name | 2020-21 | 2021-22 | 2022-23 |
|--|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| Lead Agent name (Grantee) | | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Type of funding | | | |
| Coastal Vessels | | | |
| <i>South Australian Research and Development Institute</i> | | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Base operating | \$- | \$- | \$- |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Additional operating | \$- | \$- | \$727,016 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Capital | \$- | \$- | \$- |