



Australian Government

Australian Research Council

***Call for Proposals for the Research in
Bionic Vision Science and Technology
Initiative***

Australian Research Council

Research in Bionic Vision Science and Technology Initiative

Table of Contents

Acronyms	3
Definitions for the Research in Bionic Vision Science and Technology Initiative Call for Proposals	4
Key Dates	6
Contacts.....	6
1 Introduction	7
1.1 Overview	7
1.2 Objectives of the Initiative	7
1.3 Selection criteria.....	8
2 Funding	8
2.1 Level of funding	8
2.2 Period of funding.....	9
3 Organisational types, roles and eligibility.....	9
3.1 Collaborating and Partner Organisations	9
3.2 Appointment and responsibilities of the Program Leader.....	10
3.3 Associated ARC Fellows	10
4 Cross-scheme issues.....	10
4.1 Cross-scheme eligibility	10
5 Application process	11
5.1 Proposals	11
6 Submission of Proposals	11
7 Selection and approval process	12
7.1 Assessment and selection procedure	12
7.2 Interviews	12
8 Administration of funding and reports	12
Appendix 1: Eligible Organisations.....	13

Acronyms

The following acronyms are used in ARC Calls for Proposals.

AEST	Australian Eastern Standard Time
AIATSIS	Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies
ARC	Australian Research Council
CI	Chief Investigator
SRI	ARC <i>Special Research Initiatives</i>

Definitions for the Research in Bionic Vision Science and Technology Initiative Call for Proposals

In this Call for Proposals, unless the contrary intention appears:

Administering Organisation means an Eligible Organisation which submits a Proposal for funding under the *Special Research Initiatives* scheme and which will be responsible for the administration of the funding if the proposed project is approved for funding.

Applicant means the Administering Organisation. Funding under the *Special Research Initiatives* scheme is provided to Administering Organisations, not to individual researchers.

ARC means the Australian Research Council, as established under the ARC Act.

ARC Act means the *Australian Research Council Act 2001*, or the Act.

ARC Centre means a research centre wholly or partly funded by the ARC and includes *ARC Centres of Excellence*, *ARC Centres*, *ARC Special Research Centres* and co-funded Centres of Excellence such as the Australian Centre for Plant Functional Genomics, the Australian Stem Cell Centre, the National Centre for Groundwater Research and Training and National ICT Australia.

ARC Fellow means a researcher holding an ARC Fellowship.

ARC Fellowship means a position held by a researcher where the salary is funded wholly or partly by the ARC and where the researcher has been nominated in a Proposal to hold a Fellowship. An ARC Fellowship may be awarded at a number of levels and in various ARC schemes. ARC Fellowship includes Australian Postdoctoral Fellowship, Australian Research Fellowship, Queen Elizabeth II Fellowship, Australian Professorial Fellowship, Australian Postdoctoral Fellowship (Industry), Linkage Industry Fellowship, ARC Centre Fellowship, ARC International Fellowship, Federation Fellowship, Future Fellowship, Australian Laureate Fellowship and Indigenous Researcher Fellowship.

ARC Web Site is <http://www.arc.gov.au>.

Centre Director means the person appointed to direct the programs of a Commonwealth-funded Research Centre.

Chief Investigator means a researcher who satisfies the eligibility criteria for a Chief Investigator.

Collaborating Organisation means an Eligible Organisation which is not the Administering Organisation but which is identified in the Proposal as a contributor to the project.

Commonwealth means the Commonwealth of Australia.

Commonwealth-funded Research Centre means a research centre substantially funded from Commonwealth funding sources and includes ARC Centres, Cooperative Research Centres and National Health and Medical Research Council Program Grants and Centres of Clinical Research Excellence. It does not include Research Networks funded by the ARC.

Conflict of Interest means an actual or perceived conflict between a person's public duty and their private or personal interest.

Eligible Organisation means an organisation which is eligible to apply for and receive funding under the *Special Research Initiatives* scheme.

Funding Agreement means the agreement entered into between the ARC and the Administering Organisation if the Administering Organisation's Proposal is approved for

funding. This Agreement sets out the terms and conditions under which the Commonwealth is to provide funding and the Administering Organisation is to be responsible for administration of the funding and the conduct of the project.

Minister means the Minister from time to time responsible for the administration of the ARC Act, or the Minister's delegate.

National Research Priority means a national research priority detailed in the SRI Funding Rules.

Partner Investigator means a researcher who satisfies the eligibility criteria for a Partner Investigator.

Partner Organisation means an organisation, other than an Eligible Organisation, which is to be a contributor to the project.

Program Leader means the first-named researcher nominated on a Proposal who is a CI.

Proposal means a request to the ARC for the provision of financial assistance for a research project which is submitted in accordance with Funding Rules approved by the Minister.

Research Office means a business unit within an organisation that is responsible for administrative contact with the ARC regarding Proposals and research projects.

SRI Funding Rules means the *Special Research Initiatives Funding Rules for funding commencing in 2008-2009 or 2009-2010* available on the Australian Research Council (ARC) Web Site.

Key Dates

Closing time for submission of Proposals	5.00pm (AEST) Wednesday 29 July 2009
Deadline for letters requesting non-use of an assessor	5.00pm (AEST) Wednesday 29 July 2009

Contacts

The ARC deals with thousands of Proposals each year. Where possible, researchers should direct requests for information to the Research Office or equivalent unit within their organisation.

Enquiries, paper copies of Proposals and Requests not to Assess must be addressed and sent:

by mail to:

Special Research Initiatives Coordinator
Australian Research Council
GPO Box 2702
CANBERRA ACT 2601

Email: sri@arc.gov.au
Phone: 02 6287 6600
Fax: 02 6287 6638
Web: <http://www.arc.gov.au>

by courier to:

Special Research Initiatives Coordinator
Australian Research Council
1st Floor, 8 Brindabella Circuit
CANBERRA AIRPORT ACT 2609

Appeals must be addressed and sent:

by mail to:

The Appeals Officer
Australian Research Council
GPO Box 2702
CANBERRA ACT 2601

by courier to:

The Appeals Officer
Australian Research Council
1st Floor, 8 Brindabella Circuit
CANBERRA AIRPORT ACT 2609

Other:

Email: sri@arc.gov.au
Phone: +61 02 6287 6600
Fax: +61 02 6287 6638
Web: <http://www.arc.gov.au>

Research in Bionic Vision Science and Technology Initiative

1 Introduction

1.1 Overview

- 1.1.1 This document (Call) invites Proposals from Eligible Organisations to undertake highly innovative and collaborative research to develop a functional bionic eye under the Research in Bionic Vision Science and Technology Initiative (Initiative). Proposals must comply with the *Special Research Initiatives Funding Rules for funding commencing in 2008-2009 or 2009-2010* (SRI Funding Rules), as well as the requirements described in this Call.
- 1.1.2 All parties involved in a Proposal should read and understand the SRI Funding Rules, this Call and the ARC's draft Funding Agreement (which is available on the ARC Web Site) before submitting a Proposal to the ARC. Applicants are responsible for ensuring that their Proposal is complete and accurate.
- 1.1.3 This Call is subject to change at any time, for reasons including any subsequent amendment to, replacement or supplementation of the ARC Act.

1.2 Objectives of the Initiative

- 1.2.1 The primary objective of this Initiative is the delivery of a program of activities that support the development of a functional bionic eye through:
 - a. undertaking highly innovative and internationally competitive research through a pioneering and feasible research and development program;
 - b. undertaking significant collaboration with experts in a broad range of relevant fields, including development of national and international networks and linkages with leading researchers and institutions;
 - c. developing outcomes with significant health and economic benefit for the Australian community in the short and longer term;
 - d. providing for potential spin-off innovation, with commercial applications to be pursued through a robust commercialisation strategy; and
 - e. building Australia's human capacity in this area by attracting, from within Australia and overseas, researchers of high international standing as well as the most promising research students.
- 1.2.2 The research resources of the Initiative will be directed towards addressing the National Research Priorities *Frontier Technologies for Building and Transforming Australian Industries* and *Promoting and Maintaining Good Health*. This Initiative will address challenging and significant problems, and produce outcomes of health, economic, social and cultural benefit to the Australian community.
- 1.2.3 The Proposal must demonstrate significant collaboration involving the research resources (in the form of cash or in-kind resources such as access to data, researchers or facilities) of the Administering Organisation, Collaborating Organisations and Partner Organisations; both Australian and international.

- 1.2.4 The Proposal must demonstrate a world-class research environment that is attractive to leading researchers and effective in developing the careers of outstanding early-career Australian researchers, research leaders and professionals.
- 1.2.5 The ARC invites Proposals addressing the listed National Research Priorities which can enhance collaboration among organisations.

Governance

- 1.2.6 The Proposal will be established with the academic, administrative and financial governance structures of the Administering Organisation, although the ARC may, under exceptional circumstances, approve the establishment of a separate legal entity if this is appropriate. The Proposal may be for research located at a single site, comprise networked nodes, or adopt any other approach to research management, provided that it meets the objectives and selection criteria and is not contrary to the Funding Agreement.
- 1.2.7 Governance arrangements for the Proposal must ensure fair access to resources for all eligible participants. The ARC requires that understandings or agreements reached between the Administering Organisation and the Collaborating and Partner Organisations for the operation of the Initiative be formalised by written agreement(s), a copy of which must be provided to the ARC upon request. The matters which must be covered by these written agreements will be specified in the Funding Agreement between the ARC and the Administering Organisation.

1.3 Selection criteria

- 1.3.1 All Proposals which meet the eligibility criteria will be assessed and merit ranked using the following selection criteria:
 - a. (50%) nature and merit of the Proposal in relation to the objectives of the Initiative as specified in Section 1.2 of this Call and column 4 of the table in Appendix 2 of the SRI Funding Rules, taking into consideration:
 - i. the goals of the Proposal;
 - ii. the method and approach to be adopted;
 - iii. expected results; and
 - iv. value for money and budget justification, including where appropriate any cash or in-kind financial contributions to be made from non-ARC sources.
 - b. (40%) the parties who are to be involved in and associated with the Proposal, including their track record relative to opportunity and their capacity to undertake the research program; and
 - c. (10%) the relevance of the Proposal to issues of national significance and importance.

2 Funding

2.1 Level of funding

- 2.1.1 Proposals will be received and considered by the ARC under the SRI Funding Rules. The key details relating to the Initiative are summarised at Appendix 2 of the SRI Funding Rules.

- 2.1.2 Funding must be used only for purposes that are consistent with the SRI Funding Rules, this Call, and the Funding Agreement.
- 2.1.3 The ARC reserves the right to recommend to the Minister that a Proposal not be funded if it is judged that the Proposal is not of sufficient quality and/or does not meet the eligibility or accountability requirements or selection criteria.
- 2.1.4 Funding will be directed through the Administering Organisation. If approved, the ARC's financial assistance under this Initiative is subject to the appropriation of moneys and the approval of expenditures under the ARC Act. Approval of expenditures under the ARC Act can be considered only in relation to years for which there are relevant budgetary funding caps and splits in place as required by the ARC Act. The ARC will enter into a Funding Agreement with the Administering Organisation that will specify, among other things, the approved and indicative expenditures over the funding period.
- 2.1.5 The Proposal may comprise individual research projects with organisations that are not the Administering Organisation or founding Collaborating or Partner Organisations, provided that arrangements are made to protect the rights of all parties concerned. The requirements for such arrangements are described in the Funding Agreement.

2.2 Period of funding

- 2.2.1 Funds will be awarded by the ARC for up to four years, subject to sufficient funding being available for the Initiative, the provisions of the ARC Act and continued satisfactory progress of the Initiative. Funding is expected to begin in the 2009-10 financial year.
- 2.2.2 In the case of exceptional performance and subject to a successful review and availability of funding, the ARC may consider making a recommendation for extending financial assistance for an additional period.
- 2.2.3 Subject to Section 9 of the SRI Funding Rules, research funding received or sought elsewhere (outside this Initiative) has no impact on eligibility for funding within the Initiative. Nevertheless, the time commitments of the participants named in the Proposal will be considered during the selection and assessment process.

3 Organisational types, roles and eligibility

3.1 Collaborating and Partner Organisations

- 3.1.1 In addition to the participation of the Administering Organisation, a Proposal may include participants from other Eligible Organisations—that is, Collaborating Organisations—and Partner Organisations (such as other Commonwealth and/or state/territory agencies, private sector entities, and overseas organisations).
- 3.1.2 Each Proposal must indicate agreed contributions from the Collaborating Organisation(s) and Partner Organisation(s), if any. Applicants determine, in collaboration with the Collaborating and Partner Organisation(s), which types of resources are appropriate and necessary for the project they wish to undertake. Contributions for the Collaborating and Partner Organisation(s) must be specific to the project and must not be part of a broader contribution to an Eligible Organisation.
- 3.1.3 The Proposal should include a detailed description of the collaborative arrangements proposed. Details of the nature of the collaboration should be presented in both

descriptive terms and in figures. Proposals should make clear how each Collaborating and Partner Organisation is involved in the project, how the project fits into each Collaborating and Partner Organisation's overall strategic plan and how the project is of value to each of the Collaborating and Partner Organisations involved.

- 3.1.4 If the Proposal is approved for funding, any Collaborating and Partner Organisations will be expected to sign a written partner agreement with the Administering Organisation. The requirement to enter into these arrangements is described in the Funding Agreement.

3.2 Appointment and responsibilities of the Program Leader

- 3.2.1 If a Proposal is successful, a Program Leader must be appointed. The Program Leader, normally the first named CI on a proposal, must satisfy the requirements for a Chief Investigator (CI) as specified in the SRI Funding Rules and is expected to devote a significant proportion of time to the Initiative.
- 3.2.2 The Program Leader will be responsible for implementing the strategies of the Initiative and managing the research program. The Program Leader must coordinate the research effort and reporting structures across the Administering Organisation and the Collaborating and Partner Organisations and nodes. For some Proposals, the Program Leader's role may be primarily one of research management and coordination, and the Program Leader's track record will be judged accordingly. The Program Leader must also be responsible for managing the intellectual property in accordance with the policies of the Administering Organisation and with the *National Principles of Intellectual Property Management for Publicly Funded Research* (refer also to Section 14.4 of the SRI Funding Rules).

3.3 Associated ARC Fellows

- 3.3.1 ARC Fellows with expertise in the Initiative's research area are likely to play a key role in establishing the research agenda in these areas and may be in a position to support and promote the Initiative, mentor staff and students, and help build international links.
- 3.3.2 A Proposal should outline whether any ARC Fellows are to be involved in the Proposal, but the involvement of ARC Fellows is not mandatory.
- 3.3.3 Salaries for ARC Fellows associated with the Proposal must be met from the relevant ARC Fellowship program and cannot be paid from the funding provided to the Administering Organisation by the Commonwealth for the Initiative.

4 Cross-scheme issues

4.1 Cross-scheme eligibility

- 4.1.1 The following rules will apply to funding provided by the ARC:
- a. Subject to any requirements or limitations specified under other ARC initiatives or funding schemes, ARC salary-related funding (including salary-related on-costs) associated with Fellowships awarded under other ARC initiatives or funding schemes may, with the approval of the ARC, be retained. If a person is the recipient of salary-related funding from another ARC funding scheme, funding provided by the ARC for the Initiative is not permitted to be used to meet the salary, in whole or part, for that person. However, the potential impact of the

person's other research activities on the relevant researcher's time commitments may be taken into account in assessing the Proposal;

- b. ARC funding associated with an ARC Centre and projects funded under other ARC initiatives or funding schemes, including Discovery Projects and Linkage Projects (excluding the Fellowship funding outlined above) which is for research in an area that is considered by the ARC to duplicate, or could reasonably be expected to duplicate, research or activities within the research program of the Initiative funded under this initiative may be required to be relinquished.
- 4.1.2 If a Proposal identifies a Chief Investigator (CI) who is associated with a Commonwealth-funded Research Centre, and the person will continue to be associated with the Centre on the commencement of the Initiative, the Proposal must include a letter, no longer than one page, from the Centre Director for that Centre which:
- a. describes the relationship between the proposed research and the research undertaken by that other Centre; and
 - b. explains how, and explicitly states that, the proposed research does not duplicate work that is already funded or could reasonably be expected to be funded by that other Centre.
- 4.1.3 For the purpose of this section, the term 'associated with' refers to those who contribute to the work of a Centre and whose contributions form part of the output of that Centre for annual reporting and evaluation purposes.
- 4.1.4 The ARC reserves the right to determine which researchers are associated with a Commonwealth-funded Research Centre and also reserves the right to take into account the magnitude of in-kind contributions when making a determination as to whether a Proposal or a researcher is substantially associated with a Centre.

5 Application process

5.1 Proposals

- 5.1.1 Proposals must satisfy all the requirements set out in the SRI Funding Rules and this Call.

6 Submission of Proposals

- 6.1.1 An Administering Organisation may submit only one Proposal. A Proposal must identify at least one researcher as a CI. A person nominated as a CI must satisfy the eligibility criteria for that role as specified in Section 8 of the Funding Rules.
- 6.1.2 Proposals must be submitted using the *Research in Bionic Vision Science and Technology Initiative* Application Form which is available from the ARC and accessible via the ARC's Web Site.
- 6.1.3 Proposals consist of two parts:
- a. an electronic application form in pdf format, which must be completed using the template on the ARC's Web Site and submitted electronically via email (sri@arc.gov.au) to the ARC; and
 - b. additional text (to be electronically scanned in PDF format and inserted into and submitted with the electronic application form):

- i. Signed certification page(s); and
 - ii. where relevant, letters from Centre Director(s) for any participants associated with a Commonwealth-funded Research Centre.
- 6.1.4 In addition to the electronically submitted application form, an original application form and an identical copy must be submitted in hard copy. The hard copy must be clipped, not stapled. The hard copy of a Proposal must be submitted with the additional text, including supporting documentation, interleaved appropriately.

7 Selection and approval process

7.1 Assessment and selection procedure

- 7.1.1 Assessment of Proposals is undertaken by the ARC in accordance with Section 11.2 of the SRI Funding Rules.

7.2 Interviews

- 7.2.1 The ARC may short-list proposals and invite some applicants to attend interviews. Interviews may, at the discretion of the ARC, be held in Canberra, or in one of the Administering Organisations or the Collaborating and Partner Organisations, or at a place nominated by the ARC. The ARC will endeavour to provide as much notice as possible of an invitation to attend an interview, but may schedule interviews with as little as three working days' notice. The ARC will determine the structure of interviews and will not cover the costs associated with participation in interviews.

8 Administration of funding and reports

- 8.1.1 Section 13 of the SRI Funding Rules provides details relating to the administration of funding and reporting requirements. Successful Administering Organisations should familiarise themselves with the standard Funding Agreement, which will be published on the ARC's Web Site.
- 8.1.2 If funded, there will be a full review of the performance of the Initiative in or around the second year of its operation. This review will examine the progress of the research and the extent to which the Initiative has met its previously stated aims and objectives, or any such other aims and objectives as varied and approved by the ARC. Satisfactory progress in these areas is a condition for the Administering Organisation to continue to receive ARC funding under this Initiative.
- 8.1.3 Other reviews may be held at any time, and particularly in special circumstances such as a change of Program Leader. Persons undertaking reviews for the ARC are to be given full access to all accounts, records, documents and premises relevant to the research being funded by the ARC.
- 8.1.4 Applicants should be aware of provisions of Part 8 of the *Financial Management and Accountability Act 1997*, which provide the Auditor General or an authorised person with the right to have, at all reasonable times, access to information, documents and records.

Appendix 1: Eligible Organisations

Higher Education Organisations eligible to submit Proposals

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
Melbourne College of Divinity
Monash University
Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology (RMIT University)
Swinburne University of Technology
The University of Melbourne
University of Ballarat
Victoria University

Queensland

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

Flinders University
The University of Adelaide
University of South Australia

Tasmania

University of Tasmania

Northern Territory

Charles Darwin University

Batchelor Institute of Indigenous Tertiary Education

Australian Capital Territory

The Australian National University

University of Canberra

Multi-State

Australian Catholic University

Other Organisations eligible to submit Proposals

Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS)