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# Cooperative Research Centres (CRC) Program

## Round 24 Factsheet

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## CRC guidelines – what has changed?

New grant opportunity guidelines for Round 24 of the CRC Program have been developed in accordance with the Streamlining Government Grants Administration Agenda. As such they align with agreed whole of government terminology, templates and processes.

The changes for Round 24 are relatively minor and largely administrative in nature. They do not change the scope or intent of the program. The key changes are:

- Updates to reflect changes to the latest standard grant opportunity guidelines template including strengthened national security requirements
- Addition of National Reconstruction Fund priority areas as a Government priority, while maintaining reference to all Government priorities, including the Science and Research Priorities
- Removal of National Manufacturing Priorities throughout
- Clarification of Annual Report and Management Data Questionnaire reporting requirements
- Minor amendments to clarify the intent of various sections.

The [CRC Round 24 Grant Opportunity Guidelines](#) apply to applicants and grantees awarded in Round 24 only. Previous grantees are subject to the relevant CRC Program guidelines the CRC was awarded under. New grant opportunity guidelines are published for each CRC selection round.

## How do I apply for a CRC grant?

CRC grant applications must now be submitted online through the application portal. The link to the portal is available on the CRC grants page at [business.gov.au](https://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](https://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 24 Grant Opportunity Guidelines](#).

## Key tips when completing your application

CRCs are substantial long-term commitments. To set you and your Partners up for success, we encourage applicants to review the items of the [CRC Term Sheet](#). It will assist the collaboration to consider key aspects including scope, partner expectations, CRC Entity structure, governance and IP arrangements.

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. Incomplete or late applications will not be accepted.

Applications can only be submitted via the portal once all mandatory requirements have been met. An incorrectly completed application will not be able to be submitted. The portal will alert you to any mandatory fields which have not been completed, or in some cases, if information provided is invalid or unacceptable. Correcting such errors can be time-consuming, particularly against a looming deadline.

Some browsers provide a better user experience than others when using the application portal. Google Chrome and Mozilla Firefox on Windows or Safari and Google Chrome on Mac will provide the best user interface, as they support on-

screen text box sizing. Other browsers, including Internet Explorer and Microsoft Edge, have limitations in this regard and may only display a few lines of input text at a time.

It is possible to invite other parties to assist with completing the online application, for example the other partners collaborating on the project. This is done through the application portal using the 'Participants' button on the 'Application Summary' page accessed from the 'My Applications' screen. Note, once added, other parties can see all elements of the application.

Key tips when completing your application:

- When first creating your application please select 'CRC Bid Group' as your organisation type. This will allow you to then enter the proposed name of the CRC as the organisation submitting the application. This means your application will show the CRC name as the applicant rather than one of the partners.
- **SAVE** regularly. Good practice would be to save every time you continue to a new screen, as well as within screens if they include significant input of data.
- Use the 'save' button rather than the 'save and continue' button to save details with uncompleted information. For example, when updating the partner details page you may have completed some of the partners details and have only basic information on other partners. 'Save' so you can come back to complete the details later. This will also populate zeros into in all empty \$ fields. Once you have completed all information on the page, use the 'save and continue' button to show you any errors that need to be corrected before continuing to the next page.
- 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). If you are drafting content off the portal, make sure to 'Paste as plain text' into the portal fields to avoid errors.
- Variable character limits apply to text entry fields. The relevant character limits are within the information bubbles for each relevant question contained in the application. Note the character limits used by the application portal are firm. If preparing responses off portal, word processing programs may not count characters using the same methodology. For example the portal counts paragraph returns as a character. A response which is at the limit of the character count off portal may not fit into the text entry field in the application portal. The 'save and continue' button will validate each text entry field in line with character limits.
- A Partner Details template (with partner contributions) must be uploaded with your application. The spreadsheet template is available from [business.gov.au](https://business.gov.au). It requires details for each Partner including:
  - ABN/country
  - sector
  - size
  - indigenous ownership/management
  - total contribution amounts over the life of the CRC against the categories of cash, FTE, FTE dollar value, and non-staff in-kind (NSIK) dollar value
  - role in the CRC.
- It is your responsibility to ensure all totals in the application match the information in the attachments.
- All numerical value input fields require a value to be input (even if there is an existing grey zero by default).
- At Stage 2 you will be asked to provide details of: the annual budget including grant request, expenditure by categories and partner contributions; milestones; and impacts. Details of how these are to be provided will be made available on [business.gov.au](https://business.gov.au).
- If you experience any difficulties with completing the form contact us early via [business.gov.au](https://business.gov.au) or call 13 28 46.

When your application is submitted, you will see a screen confirming the submission which includes the submission time, date and a reference number. The status of your application in the portal will change from 'draft' to 'submitted'.

Your submitted application will be able to be viewed through the screens in the portal, but you will no longer be able to amend the application. A submitted application can be set back to draft before the round closing time. Should you wish to do this [contact us](#) at least one business day prior to the closing date. Note, should an application be set back to draft it will not be considered submitted until it has been resubmitted in the application portal which must be done by the round closing time.

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

## How do I address the CRC Grant Assessment Criteria?

To be competitive, you must address all assessment criteria and their indicators in your application. The Committee will assess your application based on the weighting given to each indicator under each assessment criterion 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. Funding will only be awarded 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.
- Applicants should be mindful of not repeating key elements of their application across criteria.

Applications are assessed by the Committee as delegated by Industry 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 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. Stage 2 applicants will be required to attend an interview to present their bid to the Committee.

Compliant CRC applications are assessed against the following criteria as set out in the [CRC Program Round 24 Grant Opportunity Guidelines](#).

### **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 planned 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 focused 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?

In the form, you will be asked to provide a summary description of your research against the assessment criterion 2 question. You will be asked to provide further detailed information about each of your research programs later in the form and in Stage 2 if successful in Stage 1.

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

You should demonstrate this by describing:

- 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 by describing:

- 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 in the portal. Failure by the applicant to do so will mean the application is incomplete and may not be considered for assessment. When uploading declarations no single file can exceed 2MB and the total size limit for all files uploaded with the application is 20MB. Please contact us if you have any problems when attaching documents.

In completing the Partner Declarations, ensure the Partner Name and ABN and contribution amounts match the Partner details included in the application and the Partner Details template. The templates are available at [business.gov.au](https://business.gov.au).

## Where can I find more information?

For more information on the CRC Program visit [business.gov.au](https://business.gov.au) or call 13 28 46.