



LINKAGE—
INFRASTRUCTURE
(Equipment and Facilities)

Guidelines for applicants

for funding commencing in

2002

Australian Research Council

Linkage–Infrastructure (Equipment and Facilities) Guidelines for funding commencing in 2002

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Acronyms

The following acronyms are used throughout these guidelines.

ARC	Australian Research Council
RIEF	Research Infrastructure Equipment and Facilities Scheme

Australian Research Council

Linkage — Infrastructure

Guidelines for Funding Commencing in 2002

1 Introduction

The Australian Research Council's (ARC) Linkage—Infrastructure is part of a new National Competitive Grants Programme (NCGP) being introduced for 2001 for funding commencing in 2002. The NCGP streamlines the grant allocation process into two elements, Discovery and Linkage.

2 Objectives

Linkage—Infrastructure has four objectives—

- encourage institutions to develop collaborative arrangements among themselves, across the higher education sector and with organisations outside the sector, in order to develop research infrastructure
- support large-scale cooperative initiatives involving two or more institutions, thereby allowing expensive facilities to be shared
- enhance support for areas of research strength
- ensure that researchers in fields of recognised research potential have access to the support necessary for development.

3 Description

Research infrastructure consists of the institutional resources essential for mounting high-quality research projects in a particular field, including associated indirect costs. It excludes any direct project costs that can be covered from other sources of funding.

3.1 Areas of investigation not supported

Research in the fields of clinical medicine and dentistry is not supported because the National Health and Medical Research Council has responsibility for funding research in those fields.

3.1 Budget items not supported

The following items are **not** regarded as elements of research infrastructure, for the purposes of Linkage—Infrastructure and are not eligible for support—

- capital works (that is, the construction of buildings), because institutions receive operating grant funding for capital works
- rental of accommodation
- operational costs, including salaries of staff engaged in teaching and research, and in research only, (including the cost of 'buying time' to free such staff to do more research)
- salaries of staff supporting research at the institutional level (for example, Deputy Vice-Chancellor Research, Research Grants Officer)
- stipends of postgraduate research students
- travel costs directly associated with individual projects (with the exception of travel costs to allow participation in international consortia)
- small pieces of equipment that should be funded by institutions (such as personal computers).

Applications that seek non-capital aspects of library or information infrastructure may include salaries and small pieces of equipment to build an integrated facility if the entire project is a cohesive attempt to provide infrastructure support to research. Please refer to Appendix 2 for further details.

3.3 Funding

The minimum grant under Linkage–Infrastructure is \$100 000, with a total of approximately \$24 million being available for distribution in 2002. Additional allocations of expenditure cannot be accommodated once the Minister has approved the grant recommendations, as there are no additional funds available.

Funding is normally for one year only and is not recurrent, except where international agreements and national facilities are involved. All applicants must apply for funding each year. Where the ARC has accepted a case for continuing funding, the applicant will be required to submit a modified application each year.

International agreements

Where international agreements are involved, long-term funding will be available only if there are significant benefits to Australia by way of multi-year access to a major facility not otherwise available to Australians. Under such circumstances, the maximum funding period sought must be identified in the text of the initial application. If funding is required for more than five years, a review of the project will be conducted early in the fourth year, before any application for further funding is considered.

National facilities

Where national facilities are involved, the maximum funding period sought must be identified in the text of the initial application for funding and, if funding is sought for more than three years, a review of the project will be conducted early in the third year and before any application for further funding is considered. All bids for funding projects lasting more than one year should include a strategy for achieving independence from Linkage–Infrastructure funding.

Government-related entities do not pay GST on the funding transaction with the ARC. However, non government-related entities which are liable to pay GST on the transaction with the ARC will receive base-funding plus GST.

If the organisation is able to claim input tax credits for the GST component in the cost of goods and services purchased in the course of carrying out the Project, then the GST component of these costs should not be included in Project cost.

Therefore the ARC will make GST adjustments to payments depending on whether the funding has been provided to a government-related or non-government-related entity.

Applicants are therefore requested to provide their budgets exclusive of GST.

4 Eligibility

4.1 Eligibility of the institution

A list of eligible higher education institutions appears in Appendix 1. Applications should involve two or more eligible higher education institutions.

In some circumstances, applications from single institutions, for assistance to purchase a large item of equipment or major facility on a sole-use basis, may be considered under the Linkage–Infrastructure Scheme. In such cases, the application must demonstrate clearly that—

- the project does not duplicate equipment or a similar facility at another institution where collaborative arrangements would be practicable, and
- collaborative use of the new equipment by other higher education institutions is not feasible.

Applications involving other organisations, such as government research organisations and businesses, are also encouraged, provided that at least one higher education institution is involved and any funds allocated for equipment and/or facilities are used to build up infrastructure within the higher education sector. If only one higher education institution is involved, the application must be justified as a single-institution application.

Peak bodies representing the higher education community may act as catalysts in developing cooperative arrangements. In such cases, the peak body may apply on behalf of, and with the full written agreement of, the higher education institutions. Such applications must identify the mechanism for accountability and distribution of the grant between the eligible higher education institutions.

4.2 Eligibility of the project

4.2.1 Key criteria

Projects that demonstrate genuine collaboration between two or more eligible institutions are preferred. They must relate to high-quality research activity and must be broadly in line with the research directions of the institution(s) involved.

Collaboration will typically involve the shared use of facilities on different projects and/or collaborative projects. Where the equipment required will be located in more than one institution, the application must demonstrate clearly that—

- the facility is genuinely integrated and collaborative
- the items of equipment are complementary in nature, and
- overall research outcomes will be enhanced.

A Chief Investigator should be an established researcher who will be primarily involved in the use of the equipment or facility. Normally, there will be at least one Chief Investigator from each of the collaborating institutions. Individual researchers may not be named as Chief Investigators on more than two Linkage–Infrastructure applications in a year. Contravention of this limit may result in the exclusion of all applications involving that researcher as a Chief Investigator.

Chief Investigators must have fulfilled all obligations from previous ARC grants (including final and progress reports).

The amount sought must exceed \$100 000 (net of GST) for research infrastructure such as—

- equipment purchase and installation
- non-capital aspects of facilities such as computing centres, centrifugation facilities, animal houses, herbaria, experimental farms
- salaries if they are directly associated with creating and installing the facility

- consortium membership costs, travel to the facility, and secretariat costs in the case of Australia's participation in significant international-scale projects, and
- library and information infrastructure (non-capital aspects only). Applicants should refer to the advice at Appendix 2 of these Guidelines.

4.2.2 *Integrated facilities*

Linkage–Infrastructure supports major facilities and equipment. Small items of equipment are the responsibility of institutions. However, there may be special circumstances in which a case can be made for an integrated facility consisting of a number of small items. Such applications will be considered only where a convincing case can be made that an integrated facility is necessary to support research activities.

4.2.3 *Ownership and location of equipment and facilities*

Ownership of shared facilities and equipment provided under Linkage–Infrastructure is to be vested in the lead higher education institution identified on the application, listed in its assets register and located on campus. Collaborating institutions must reach agreement on time-sharing and access to equipment or facilities before applying for funding.

It is recognised that at times it may be desirable, in very special circumstances, to fund and support the location of equipment or major national facilities outside a university campus, when access is provided to several institutions to better utilise research potential. In these circumstances, the terms of access must be guaranteed and agreed to by the parties in a contract prior to application. The costs of managing the equipment or facility should then be proportionally distributed across the users of the facility and agreed to prior to application. In such cases, ownership of the equipment or facility is vested with the institution that receives the Linkage-Infrastructure grant. A copy of the signed agreement specifying location, access and sharing of recurrent costs must be attached to the application.

4.2.4 *Cash contribution by institutions*

The cost of acquiring equipment or facilities must be itemised on the application form as cash and in-kind contributions by participating institutions. The Linkage–Infrastructure Scheme will fund up to a maximum of 75 percent of the direct cost of purchasing the equipment or creating the facility (net of GST).

Salaries of support or academic staff and the cost of buildings or other infrastructure may not be counted as cash contributions towards the purchase of a new item of equipment or facility. Such items may be included only as in-kind contributions.

The Minister may approve a lesser amount of funding than that sought. In such cases, each participating institution is nonetheless required to contribute pro-rata to the funded items, irrespective of where those items are to be located.

5 Application process

As the application is the prime source of information available to the selection committee, applicants must submit their projects as mature research plans ready for implementation. The application must contain all the information necessary for assessment of the project without the need for further written or oral explanation, or reference to additional documentation, including the World Wide Web, unless requested by the selection committee. All details in the application, particularly concerning any successful grants, must be current.

Applications under Linkage—Infrastructure consist of three parts—

- 1 Application form
- 2 Additional text
- 3 Supporting documentation and curriculum vitae

5.1 Submission of Applications

5.1.1 *Closing date for applications*

Applications for Linkage-Infrastructure must be received by the ARC by close of business (AEST) Friday **1 June 2001**. Replacement pages or late additional pages will not be accepted after submission. Applications received after close of business (AEST) 1 June 2001 will not be considered for funding.

5.1.2 *How to submit applications*

Applicants should submit their applications through the research office of the administering institution by the institution's closing date. You should check the preferred method with your research office. Applicants/Institutions have the following two options.

(1) Applicant entry of summary information directly into GAMS

The GAMS system has been developed by the ARC to capture electronic summary information via the World Wide Web. Applicants may enter their data directly into GAMS, validate, print and then forward their completed paper applications to their institutions research office. The research offices will administer access to the GAMS system by issuing GAMS UserIDs and passwords to applicants. On the ARC closing date, the research office will submit both the GAMS summary data and the full paper application to the ARC.

(2) Applicant completes RTF, forwards to the institution for data entry into GAMS

Applicants complete an RTF template (available from www.arc.gov.au) of the application form, print and forward to the research office. The research office will re-enter all mandatory data into the GAMS system, validate and submit both GAMS mandatory data and the full paper application to the ARC by the closing date.

Research Offices should send applications—

by **mail**, to

Director
Programme Management Section
Australian Research Council
GPO Box 9880
CANBERRA ACT 2601

by **courier**, to

Director
Programme Management Section
Australian Research Council
AGSO Building
cnr Jerrabomberra Drive and Hindmarsh
Avenue
SYMONSTON ACT 2609

Applicants should note that a separate document *Linkage-Infrastructure Instructions to Applicants for Funding Commencing in 2002* is available from www.arc.gov.au to assist in preparing applications.

5.2 Number of copies

An original and **one identical** copy only are required. The application must be clipped with NAL clips, not stapled, and submitted in the following order—

- 1 application form
- 2 additional text
- 3 supporting documentation and curriculum vitae

5.3 Application format

All documents must be written in English and must comply strictly with the format and submission requirements.

All pages must be in black type, 12 point font size on white A4 paper, printed on one side only and unbound, with at least 2 cm margins on each side. As applications are scanned electronically, applicants must use a highly-legible font type, such as Arial, Courier, Palatino, Times New Roman and Helvetica. Variants such as mathematical typesetting languages may also be used. References may be reproduced in 10 point font size. Colour graphs or colour photographs may be included but they will be reproduced in black and white.

The pages of the additional text and supporting documentation must be numbered consecutively starting from page one of the additional text.

5.4 Application form and instructions to applicants

Applicants must use the application form available from the institution's Research Office or from the World Wide Web at www.arc.gov.au.

The application form is organised into six parts—

- Part A Administrative summary
- Part B Personnel
- Part C Cost and usage
- Part D Research support
- Part E Collaborating organisation details
- Part F Project description

Applicants should note that a separate document, *Linkage —Infrastructure Instructions to Applicants for Funding Commencing in 2002*, is available to assist in preparing applications.

5.4.1 Additional text

Applicants should note that applications are considered by a committee that may include people who are not specialists in the field of the application. Consequently, the project and its expected outcomes should be described in a way that can be understood by all committee members (both specialist and non-specialist).

The additional text is to be no longer than **ten** pages. It should, within the required format, address the selection criteria listed in Section 6.1 of these guidelines **and** include the following details—

1. A description and outline of the research activities to be supported, stating how the research will be enhanced and why it is important. Relate your comments to the research priorities of the institutions involved.
2. The need and level of demand for the proposed equipment in Australia and the availability of comparable infrastructure elsewhere in the country.

3. A description of the collaborative arrangements proposed, including the involvement of each institution. A single-institution applicant needs to provide justification why collaborative arrangements are not feasible or appropriate.
4. A detailed budget justification that states the amount required for each item and the priority afforded each item (A, B or C). Note that each budget item and its priority should be justified.
5. Funding from sources other than the applicant institutions.
6. Details of staff, students and resources involved in the research activities.
7. The arrangements proposed for the purchase or construction of the equipment, its location, installation, day-to-day management and operation, maintenance, access by users to the facility, and the sharing of time and resources to maximise its use.

Applicants for library or information infrastructure must also address the issues identified in Appendix 2 of these Guidelines.

5.4.2 *Supporting documentation and curriculum vitae*

All the documents listed below are mandatory except for the agreement on access. They are **not** included in the quota of pages for the additional text.

1. Summary of quotes for items to be purchased, one page in length, behind the additional text and CVs.
2. If equipment is to be located outside an eligible higher education institution (as listed at Appendix 1), a copy of an agreement on access, use and maintenance between collaborators must be attached.
3. Curriculum vitae each no more than **one page** in length (including publication details) for each Chief Investigator and must include the following details—
 - name
 - qualifications and current appointment
 - relevant employment history
 - a list of the ten most significant relevant publications for the last five years and the total number of peer-reviewed research publications over the last five years
 - brief details of all competitive grant funding for the last five years.

CVs longer than one page will be removed from the application before assessment.

5.5 Timetable

Month	Year	Event
1 June	2001	Closing date for applications with the ARC Note: Each institution may set its own closing date. Please check with your institutions research office.
July/August	2001	Applications considered by an ARC Committee
October	2001	Recommendations to the Minister for approval
September	2001	Announcement of successful Linkage–Infrastructure projects and advice to applicants
28 days after date of advice to applicants	2001	Closing date for appeals
4-6 weeks after closing date of appeals	2001	Appeals are considered and applicants advised.

6 Selection and approval process

6.1 Selection criteria

Assessment will be based on the following criteria—

1. Need and level of demand for the proposed equipment or facilities in Australia.
The application should indicate the relevance of the proposed infrastructure to national needs and the availability of comparable infrastructure elsewhere in Australia.
2. Excellence of the researchers and research activity to be supported.
Evidence must be presented to show that the proposed research and the Chief Investigators' track records are of high quality, including details of the research proposed, complemented in the attached curriculum vitae of the principal proponents by details of recent relevant publications and competitive grants. This evaluation will take into account the opportunities that have been made available to the researchers to date.
3. Effectiveness of the cooperative arrangements between institutions, including access and resource sharing.
The application should detail the nature and degree of cooperation involved between the collaborating institutions. Where possible (and relevant), applications should also detail past and present cooperation and collaboration between the institutions concerned. Where the application seeks an extension of existing equipment facilities and/or additional equipment for a facility previously funded under Research Infrastructure Equipment and Facilities, then the extent of the current usage should be set out.
4. The commitment of each collaborating institution.
The application must provide clear evidence of the extent of financial and other support from the collaborating institutions and partners, and must be consistent with the institutions' research management plans.

6.2 Selection procedure

Assessment of applications is undertaken by one or more representatives from each of the Expert Advisory Committees. The Expert Advisory Committee—

- ranks each application relative to the others on the basis of the application
- assesses and recommends budgets
- prepares funding recommendations that are submitted to the ARC for endorsement and then to the Minister for approval

The ARC has procedures for declaring conflicts of interest and for members to withdraw from considering particular applications.

6.3 Offer of grant

Following the Minister's approval, the ARC will inform the successful administering institution in a letter of offer that will indicate the funding to be provided and will include the Conditions of Grant. Collaborating institutions will be advised of the details of relevant grant offers.

6.4 Conditions of grant

Applicants should familiarise themselves with the Conditions of Grant. These will be available on the World Wide Web at <http://www.arc.gov.au>.

The grantee must accept the Conditions of Grant and the administering institution must sign the Conditions of Grant before grant payments can be made. If the institution is administering more than one grant under the Linkage–Infrastructure Scheme, only one Conditions of Grant document needs to be completed.

7 Appeals process

Appeals will be considered only against process issues and not against Committee decisions or comments. Appeals must be made on the appeals form available on the ARC website (www.arc.gov.au).

The form must be lodged through the institution's research office and be received, **within 28 days** of the date on the letter notifying the outcome of applications, to:

The Appeals Officer
 Australian Research Council LC 321
 GPO Box 9880
 CANBERRA ACT 2601

8 Grant administration

8.1 Reporting requirements

Institutions are required to submit to the ARC—

- an **End-of Year Report** on the use and expenditure of grant funds by 31 March in the year following the calendar year for which they were granted,
- A **Final Report** on the project, within six months of the completion of the project, and expenditure of all ARC funds and
- an **Audited Financial Statement** by 30 June of the year following the year of the grant, in accordance with the relevant legislation.

The ARC reserves the right to suspend payment of further instalments of any current grant until the appropriate reports have been received and assessed as satisfactory.

8.2 Failure to provide reports

Where an institution fails to submit satisfactory reports, as required, the Minister may determine that funds have not been used in accordance with conditions applicable to the grant, and that all or part of the grant must be repaid. In this case, the ARC may withhold the remainder of the institution's payments under the Programme for the current year or initiate recovery of grant money.

8.3 Financial management

Linkage—Infrastructure operates on a calendar year basis. Subject to appropriations, payment of funds will be made to institutions in regular instalments, in accordance with approved payment arrangements made under the appropriate Act. Funds must be used only for purposes approved under Linkage—Infrastructure, otherwise they must be returned.

8.4 Privacy of individuals

Documents containing personal information are handled and protected in accordance with the provisions of the *Privacy Act 1988*, which sets standards for the collection, storage, use and disclosure of, and access to, personal information. Personal information is disclosed only with permission of the individual to whom it relates or where the Act allows.

8.5 Confidentiality

Information contained in applications is regarded as confidential unless otherwise stated and will be received and treated as confidential by the ARC, institutions and assessors.

8.6 Intellectual property

The institution must adhere to an intellectual property policy, approved by the institution's governing body, which has as one of its aims the maximisation of national benefits arising from research.

8.7 Incomplete or misleading information

If an application is incomplete or contains information that is considered misleading, it will be excluded from any further consideration for funding.

If the ARC believes that omissions or inclusion of misleading information are intentional, or if there is evidence of malpractice, the ARC will refer the matter for appropriate legal advice. The Commonwealth Government is committed to protecting its revenue, expenditure and property from any attempt, either by members of the public, contractors, sub-contractors, agents, intermediaries or its own employees to gain financial or other benefits by deceit.

Examples of malpractice include, but are not restricted to—

- providing fictitious track records, and
- falsifying claims in publications records (for example, describing a paper as accepted for publication when it has only been submitted).

8.8 Contact points

For further information, the institution's Research Office should be contacted in the first instance.

Enquiries about Linkage—Infrastructure may be addressed to—

Director
Programme Management Section
Australian Research Council
GPO Box 9880
CANBERRA ACT 2601

Fax (02) 6284 6638

Web <http://www.arc.gov.au>

APPENDIX 1

Eligible higher education institutions

Higher education institutions receiving Commonwealth funding on a triennial basis

New South Wales

Charles Sturt University
Macquarie University
Southern Cross University
The University of New England
The University of New South Wales
The University of Newcastle
The University of Sydney
University of Technology, Sydney
University of Western Sydney
University of Wollongong

Victoria

Deakin University
La Trobe University
Monash University
RMIT University
Swinburne University of Technology
University of Ballarat
The University of Melbourne
Victoria University

Queensland

Central Queensland University
Griffith University
James Cook University
Queensland University of Technology
The University of the Sunshine Coast
The University of Queensland
University of Southern Queensland

Western Australia

Curtin University of Technology
Edith Cowan University
Murdoch University
The University of Notre Dame Australia
The University of Western Australia

South Australia

The Flinders University of South Australia
The University of Adelaide
University of South Australia

Tasmania

University of Tasmania
Australian Maritime College

Northern Territory

Batchelor College
Northern Territory University

Australian Capital Territory

The Australian National University
University of Canberra

Multi-State

Australian Catholic University

APPENDIX 2

Library and information infrastructure

Applications for library and information infrastructure must address the matters raised here in addition to the requirements specified in the body of these Guidelines.

One of the aims of Linkage–Infrastructure is to support research through development of the national library and information infrastructure. Applications in this category must demonstrate that they will enhance specific high-quality research projects, and that they will benefit researchers and scholars nationally. Applications must be collaborative in nature.

All applications submitted for library and information infrastructure should demonstrate the following—

1. How the infrastructure enhances the ability of Australian researchers to access or use information resources effectively and efficiently.
2. That the project will not duplicate existing library and information infrastructure, but will link to existing infrastructure in Australia and overseas.
3. That the project has the capacity for future development and enhancements.
4. That the outcomes are sustainable.
5. That current developments in the information sciences, including international standards and protocols, systems and software to further library and information network inter-operability are understood and applied.

All applications submitted for library and information infrastructure should address one or more of the following elements of the national library and information infrastructure—

1. The development of improvements in access to information resources that can be made available nationally. This may include—
 - developing services that provide access to integrated print and electronic information resources, and/or
 - improving the level and quality of access through developing significant new directory, cataloguing or indexing services.
2. The testing, development and implementation of innovative and sustainable models that will lead to improved access to distributed information and research library resources.
3. The purchase or development of information resources of national significance, whether in electronic form or otherwise, that can be made available nationally. This will include—
 - the development of information resources to meet Australian research priorities, and/or
 - proposals to meet or provide resources that will fill significant gaps in the research resources available to the nation.