

REGIONAL COLLABORATIONS PROGRAMME

▶ PROJECT GUIDELINES

Regional Collaborations Programme Round 2 Project Guidelines

Introduction

Rapid population growth, digital disruption and environmental dynamism have all contributed to making the 21st century period as one of dynamic change and complexity. Challenges such as the increasing demand on natural resources and the environment requires national, regional and global responses. International science and innovation cooperation can play a key role in addressing economic, social and environmental challenges, including those identified in the [United Nations Sustainable Development Goals](#).

The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) CSTP Steering Group identified that an effective response to such challenges requires; flexibility in institutional frameworks for priority setting, flexible funding and spending mechanisms, tailored approaches to knowledge sharing and intellectual property, and an inclusive approach to science and innovation to enable the benefits of science to be shared by all. Such an approach would enable achieving national societal goals through research and innovation.

Background

The Regional Collaborations Programme (the Programme) aims to assist Australian researchers and businesses build stronger linkages in the Asia-Pacific region to support inclusive and sustainable economic growth and prosperity.

The Programme objectives include:

- helping to remove barriers between researchers and businesses seeking to collaborate;
- building technical and research mobility; and
- supporting Australia's access to global science and research networks and infrastructure.

These activities will promote an open approach to science, research and industry collaboration throughout the Asia-Pacific region.

This Programme was launched in August 2017 as part of the Australian Government's [Global Innovation Strategy](#), under the National Innovation and Science Agenda. The Programme will fund Australian participants from eligible research organisations and businesses to collaborate with regional and international science, research and innovation partners on developing solutions to shared regional challenges within the Asia-Pacific region. The Australian Academy of Science delivers this Programme on behalf of the Australian Government Department of Industry, Innovation and Science.

Funding support is available for Australian research and businesses to undertake science, research and innovation **projects or non-project aligned workshops** that deliver innovative solutions to shared regional challenges. These guidelines outline arrangements and conditions for **project**-based applications only.

A separate set of guidelines have been developed for the non-project aligned thematic workshops which is available [here](#).

Past supported activities

The successful applicants for Round 1 of the Programme were announced in October 2017. A total of \$897,210 was granted to five researchers to undertake projects. Project areas included agricultural and environmental sciences, transport and construction, health, manufacturing and material sciences. Please refer to this [link](#) for details on the awardees and their project summaries.

Round 2 supported activities

In 2018, funding support under the Programme is available for:

- multi-partner collaborative **projects** addressing areas of regional challenge, and
- non-project aligned thematic **workshops** addressing areas of regional challenge.

This guide outlines arrangements and conditions for **project applications only**. A separate set of guidelines have been developed for the thematic non-project aligned workshops which is available [here](#).

Funding arrangements

Up to \$1.38 million is available to fund collaborative, multi-partner projects under Round 2 of the Programme. Further information on what items and activities that funding support can be used for are outlined under Eligible and Ineligible Budget items.

Subject to the available allocation, there is no set minimum or maximum total project cost requirement, however, projects must include matched funding of 1:1 (cash only).

For example, if an applicant seeks \$25,000 collaborative project support, then the project proponents would need to contribute another \$25,000 (cash), bringing the total value of the project to \$50,000.

It is not permissible to duplicate support available from other sources, including other Australian Government funding mechanisms, with support from the Programme. Where applicants already receive Australian Government funding for their core activities, they will only be eligible if they can demonstrate that the activity for which funding is sought is additional to their core activities.

Upon submission of an application, a letter of intent is required, attaching appropriate evidence that each project partner is genuinely committed to, and prepared to collaborate in, the project. Where applicable, this includes financial support.

All partners must sign a formal declaration outlining any cash contributions and funding sources.

Regional challenges

The objective of the Programme is to use a collaborative approach to developing innovative solutions to shared regional challenges. Applicants should consider carefully how their proposed project may support the objectives of the [National Science and Research Priorities](#) and associated Practical Research Challenges, or other regional challenges identified through multilateral fora such as eAsia, Asia–Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC), Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), the East Asia Summit, and the [Sustainable Development Goals](#) and underpinning [targets](#).

Eligibility

Eligible applicants must:

- be either an Australian research organisation or Australian business (see Glossary for definitions); and
- have an Australian Business Number (ABN).

Note: Non-corporate Commonwealth entities, legally and financially part of the Commonwealth (as defined under the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013*) are not eligible under this Programme. Corporate Commonwealth Entities, defined as a Commonwealth entity that is a body corporate, may apply.

Eligible project applications must:

- be led by an Australian organisation;
- include as project partners at least **two different regional** economies from the Asia-Pacific region¹ in addition to Australia as the lead;
- addresses a regional challenge of significance to Australia;
- address all application criteria, including responding to the merit criteria;
- contain all identified documentation; and
- have evidence of being able to provide 1:1 leveraged cash contribution.

Eligible project collaborative arrangements:

- must include a minimum of **two different regional** economies from the Asia-Pacific region in addition to Australia as the lead and;
- may consist of any combination of research and business organisations (for example, an Australian university, an Indonesian university and a business from Papua New Guinea).

Collaborative partnerships may include non-regional economies, provided:

- this in supplementary to the minimum of **two different regional** economies from the Asia-Pacific region (in addition to Australia as a lead),
- the key eligibility criteria are met; and
- the project collaborative focus is on the Asia-Pacific region.

For example: Australia (regional), Indonesia (regional), Papua New Guinea (regional) and France (non-regional).

Supporting women in Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics & Medicine

While not compulsory, and not part of the assessment, the Academy strongly encourages applicants to consider opportunities for women in STEM to lead, participate or otherwise be involved in the proposed project, in line with their organisation's commitment to gender inclusion. For example, this might include ensuring workshop speaker gender balance.

The evidence of the social and economic benefits that accrue from inclusive, diverse and equitable approaches to research and innovation is indisputable. The UK's experience with implementing the Athena SWAN Charter and its principles make a strong case for this. Australia's own recent experience with the Science in Australia Gender Equity (SAGE) Pilot of Athena SWAN is starting to bear fruit. Applicants should consider the ten principles of the Athena SWAN Charter when proposing and delivering a project. Information on the Athena SWAN Charter can be accessed [here](#). Information on SAGE can be accessed [here](#).

Eligible budget items

- Salaries (including direct salary on-costs) for **Australian** personnel only (researchers, support staff, fellowships and postgraduate students).

¹ As specified in Appendix 1

- International travel expenses (economy class airfare, associated living expenses, visa and insurance) for **Australian** personnel specifically engaged in project activities. **This component should not exceed 20% of the awarded funds.**
- Direct support costs of research, translation and promotion of outcomes.
- Other costs as agreed in writing with the Academy.

Ineligible budget items

- Salaries and travel related costs for **non-Australian** personnel, including consultants.
- Capital expenditure for the purchase of assets such as office furniture and equipment, motor vehicles, computers, printers or photocopiers; and the construction, renovation or extension of facilities such as buildings and laboratories.
- Costs involved in the purchase, upgrade or hire of software (including user licences) and ICT hardware.
- Activities that would be undertaken in the normal course of business, such as website development, or the purchase, development and/or integration of standard software for core purposes (e.g. accounting, financial management, business planning, sales and promotional activities).
- Retrospective activities (where expenditure is incurred prior to the award of Programme funding).
- Any costs incurred prior to the signing of a funding agreement with the Academy.
- Institutional overheads and administrative charges.
- Costs associated with the internal preparation of finance and audit statements.
- Any activities, equipment or supplies that are already being supported through other sources.
- Indirect costs of research, not listed in eligible expenses.
- Costs associated with market research for products or research carried out by surveys to assess the size of the market and the price of a particular service or product.
- Costs associated with marketing projects (activities aimed at creating demand for goods and services of consumers, businesses and government).
- Costs such as rental, renovations and utilities.
- Fees for international students, or the Higher Education Contribution Scheme (HECS) and Higher Education Loan Programme (HELP) liabilities for students.
- Insurance costs (project partners must maintain adequate insurance or similar coverage for any liability arising as a result of their participation in the Programme).
- Staff recruitment and relocation costs.
- Debt financing.
- Costs of Australia's membership of international science and technology projects.
- Other costs as determined by the Academy as not meeting the Programme's objectives.

Application and selection process

1. Applications submitted for assessment.
2. Applications assessed for impact and eligibility.
3. If required, external stakeholder consultation undertaken on alignment of select applications with Australia's strategic priorities.
4. Applicants advised of final assessment outcome.
5. Successful applicants announced, and project funding allocated.

Application assessment

Assessments will be based on the project merit criteria outlined below. Relevant government agencies may also be approached to assist with assessment considerations, in particular, alignment with

Australia's strategic priorities, the [Sustainable Development Goals](#) and underpinning targets. Applicants may be contacted by the Academy to clarify aspects of their application.

Applications will be assessed on merit by an expert panel constituted by the Academy. This process may take several weeks.

Unsuccessful applicants will be notified in writing. The Academy is not able to enter into discussion or correspondence regarding the reasons why an application is successful or not.

Successful applicants will enter into a funding agreement with the Academy, as a condition of accepting the funding. The agreement outlines standard terms and conditions.

Merit criterion 1: Aims, significance and outcomes – Weighted 50%

- The project addresses a shared regional challenge, with regard to Australia's national interests, along with building and enhancing regional science, research and industry relationships.
- The aims and key objectives the project and activities will achieve are clearly outlined, including the scientific knowledge, technical capability, and/or industry/innovation to be advanced.
- The project is likely to result in ongoing collaboration which supports the objectives of the Programme.

Merit criterion 2: Design and feasibility – Weighted 25%

- The design, approach and methods outlined in the application will help achieve the anticipated outputs and outcomes of the project – i.e. addressing the stated regional challenge.
- The benefits to Australia and flow-on effects to the region are clearly demonstrated.
- Measures to ensure that the outcomes are sustainable after project funding ceases have been outlined.
- The partnership meets the matching cash contribution requirements.

Merit criterion 3: Capacity of partnership to deliver project's goals – Weighted 25%

- The capacity of the lead applicant and partners to undertake the proposed project is clearly demonstrated.
- Indication of how existing networks and linkages will be leveraged to strengthen collaboration is provided.
- Indication of how the project will facilitate access to resources including infrastructure, capital equipment, technology, intellectual property and required regulatory and other approvals is provided.
- The experience and expertise of the lead applicant and partners in delivering similar projects involving multi-partner collaborations is demonstrated.

Application process

Applicants must submit their proposal using the Programme project application form provided on the Academy's website, by the advertised submission date. Completed applications, including all supporting documentation, must be submitted electronically (preferably in PDF format) to grants@science.org.au.

Materials to be submitted (in the following order)

- 1) Summary form.
- 2) Application form.
- 3) Supporting documents, including:
 - a) Itemised budget and expenditure templates – refer to Appendix 2.

- b) Signed letters of intent of support and verification of indicative cash contributions from all project partners – refer to Appendix 3.
- c) CV² of project manager if no LinkedIn profile or web profile is available.
- d) CV of lead researcher and key personnel for each partner, including Australian and lead partner.

For further inquiries, please contact the Academy directly:

International Programs
Australian Academy of Science
GPO Box 783
Canberra ACT 2601

Email: grants@science.org.au

Project timeframes

Projects may commence after 1 April 2019 and after execution of a funding agreement with the Academy. Projects must be completed by 31 December 2020. Projects can be either delivered in a single-year or multi-year basis.

Project reporting requirements

Successful applicants (funding recipients) will be required to submit an annual report and a final report of their project as per reporting templates provided by the Academy.

Funding recipients will also be required to participate in an exit survey.

Upon completion of the project, funding recipients will be required to provide a summary of project outcomes in plain English for public use by the Academy and the Australian Government.

The Academy reserves the right to reduce, recall or terminate funding where a report indicates that funds have not been used in accordance with the funding agreement.

Disclosure of information for certain purposes

Without limitation, the Academy and the Australian Government may publish the following information for activities supported through the Regional Collaborations Programme on the Academy's website or the Department of Industry, Innovation and Science website, or in media releases issued by the Government:

- the project title;
- name of successful lead applicant;
- the names of the partner organisations;
- the contact details provided by the recipient organisation;
- a project summary; and
- the amount of Australian Government funding awarded.

²CV should contain; current position and contact details, education qualifications (with dates received), career experience, awards and grants received over the past 5 years, society membership/boards, published articles (if applicable) – reviewed journal articles, books, book chapters, patents, major reports, citation metrics – (numbers of each with top 10 listed with title and published details, etc.), miscellaneous (other relevant information).

Glossary

Research organisations

Research organisations will be incorporated and registered for GST and have an ABN number. Universities will be registered as exempt from income tax.

Research organisations include Australian:

- tertiary education institutions (as per the Higher Education Support Act 2003)
- cooperative research centres
- Publicly funded research agencies
- state or territory-funded research organisations
- public research companies (as long as non-corporate commonwealth entities).
- private research companies
- not-for-profit research organisations.

Australian businesses

Australian businesses must:

- have an Australian Business Number (ABN)
- be incorporated and registered for GST
- not be engaged in any litigation, arbitration, administrative proceedings, investigations, of or before any court, tribunal, commission, arbitral body or other agency in any jurisdiction in the Commonwealth of Australia (for enterprises based in Australia) or in their nominated economy.

Australian personnel

Australian personnel are considered Australian citizens or permanent residents.

Appendix 1 - REGIONAL ECONOMIES

| Economy | Economy | Economy |
|--|---|----------------------------------|
| American Samoa | Lao PDR | Pitcairn Island |
| Bangladesh | Malaysia | Republic of Korea (South Korea) |
| Bhutan | Maldives | Republic of the Marshall Islands |
| Brunei Darussalam | Mexico | Russia |
| Cambodia | Micronesia (Federated States of Micronesia) | Samoa |
| Canada | Mongolia | Singapore |
| Chile | Myanmar | Solomon Islands |
| Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands | Nauru | Sri Lanka |
| Cook Islands | Nepal | Taiwan |
| East Timor | New Caledonia | Thailand |
| Fiji | New Zealand | The United States |
| French Polynesia | Niue | Timor-Leste |
| Guam | Pakistan | Tokelau |
| Hong Kong, China | Palau | Tonga |
| India | Papua New Guinea | Tuvalu |
| Indonesia | People's Republic of China | Vanuatu |
| Japan | Peru | Vietnam |
| Kiribati | Philippines | Wallis and Futuna |

Appendix 2 - BUDGET TEMPLATE

Indicate how the partnership will meet the matching cash contribution requirements, insert additional partners and amounts if required.

INCOME:

| A. Programme Funding | | Cash (AUD) | |
|--|------|-------------------------|---------------|
| Funds requested from the Regional Collaborations Programme | | \$ | |
| B. Partner contributions | | | |
| Partner | Name | Cash (AUD) ³ | In-kind (AUD) |
| Lead applicant | | \$ | \$ |
| Partner 1 | | \$ | \$ |
| Partner 2 | | \$ | \$ |
| Partner 3 | | \$ | \$ |
| Partner 4 | | \$ | \$ |
| Total partner contributions | | \$ | \$ |

| Total combined cash income | Cash (AUD) |
|--|------------|
| Programme funding (A.) + total partner cash contributions (B.) | \$ |

Please note: The cash contribution can include salary costs for new staff employed that will be dedicated to work on the project being funded by the Regional Collaborations Programme. In-kind contributions can include salaries or proportions of salaries of established staff that will be released to work on the project funded by the Regional Collaborations Programme.

³ Cash contribution must be equal to, or greater than, the Programme Funding (A.) requested.

EXPENDITURE:

| A. Programme expenditure | Cash (AUD) |
|--|------------|
| Salaries for Australian personnel ⁴ | \$ |
| Travel expenses for Australian personnel ⁵ | \$ |
| Direct support costs of activities | \$ |
| Other expenditure (please list expenditure in the space below) | \$ |
| TOTAL | \$ |

| Other expenditure | Cash (AUD) |
|-------------------|------------|
| | \$ |
| | \$ |
| | \$ |
| | \$ |
| TOTAL | \$ |

⁴ **Salaries** (including direct salary on-costs) for Australian personnel, researchers and support staff, fellowships and student stipends. **NOTE: Australian personnel** are considered Australian citizens or permanent residents.

⁵ **Travel expenses** (economy class airfare, associated living expenses, visa and insurance) for Australian personnel specifically engaged in project activities. **This component should not exceed 20% of the awarded RCP funds.**

Lead applicant/partner expenditure

| B. Partner expenditure (include lead applicant if providing cash and/or in-kind contribution/s to the project) | Cash (AUD) | In-kind (AUD) * |
|--|------------|-----------------|
| Salaries ⁶ for Australian personnel | \$ | \$ |
| Salaries for non-Australian personnel | \$ | \$ |
| International travel expenses for Australian personnel ⁷ | \$ | \$ |
| International travel expenses for non-Australian personnel | \$ | \$ |
| Direct support costs of activities | \$ | \$ |
| Other (please itemise expenditure in the space below) | \$ | \$ |
| TOTAL | \$ | \$ |

⁶ **Salaries** (including direct salary on-costs) for Australian personnel, researchers and support staff, fellowships and student stipends. **Note: Australian personnel** are considered Australian citizens or permanent residents.

⁷ **Travel expenses** (economy class airfare, associated living expenses, visa and insurance) for Australian personnel specifically engaged in project activities. **This component should not exceed 20% of the awarded RCP funds.**

| Other expenditure | Cash (AUD) |
|-------------------|------------|
| | \$ |
| | \$ |
| | \$ |
| | \$ |
| | \$ |
| TOTAL | \$ |

| Total combined expenditure | Cash (AUD) |
|--|------------|
| Programme funding expenditure (A.) + total participant contribution expenditure (B.) | \$ |

Appendix 3 - SAMPLE LETTER OF INTENT (To be completed by each partner)

Official Letterhead

Date

Re: Regional Collaborations Programme

This letter confirms my commitment to participate in the delivery of the project titled xxx under the Regional Collaborations Programme. Subject to the project proposal being funded by the Regional Collaborations Programme and subsequent successful grant agreement, I confirm that I will contribute to the project and relevant activities as indicated in the project proposal. I will also provide my share of the financial contribution and provide organisational resources as indicated for the viability and success of the project.

My contribution will include (in terms of high-level tasks and cash/in-kind contribution)

1. A cash contribution of \$x,xxx towards x
2. An in-kind contribution of \$x,xxx towards x
- 3.
- 4.

Sincerely yours,

Delegate signature from authorised representative of research organisation/business