



# Cooperative Research Centres (CRC) Program

## Frequently Asked Questions

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### General

#### What is the CRC Program?

The CRC Program supports industry-led collaborations between industry, researchers and the community. The CRC Program aims to:

- Improve the competitiveness, productivity and sustainability of Australian industries, especially where Australia has a competitive strength, and is in line with Government priorities.
- Foster high quality research to solve industry-identified problems through industry-led and outcome-focused collaborative research partnerships between industry entities and research organisations; and
- Encourage and facilitate small and medium enterprise (SME) participation in collaborative research.

#### What funding is available from the CRC Program?

The CRC Program has two elements:

- Cooperative Research Centres (CRCs) to support medium to long term, industry-led collaborations; and
- Cooperative Research Centres Projects (CRC-Ps), to support short term, industry-led collaborative research.

#### How are CRCs and CRC-Ps different?

CRC-Ps are smaller collaborations than a CRC, operating on shorter project timelines (up to three years) and smaller budgets. CRC-Ps have simpler governance and administration arrangements than a CRC.

#### How does the CRC Program fit with other Government initiatives?

The CRC Program supports the aims of the Australian Government's National Innovation and Science Agenda. Innovation and science are critical for Australia to deliver new sources of growth, maintain high-wage jobs and seize the next wave of economic prosperity.

The CRC Program complements the National Modern Manufacturing Initiative (to grow the manufacturing sector by making Australian manufacturers more competitive, resilient and globally competitive), Industry Growth Centres (an industry led initiative driving innovation, productivity and competitiveness) by focusing on areas of competitive strength and strategic priority. This will help Australia transition into smart, high value and export focused industries.

#### Who can apply to the CRC Program?

CRC Program rounds can be open to all areas, targeted priority areas or a combination of the two.

**CRCs** - Applications for CRCs are submitted on behalf of a group of partners who have agreed to collaborate.

A CRC application must have among its partners at least:

- a. one Australian industry entity; and
- b. one Australian research organisation.

For further information, please refer to the [CRC Grant Opportunity Guidelines](#).

**CRC-Ps** - Applications for CRC-Ps must be submitted by a lead applicant, which must be an industry entity, on behalf of the collaboration.

A CRC-P application must have among its partners at least:

- a. two Australian industry entities; (including at least one SME); and
- b. one Australian research organisation.

For further information, please refer to the [CRC Projects Grant Opportunity Guidelines](#).

## Is there a minimum operating period or size of a Australian industry entity?

There is no minimum organisation size or period of operation required to be a partner but the organisation must be active and operating. As long as the organisation meets the definition of an industry entity and is currently operating in Australia they may be an industry entity for eligibility purposes.

## Can existing CRCs apply for CRC-P funding?

No. CRCs cannot directly apply for CRC-P funding but may be a partner in a CRC-P collaboration.

## Can existing CRCs and CRC-Ps apply for extension funding?

No. Existing CRCs and CRC-Ps cannot apply for extension funding.

## What are the Growth Centres and how do they relate to the CRC Program?

The Industry Growth Centres Initiative takes a national sector approach to structural reform and address barriers to productivity, competitiveness and innovative

capacity at the sector level where economic growth can be maximised.

There are six Industry Growth Centres in the following sectors of competitive strength and strategic priority: Advanced Manufacturing; Cyber Security; Food and Agribusiness; Medical Technologies and Pharmaceuticals; Mining Equipment, Technology and Services; and Oil, Gas and Energy Resources.

CRCs and CRC-Ps are undertaking industry-focused research that contributes to the aims of the Growth Centres.

## How are CRCs and Industry Growth Centres different?

Growth Centres and CRCs are complementary initiatives that enhance the productivity and competitiveness of Australian industries.

Growth Centres directly assist industry and business to prosper by identifying priorities in key growth sectors. Industry and researchers are able to draw on this information to leverage funding through sources such as the CRCs.

CRCs undertake industry-focused research and development, bringing together industry and research organisations to address industry challenges requiring medium to long term research by harnessing the benefits of collaboration.

## What does the selection process involve?

Application and selection processes for CRCs involve two stages. The stage one application involves responding to the assessment criteria and attaching the partner declarations. Stage one applications are assessed by the CRC Advisory Committee. The shortlisted stage one applicants are then required to submit further details in a stage two application and be interviewed by the CRC Advisory Committee.

The application and selection process for CRC-Ps is a single stage process with a single application that is assessed by the CRC Advisory Committee.

## Selection rounds

### When will the next selection round open and close?

The schedules for future CRC and CRC-P selection rounds are available on the CRC and CRC-Ps pages at [business.gov.au](https://business.gov.au).

*Note: the schedule for both CRC and CRC-P selection rounds are indicative timelines only and are subject to change.*

### When will outcomes for CRC and CRC-P selection rounds be announced?

CRC and CRC-P selection round outcomes are available on the CRC and CRC-P pages at [business.gov.au](https://business.gov.au).

*Note: the schedule for both CRC and CRC-P selection round outcomes are indicative timelines only and are subject to change.*

## Changes to CRC applications

### Can I change my CRC application between stages one and two?

Stage two is the opportunity to provide updates to the proposal based on stage one feedback. The stage two proposal should be consistent and aligned with the stage one application. All changes (including to partners, contributions, activities and outcomes) should be detailed in the application.

Any significant changes will need to be strongly justified.

Should an application be fundamentally different to the application submitted at stage one, it may be excluded from further consideration.

### What are the Government priorities for the CRC and CRC-P selection rounds?

Government priorities currently include [Science and Research Priorities](#), the [National Manufacturing Priorities](#),

the [Industry Knowledge Priorities](#) developed under the Industry Growth Centres Initiative or any other science, research, industry or innovation priorities identified by the Australian Government.

Applicants also have the opportunity to list other government priorities that relate to their application and they should include specific references for those priorities.

Each relevant CRC or CRC-P grant opportunity guideline identifies whether a specific priority area is to be addressed.

### Can we expect to be awarded the full funding we have requested?

The Minister may determine a funding amount and term different to that applied for. In approving applications the Minister must take into account the relevant CRC Program guidelines, advice of Industry Innovation and Science Australia, and all existing commitments of CRC Program funds. Successful applicants will be advised of their funding details and any conditions for that funding.

## Partners

### What is a partner declaration?

The Partner Declaration is required at the CRC or CRC-P application stage and is a declaration of intent made by a partner organisation to the Commonwealth to confirm its intention to participate in the proposed CRC or CRC-P should an application be successful.

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 CRC or CRC-P information provided and acknowledges the obligations on partners in the CRC or CRC-P, should the application be successful.

## What is a partners agreement?

A partners agreement is an agreement between the partners and either the CRC entity or CRC-P lead partner which must be entered into if selected for funding. The partner agreement sets out various arrangements in relation to the conduct of the CRC or CRC-P. The grant agreement requires all partners enter into a partners agreement and requires the partners to comply with various obligations which will allow the CRC entity or CRC-P lead partner to meet their obligations under the grant agreement. The Commonwealth is not party to partner agreements.

## Why do all partners have to sign a partners agreement?

The Commonwealth requires assurance that all partners will honour their commitments made in a CRC or CRC-P application, hence they must sign a relevant partner's agreement. The actual form of the agreement is up to the applicants to decide, provided it meets the minimum requirements set out in the grant agreement.

CRC or CRC-Ps are at liberty to develop their own partner agreement or use (or amend) the relevant agreement templates that are available at [business.gov.au](http://business.gov.au).

Successful applicants may decide to distinguish and define different roles, responsibilities and obligations within their agreements, and any other terms and conditions they feel are required. As such, these agreements can be as flexible as the applicants wish, it subject to the requirements of the grant agreement.

## Can a Commonwealth government department or agency be a partner in a CRC or CRC-P?

Yes. There are no restrictions on Commonwealth government departments or agencies becoming partners in a CRC or CRC-P and making contributions to support the activities or project to be undertaken. Any involvement by a Commonwealth government department or agency in an application is considered during the assessment process.

## Can international organisations be involved in a CRC or CRC-P?

Yes, as long as the eligibility requirements of Australian industry entities and research organisations have been met, international partners can be included.

The application form includes a separate section for partners without an ABN, including overseas organisations.

For all partners, and in particular for international partners, applicants should be aware of any potential risks around data security, information of national significance and intellectual property protection. Risk management strategies addressing this should be included in the application.

To assist with managing security risks, you are strongly encouraged to review the [Guidelines on Security in the CRC Program](#).

## How many partners should a CRC have?

The [CRC Grant Opportunity Guidelines](#) stipulate that to be eligible a CRC must include at least one Australian industry entity and one Australian research organisation amongst its partners. Beyond this there is no program directive regarding the size or composition of a CRC.

To be competitive against the CRC assessment criteria, applicants will need to demonstrate that the industry identified problem is of a significant scale that requires a medium to long term collaboration.

Applications will also need to effectively demonstrate that their CRC collaboration has the right mix of partners and sufficient resources to address the identified problem and achieve associated CRC objectives, deliver benefit to Australia, and conform to all CRC requirements.

Additionally, applicants will need to effectively demonstrate how their collaboration will function, including strong governance and management structures to support its activities and collaborations.

## How many partners should a CRC-P have?

The CRC Projects Grant Opportunity Guidelines stipulate that to be eligible a CRC-P must include at least two Australian industry entities (at least one of whom must be an SME) and one Australian research organisation amongst its partners. Beyond this there is no program directive regarding the size or composition of a CRC-P.

## Project timeframes and funding limits

### What is the maximum or minimum duration and funding for a CRC?

CRC funding is available for varying periods of up to 10 years. There is no specified limit to the amount of funding available for each CRC. However, CRC funding is limited by appropriation and CRCs require medium to long term collaborations. There are no minimums.

### What is the maximum or minimum duration and funding for a CRC-P?

The duration of a CRC-P can be up to a maximum of three years and applicants may request a maximum of \$3 million of Commonwealth funding. The minimum CRC-P grant amount is \$100,000.

### Can a CRC-P commence prior to the announcement of funding outcomes or a grant agreement being entered into?

The earliest date you can start your project and incur eligible expenditure is from the date of your letter of offer. If you choose to start your project before you enter into a grant agreement with the Commonwealth, you do so at your own risk.

## Customer Support

### How do I provide feedback?

We encourage you to give us feedback on our services and programs. Your feedback will help the department to improve its services.

Read our [Customer Service Charter](#) to find out more about our commitment to service delivery.

If you have feedback about any decisions made about your application, please complete the [Feedback Form](#) available at [business.gov.au](http://business.gov.au).

You are also entitled to lodge a complaint with the [Commonwealth Ombudsman](#).

### Need more information?

For more information on the Cooperative Research Centres Program, visit [business.gov.au](http://business.gov.au) or call **13 28 46**.