

ARC Linkage Projects Grant Scheme
Information Package for Partner Organisations

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What is ARC Linkage Projects?

Linkage Projects is an application-based research funding programme available for individual researchers or teams to support collaborative research projects between higher education researchers and industry.

Linkage Projects – Aims

The scheme aims to encourage and develop long-term strategic research alliances between higher education institutions and other organisations, including with industry and end-users, in order to apply advanced knowledge to problems, and/or to provide opportunities to obtain national economic, social or cultural benefits.

Types of Research Not Supported

The Linkage Projects scheme does not support:

- a. medical and dental research. These areas of research are generally covered by other Commonwealth Government funding agencies, such as the NHMRC;
- b. activities leading solely to the creation or performance of a work of art, including visual art, musical compositions, drama, dance, designs and literary works. These areas are generally covered by other Commonwealth Government agencies, such as the Australia Council for the Arts;
- c. projects such as uncritical compilations and purely descriptive catalogues or editions that do not involve original research;
- d. production of teaching materials, even though some research may be involved in their production;
- e. compilation of data, unless this is an integral part of a project which is judged to be necessary, in which case the Proposal must include a statement indicating the research objectives to which the data would contribute;

- f. development of research aids and tools (including computer programs), unless they form an integral part of the Proposal, in which case the Proposal must include a statement indicating the research objectives to which these activities would contribute.
- g. projects where, in the ARC's opinion, one or more Partner Organisations is seeking expert external assistance, not available within their own organisation, in order to develop specific applications involving:
- h. little innovation or low risk; and/or
 - i. ii. are, in the opinion of the ARC, mainly for the benefit, and align with the priorities or objectives, of the Partner Organisation; and
 - ii. iii. the ARC deems to be contracted research or consultancies.
- i. projects that, in the opinion of the ARC, do not significantly enhance links with organisations outside the publicly funded research and higher education sectors;

6.5.2 If the ARC considers that a Proposal seeks funding for a project that involves any of the items listed in subsection 6.5.2, then to that extent part or all of the Proposal will not be recommended or approved for funding. However, if the ARC considers other parts of the proposed project remain worthy of support, the ARC may recommend that a reduced amount of funding be approved for the Proposal.

Linkage Projects Funding

- Funding is used to support the costs associated with conducting a research project, this includes the cost of personnel working on the project, travel, maintenance and equipment
- Personnel costs supported by the scheme include: Linkage Industry Fellowships (short term transfers), ARC Postdoctoral Research Fellowships (Industry), Australian Postgraduate Awards (Industry) to support PhD students, Research Assistants, Research Associates, Technicians, etc. Note that support for Partner Organisation staff is not available.
- Restrictions on budget items are outlined in clause 6.4 of the ARC *Linkage Projects Funding Rules* for funding commencing in 2010.
- Funding for projects may be awarded for 1 to 5 years.
- The minimum level of funding that will be provided by the ARC for a project is \$20,000 per annum. Applicants must make a request of at least \$20,000 per year.
- Generally, the maximum level of ARC funding for a project is \$500,000 per annum. In exceptional circumstances, the ARC is prepared to consider higher funding levels of up to \$2,000,000 per year, where an outstanding case is made, and where there is clear evidence of a very high level of commitment by, and very significant cash contributions from, the Partner Organisation(s).

Partner Organisation Eligibility

To be an eligible Partner Organisation, an organisation must be:

- a. a private sector organisation;
- b. a private non-profit organisation; or
- c. a Government organisation – in general, State, Territory or Commonwealth Government organisations are eligible to participate as Partner Organisations where funds they are committing to the project have not previously been appropriated either for internal research-related activities or for any other purpose of research, research evaluation and/or Consultancy.

Notwithstanding the above, the following organisations and types of organisation are not eligible as Partner Organisations under LP:

- a. Australian higher education organisations and their controlled entities, including their commercial arms;
- b. any Australian organisation which in the ARC's opinion is associated with a higher education organisation and which in the ARC's opinion provides undergraduate or postgraduate training as a substantial part of its activities;
- c. Rural Research and Development Boards / Corporations;
- d. State and Territory Government Research and Development organisations;
- e. Co-operative Research Centres;
- f. the Defence Science and Technology Organisation;
- g. the Australian Nuclear Science and Technology Organisation;
- h. the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation;
- i. Geoscience Australia;
- j. the Australian Institute of Marine Science;
- k. the Institute of Advanced Studies (IAS) at the Australian National University;
- l. the Environmental Research Institute of the Supervising Scientist;
- m. the Australian Antarctic Division;
- n. any entity (for example joint ventures) where a majority of the membership is made up of, or ownership and/or control is exercised by, other organisations or their representatives, which are not themselves eligible to be a Partner Organisation; and
- o. any organisation, which in the opinion of the ARC, receives substantial funding from State, Territory or Commonwealth Government sources or from Governments of other countries and the ARC considers such funding is provided mainly for research or research-related activities.

If, after reading these Funding Rules, any doubt exists over the eligibility of an organisation to be a Partner Organisation, advice can be sought from the ARC about the eligibility status of the organisation by means of the submission of an Eligibility Ruling Request to the ARC pursuant to the process specified in Section 10.1. The request must include information where relevant concerning the proposed Partner Organisation's activities and arrangements for the organisation's membership, ownership and control.

Overseas Partner Organisation

The ARC is prepared to accept an overseas organisation as a Partner Organisation if the organisation meets the eligibility criteria above. If a Proposal includes an overseas Partner Organisation, the Proposal must address the following additional criteria to the satisfaction of the ARC:

- a. the economic, environmental or social benefit of the research to Australia; and
- b. the intended use of the research outcomes in Australia.

In addition to the requirements stipulated above, if an overseas higher education institution, or an entity closely associated with an overseas higher education organisation, is proposed as a Partner Organisation on a Proposal there must be at least one other Partner Organisation involved in the Proposal which is an Australian Partner Organisation which meets the eligibility requirements specified in Appendix E.

If similar Proposals involving Australian and overseas Partner Organisation(s) are competing at the margin for funding, the ARC may give priority to Proposals which involve one or more Australian Partner Organisations.

Partner Organisation contributions from overseas organisations must be specified in Australian dollars and contributed at the specified level regardless of currency fluctuations.

Application Process

The application must be prepared by a researcher working at an eligible higher education institution and should include:

- a detailed description of the collaborative arrangements proposed, and
- a clear indication of how the Partner Organisation will be involved in the project.

Partner Organisation Requirements

The applicants will need to provide detail of the nature of the collaboration. Applications must make clear:

- how the Partner is involved in the project
- how the project fits into the company's overall strategic plan
- how the project is of value to the company.

The application must also include a **letter of support** (of no more than two pages) from each Partner Organisation(s) on their letterhead, including the following information:

- a brief profile of the organisation
- details of the cash and in-kind support that will be provided
- value/benefit of the project to the Partner Organisation

An example letter is attached.

Every organisation applying to *Linkage Projects* as a Partner Organisation must certify --

- that no part of their cash contribution is drawn from funds previously appropriated from government sources for the purposes of research, evaluation and/or consultancy activity.
- that the Partner Organisation has read and understood the requirements in the Funding Rules about Partner Organisation agreements including the requirement to enter into arrangements for intellectual property.

Failure to do so provides grounds for exclusion.

Grant funds from the ARC can be used to support and offset project expenses including personnel (such as research associates, APDI, and laboratory staff), research training through an APAI, travel, maintenance and equipment. Detailed information about the type of research supported and the areas of investigation/work not supported are shown in Sections 6.3 to 6.5 of the Funding Rules.

Contribution of Partner Organisation(s)

APAI Stipend only Proposals

For Proposals that do not involve a request for one or more APAI stipends only (i.e. no project costs requested from the ARC), the combined Partner Organisation cash contributions must be at least 20 per cent, and the combined minimum Partner Organisation in-kind contribution must be at least 20 per cent, of the total amount sought from the Commonwealth. The Partner Organisation contribution must be provided in support of each APAI in each year the APAI is requested.

Project costs sought from the ARC (with or without APAI request)

If the Proposal is seeking **less than \$500,000 in each year** from the Commonwealth the combined Partner Organisation Cash Contributions must be at least 20 per cent of the total sought from the Commonwealth. The combined cash and in-kind contributions, as determined by the ARC, must at least match the total amount sought from the Commonwealth.

If the Proposal is **seeking more than \$500,000 in any year** from the Commonwealth the combined Partner Organisation Cash Contributions must be at least 50 per cent of the total sought from the Commonwealth. The combined cash and in-kind contributions, as determined by the ARC, must at least match the total amount sought from the Commonwealth.

Evaluation on the Adequacy of Partner Organisation In-kind Contributions

The primary objectives in examining the Partner Organisation in-kind contributions are to ensure that the available support is adequate for the successful completion of the project and that the Partner Organisation contribution is in accordance with the budget, aims and research plan.

In-kind contributions that are shown to be essential and central to the conduct of the project are given full recognition in evaluating the total value of the contributions.

In-kind contributions to a project may include scientific liaison and management, direct technical support, or unique access to reagents or equipment. However, corporate membership or subscription fees in industrial consortia do not qualify as Partner Organisation contributions but the allocation of designated research funds, together with the identification of the linkages between the member and the project, does qualify.

Guidelines on In-kind Budget Items are outlined in Appendix F of the Funding Rules for funding commencing 2010. This list, however, is not all inclusive.

Eligibility for Tax Concessions

Partner Organisation contributions to a *Linkage Projects* project may be eligible for the R&D Tax Concession to the extent that the expenditure is incurred by an eligible company in respect of eligible R&D activities and provided that all other eligibility requirements are met.

Detailed information on the eligibility requirements for the R&D Tax Concession can be obtained from AusIndustry Staff Office in Queensland. Details can be obtained from www.ausindustry.gov.au

If an eligible company is unsure whether it can claim the contribution as research and development expenditure, it can apply for a private binding ruling from the Australian Taxation Office (ATO). Details on how to apply and what information needs to be provided can be obtained from the nearest ATO Branch.

Further Information

For further information about the scheme, please read the Funding Rules or contact:

Janine Richards

Coordinator (Acting), Research Grants Unit

Research and Research Training Division

Phone: (07) 3365 3571

Fax: (07) 3365 4455

Email: grants-manager@research.uq.edu.au

Partner Organisation Letter of Support Example

EXAMPLE OF INFORMATION TO BE INCLUDED IN THE COLLABORATING ORGANISATION LETTER OF SUPPORT FOR ARC LINKAGE - PROJECTS SCHEME

2 PAGES MAXIMUM (On Partner Organisation's letterhead)

To: Letter can be addressed to Chief Investigator

Subject: LETTER OF CONFIRMATION OF SUPPORT FOR PROPOSAL <Insert project name> TO BE SUBMITTED TO ARC LINKAGE PROJECT SCHEME

Date: <Insert Date>

Content of letter:

At a minimum the letter should include:

- **Brief profile of Partner Organisation** (brief description of the organisation)
- **Cash and In-Kind Commitment to the Project** (these must match the amounts listed in the application; overseas organisations must specify in Australian Dollars)

Cash Support –

In-Kind support –

“Value” to be provided per annum.

Personnel: State what this includes, eg, position and percentage of time to be spent by staff members, mentoring, collaboration through project management, focus meetings, workshops.

Equipment, Maintenance, Travel: provision of access to specific equipment, resources, etc., workspace (office facilities, equipment and office space for number of days per week/month/block of time, throughout the project). Supply of consumables. Use of company vehicles, provision of travel etc.

- If the Partner Organisation is a Government organisation, or receives funding from State, Territory or Commonwealth Government Sources, or from a Government of another country, sufficient detail must be provided to demonstrate their eligibility to participate as a Partner Organisation. (see Funding Rules Appendix E)
- **A statement of the relevance/importance of the Project to the Partner Organisation:**

The level of research and development that is currently underway or has already been carried out by the Partner Organisation, or the information that is currently available “in the field” and any gaps in this knowledge that the project will fill.

How the project will assist the Partner Organisation's “business”, industrial competitiveness, how the project helps the organisation achieve its objectives.

How the project fits with/contributes to the Partner Organisation's mission statement or business plan / objectives.

How the project enhances links between the university and the Partner Organisation. The potential of these links to be of benefit in the future (to the Partner Organisation and/or to those in the field of work generally, eg, the benefit of more researchers with knowledge in this field).

- **Must contain the following two statements verbatim:**

I certify that no part of the cash contribution is drawn from funds previously appropriated from government sources for the purposes of research, evaluation and/or consultancy activity; and

I have read and understood the requirements in the standard *Linkage Projects* Funding Agreement about Partner Organisation written agreements, including the requirement to enter into arrangements regarding intellectual property.

Signature: Chief Executive Officer/or nominee (or equivalent)