FACTSHEET
Cooperative Research Centres (CRC) Program

Cooperative Research Centres (CRC) Program Round 22

CRC guidelines – what has changed?

New grant opportunity guidelines for Round 22 of the CRC Program have been developed in accordance with the Streamlining Government Grants Administration Agenda which is designed to bring government grant programs in line with agreed whole of government terminology, templates and processes. Consistency across government programs will enable businesses to more easily apply for and enter into grant agreements for government programs.

The changes for Round 22 do not change the scope or intent of the program. The minor changes include:

- Updates to terminology and numbering to align with the current guidelines template.
- Minor text updates for increased clarification.
- Updates to assessment criterion 3 to place greater emphasis on how grantees will manage any national security risks associated with their project.
- Included diversity measurement in line with Advancing Women in STEM strategy.
- Extension to the round timeline to allow more time to finalise applications. The nominal commencement date for successful CRCs is 1 October 2021.

The CRC Round 22 Grant Opportunity Guidelines apply to applicants and grantees awarded in Round 22 only. Previous grantees are subject to the relevant CRC Program guidelines the CRC was awarded under. New grant opportunity guidelines will be published for each CRC selection round.

What activities are eligible?

CRC grant funds must only be spent on eligible expenditure activities which will be defined in your grant agreement. Your total project value may also include eligible special purpose expenditure. Eligible special purpose expenditure contributes to your total project value but is not included in the calculation of your grant amount. You cannot spend grant funds on these activities.

Further details are available in the CRC Round 22 Grant Opportunity Guidelines, for guidance on:

- eligible expenditure, see appendix B.
- in-kind contributions, see appendix C.
- eligible special purpose expenditure, see appendix D.
- ineligible expenditure, see appendix E.

How do I apply for a CRC grant?

CRC applications must be submitted online through a smart form. The link to the smart form is available once a round is opened from the CRC Grants page at business.gov.au.

You can only create and submit an application during an open selection round. The opening and closing dates and times for each selection round will be published on business.gov.au. Please remember any specified times refer to Canberra time, whether AEST or AEDT.

Before you begin an application it is strongly advised you familiarise yourself with the [CRC Program Round 22 Grant Opportunity Guidelines](#) and the various CRC Grants Fact Sheets applicable for Round 22. All are available on [business.gov.au](#).

Ensure you allow ample time to complete the online application – do not leave completion and submission of the application to the last minute. Submitting by the due time is your responsibility and incomplete or late applications will not be accepted.

Applications can only be submitted via the smart form once all mandatory requirements have been met. An incorrectly completed application will not be able to be submitted. The smart form will alert you to any mandatory fields not completed, or in some cases, if information provided is invalid or unacceptable. All questions marked with an asterisk (*) are mandatory fields.

You can click the **'Check Form for Submission'** button (at the end of the final section of the form) at any time to check the form's completeness. Once all mandatory fields are completed correctly and the application is complete, the form can be submitted. Please leave plenty of time before submission to populate incomplete information. Correcting such errors can be time-consuming, particularly against a looming deadline.

Key tips when completing your application:

- Keep a record of the Tracking Code (top right hand corner of the page) when you create the form. You will need this code to reopen your saved form and if you have any queries regarding your form.

- **SAVE** regularly. A new form will expire after 8 hours if not saved. Click the 'Save for Later' button regularly while completing this form to ensure the information entered is saved. Saved forms will be retained for a maximum of 30 days. If you do not save or submit your form within this timeframe, you will need to start a new form.

- Text entry fields DO NOT accept formatted text (all formatting will be lost if formatted text, including bold, italics, dot points, images etc is copied into these fields).

- Variable character limits apply to text entry fields (please note the character limits at the bottom of the relevant field for each question contained in the application). The character count include spaces and returns as characters and formatting may also affect the character count. Therefore, please ensure you only use plain, unformatted text. Ensure you use the character limits wisely and write a concise response to directly answer the questions covering any additional guidance provided.

- The form can be viewed by more than one person by sharing the form's unique tracking code however, the form can only be used by one person at any one time. If multiple users access the form at the same time, any information entered may be lost. Sharing the tracking code also increases the risk of losing unsaved information. Only one person at a time has permissions for the application form. The last person to access the form has the saving permission. If the form is shared, it is recommended the form is saved regularly.

- We suggest you complete as many sections of the form as you can prior to updating the partner section. Due to the checking of partner details (such as ABN) the form can slow down as you add more partners.

- Please leave ample time to complete the form. If you experience any difficulties in completing the form contact us well before the closing date and time.

- For Stage 1 applications, if required, use the CRC Round 22 Partner Contributions spreadsheet. Only use this spreadsheet if you have exceeded the capacity of the SmartForm to add partners. If you intend to attach this spreadsheet to your application please contact us.

When your application is submitted you will be provided with a receipt to confirm your submission has been successful. Please keep this receipt for your records. A copy of your complete application is also emailed to both the contact person and the declarant email addresses supplied in your submitted form. Once submitted you will no longer be able to amend the application. A submitted application can be withdrawn, but it cannot be retrieved or amended.

If you have any queries relating to submission of your form you will need to provide your receipt number or tracking code.

Submitted applications will be checked for eligibility and compliance. Compliant applications will proceed to assessment, and will be referred to the CRC Advisory Committee, an independent committee of Innovation and Science Australia, to assess the application against the assessment criteria and other applications.

How do I address the CRC Assessment Criteria?

To be competitive, you must address all assessment criteria and their indicators in your application. We will assess your application based on the weighting given to each indicator under each assessment criterion.

The application form asks questions that relate to the assessment criteria below. The amount of detail and supporting evidence you provide in your application should be relative to the project size, complexity and grant amount requested.

We will only award funding to applications that score highly against all assessment criteria, as these represent best value for money.

Applicants should note funding is awarded through a competitive, assessment based selection process. Compliant CRC applications are considered in two stages. Applicants are asked to address the assessment criteria in the Stage 1 application.

- Responses should be succinct, coherent, well-structured and written in plain English.
- Responses need to address the assessment criteria however, it is not necessary to fill the full character limit.
- It is important that your application and its language is appropriately targeted to a general audience and avoids jargon and technical detail. Your application may not be assessed by a specialist panel with detailed and expert knowledge of your particular field.
- Applicants should be mindful of not repeating key elements of their application across criteria.

Applications are assessed by the CRC Advisory Committee as delegated by Innovation and Science Australia. The Committee makes recommendations to the Minister as to which Stage 1 applications are suitable to progress to Stage 2 and which Stage 2 applications are suitable for funding.

In assessing applications and making its recommendations, the CRC Advisory Committee will consider the application and may seek expert advice from industry, government and the research sector on any aspect of the application. Applicants invited to Stage 2 will need to provide further details to their Stage 1 application, including any changes based on Stage 1 feedback and will be required to attend an interview to present the bid to the CRC Advisory Committee.

Compliant CRC applications will be assessed against the following criteria as set out in the CRC Grant Opportunity Guidelines. The indicators for each criterion are also weighted.

Assessment criterion 1 - Project alignment with the program objectives (total 25 points)

You should demonstrate this by describing:

a. the industry-identified problem and how this is impacting the competitiveness, productivity and sustainability of Australian industries, including links to Government priorities (10 points)

b. how your project will foster high quality research through industry-led and outcome-focused collaborative industry-research partnerships (10 points)

c. the additionality or value add of the proposed project in relation to the existing approach industry has to solving the problem. (5 points)

Key considerations under this criterion may include: Has the why/what been answered? Is there sufficient detail and clarity? What is the industry problem to be solved? What outcomes will be delivered, both to the partners and to industry more broadly? Are the proposed outcomes tangible and realistic? How is the proposal aligned with government priorities? Why is a collaborative effort required? How do the activities align with existing programs and offerings? What additionality will the specific education and training activities bring to the sector? What impacts will the activities have on the industry?

Assessment criterion 2 - The quality of your research project (total 25 points)

You should demonstrate this by describing:

a. the research you will do and the methodologies you will use, including describing the role of your partners in the research (10 points)

b. how the research will address the identified industry problem, build on the current body of knowledge and enhance the adoption of new technologies (5 points)

c. the education and training opportunities your project will provide, including a PhD program, to build capability and capacity in the industry and research sectors. (10 points)

Key considerations under this criterion may include: Does the response answer the how/who? What specific research activities will be undertaken to address the problem? Is the research appropriate to address the problem? Is there a clear research methodology? Do the researchers have a track record of delivery and a commercial focus? Are the milestones and outputs achievable within the timeframe? Is the proposed research strongly linked to the expected industry outcomes? Are the proposed partners and their roles in the proposal clear? Are the proposed education and training activities industry focussed and appropriately targeted? Will the activities assist in developing workforce capacity and industry capability and are they supported by industry? Is the education and training offering broad enough and relevant to the industry sector? What are the expected outcomes of the education and training activities? What qualifications will be delivered?

It is expected that you will not duplicate information across assessment criterion 2 and the information provided in the fields on specific Research Programs.

Assessment criterion 3 - Capacity, capability and resources to deliver your project (total 25 points):

You should demonstrate this through identifying:

a. how you will manage and monitor your project and your partners, explaining the governance and planning arrangements, including security (8 points)

b. a plan to manage and monitor the project including risk management of but not limited to security (in particular any associated national security issues), involvement of international partners and intellectual property protection (10 points)

c. your access to required resources including personnel with the right skills (project/business/commercialisation management) and experience (names/qualifications and achievements), funding, security, infrastructure, technology and intellectual property (5 points)

d. why your collaboration is the most appropriate to solve the identified problem with specific reference to any existing collaborations. (2 points)

Key considerations under this criterion may include: Is there sufficient detail and clarity? How will the activities be effectively managed? Does the governance model demonstrate good practice in its design and execution? Are the governance arrangements suitable to deliver the proposal? Is the governance structure clearly described? Is risk adequately identified, including the involvement of international partners and intellectual property management? Are the management capabilities to undertake the proposed activities well demonstrated? Are the proposed Chair and CEO identified and is your Board independent of the partners? Do the directors and management team have the appropriate expertise? Is there evidence of effective governance of a collaboration? Is there experience in commercialising research? Is there sufficient partner investment? Why is this the best group to undertake the research and solve the problem for industry?

Assessment criterion 4 - Impact of the grant funding on your project (total 25 points)

You should demonstrate this through identifying:

a. the likelihood your project would proceed without the grant and how the grant will impact the project in terms of scale and timing (5 points)

b. the total investment the grant will leverage and why the Australian Government should invest in your project (10 points)

c. the commercial potential of your project including the expected commercial outputs such as new products, processes or services, and/or any expected spill over benefits. (10 points)

Key considerations under this criterion may include: Is the level of funding requested reasonable? What is the case to support government investment? What is the overall value proposition? Why can't the proposal proceed without the government grant? Has the grant request been well justified and supported by evidence? What is the ratio of partner contributions to the grant request? Is it clear how the funds will be used? Is proposed expenditure appropriate? Is the need for funding well justified? How will the funding deliver broader benefits to industry? How will the proposal and its outcomes improve Australia's competitiveness and comparative advantage? How will access be improved to new and existing markets? What are the expected spill-over benefits? How will they be delivered? What is the scale (quantity and value) of the expected benefits? Are they well justified? What is the path to market? What are the commercial opportunities? Is there evidence of market analysis? Are there similar products/processes/services already on the market? How will impacts be attributable to the CRC as opposed to other work in this area? What new market opportunities will be created? Which parts of the supply chain will be impacted?

What is a partner declaration?

The Partner Declaration is a declaration of intent made by a partner organisation to the Commonwealth to confirm its intention to participate in the proposed CRC should the application be successful. The declaration (and application form) should only include the resources intended as a firm commitment to the proposed CRC.

The Partner Declaration is not a contract between the Commonwealth and the partner organisation. The declaration does not create any binding legal obligation on the partner, nor does it create a binding legal relationship between the signatory and the other partner or the Commonwealth.

In signing the declaration the partner organisation affirms the truth and accuracy of the information provided and acknowledges the obligations on partners in the CRC.

A signed Partner Declaration for each partner organisation in the collaboration must be uploaded to the grant application. Failure by the applicant to do so will mean the application is incomplete and may not be considered for assessment.

The template declaration is available at business.gov.au.

What are the reporting requirements?

You will be required to submit reports quarterly to the department in line with the grant agreement. We will provide samples of these reports as appendices in the grant agreement and remind you of your reporting obligations before a report is due.

Further details are available in the CRC Round 22 Grant Opportunity Guidelines.

Where can I find more information?

For more information on the CRC Program visit business.gov.au or call 13 28 46.