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ARC

# Tips and Tricks for industry collaboration

Presented by:

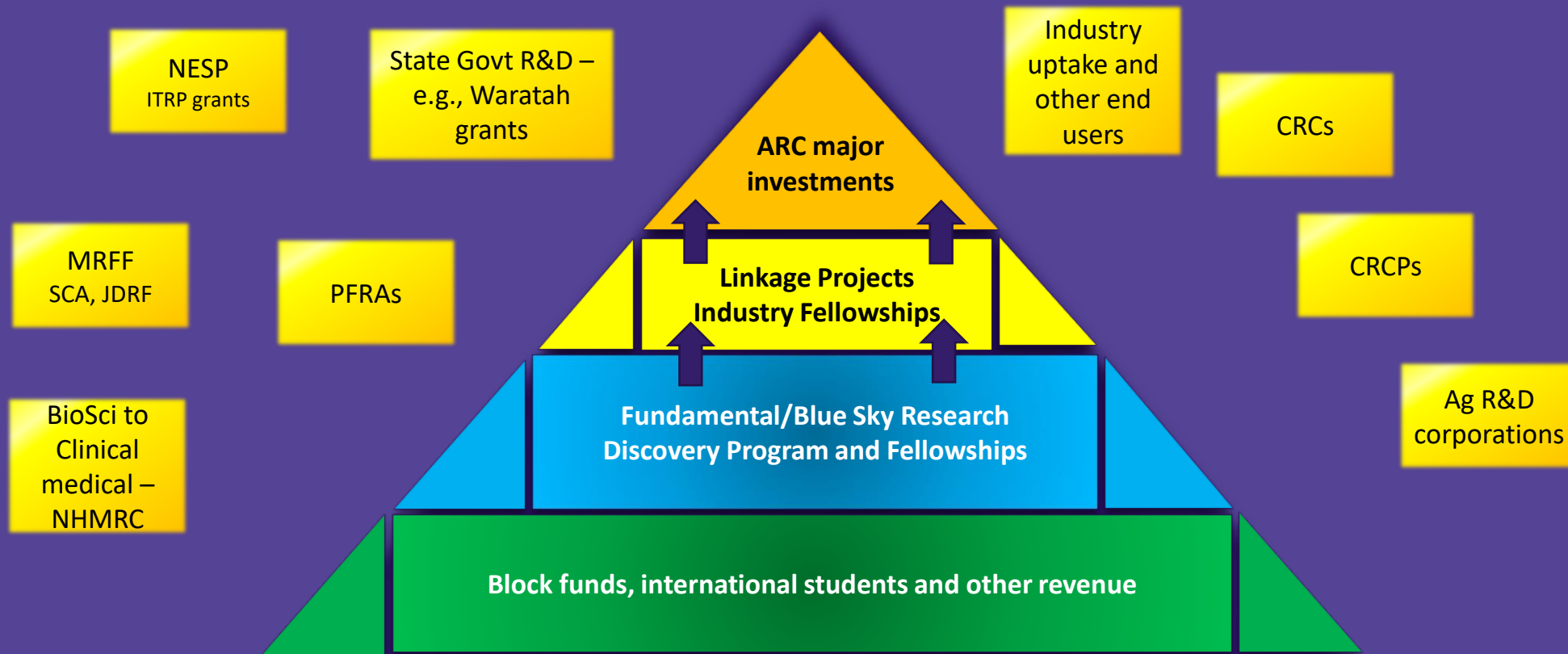
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Australian Research Council

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# OECD 2013b – firms collaborating on innovation with higher education and public research institutions





## The R&D Context

# The Grants Scale

The gradient of ARC investments in Linkage Program:

| Linkage Projects                         | Industry Laureate Fellowships | ITRP Research Hubs and Training Centres                      | ARC Centres of Excellence | Other large research institutes or organisations |
|--|-------------------------------|--|---------------------------|--|
| Early to mid career industry fellowships | <b>Program Management</b>     |  | <b>Entity Management</b>  |  |
| <b>Project Management</b>                |                               | <b>Interdisciplinary and highly integrated collaboration</b> |                           |  |

# Tips and Tricks for industry collaboration

## Establishing a relationship and designing the project

**The starting point** – the company knows they have a process problem but may not know what the nature of the problem is... - have you walked the factory floor? A short case study

- **Some triaging is initially involved:**
  - There is a problem to be solved but industry wants 100% IP and full control – see **Contract Research or Consultancy**
  - There is a research problem that has some research may have immediate and longer term benefits, and IP and benefits can be shared between the University, industry and researchers – see **new Industry Fellowships** and **Linkage Projects** as a smaller scale project
  - There is a more industry-wide problem and there is benefits in more system-wide industry solutions and some blue-sky research plus serious capacity building involved – see **Industrial Transformation Research Program**
  - There is a longer term problem, requiring a multi-disciplinary approach, the scale of national centre with international level of research excellence and translation to multiple end users – see **ARC Centres of Excellence**
- There are other sources of Commonwealth funds including CRC and CRC(P) - industry led bids

# Tips and Tricks for industry collaboration

## Now for a serious chat

- After triaging if the project ideas and partnership is too early then **explore other benefits**: a future collaborative relationship, the identification and solution of other business problems.
- Be aware of **your university 'deal breakers'** and principles of engagement before talking to your partner, so that you don't inadvertently raise expectations that cannot be met

## Consider the differing perspectives

- End users focus on outcomes as they can be applied. Researchers focus on research outcomes. **Both parties' needs must be met** for a research project to be successful.
- The university researcher and the research end-user need to be **clear about what they expect to gain from the relationship**.

## A common understanding – and not just a glossary of terminology...

- Don't assume that **everyone** understands research concepts or business concepts.
- **Face to face discussions** is often best and do it regularly
- Partnerships is really about **building trust**.

# Tips and Tricks for industry collaboration

## Developing a collaborative project idea

- As a first step, establish whether there are any **conflicts of interest** for any parties and declare any other projects that are underway that relate to the proposed project idea
- The industry will think they know better than the researcher **what the problem looks like** and what a solution might look like. These questions should be addressed first and incorporated into any further project planning
- **What does success look like** to each party?
- Consider **critical risks** and identify elements of **risk mitigation** – research may or may not always be successful and cash and reputation are always involved.
- Have an early discussion about **funds and other resources** needed
- Identify **skill gaps** and broaden the collaboration if needed
- What **ethics approvals** are needed or other compliance (Defence trade controls, biosafety etc)
- Agree on broad principles of **Intellectual Property** ownership (including acknowledging and protecting background IP)

# Tips and Tricks for industry collaboration

## The Concept paper emerges...

Clearly articulate the challenge/solution and to describe potential project activity (and what may be possible). However don't convey the project as only a three year life span...

- who will be doing the work
- how each party will be involved
- what contributions the parties will make in cash and in-kind and the likely expenditure
- intellectual property expectations (ownership and use)
- what the specific outputs are and when they are expected to be delivered.

**These should be recorded in the form of a term sheet or heads of agreement, which will save time and much angst later.**

This material can also be used:

- as a briefing for additional prospective partners
- To help to identify other funding sources



# Tips and Tricks for industry collaboration

## The ARC grant application

- The **Research Office staff are your best friends** 😊
- **Keep engaged** and communicate regularly
- **Be clear what each party will, will not, or cannot, compromise upon** (IP grumbles are birthed here)
- Prepare a 'finalised' budget **allowing plenty of time for any internal approvals** in the university and the end-user organisation.
- **Share the draft and final application form** with partners – industry partners are sometimes forgotten in this process
- For *Linkage Projects* applications researchers should work with Research Office and partner's legal office to prepare a draft of the partner support letter early. **Industry partners do not appreciate 24-48 hours to sign off letters of support.**
- Have some **level of agreement on the distribution of funds** to support the project and a contingency plan of what can be changed if the grant is successful, but the amount of funding awarded is reduced.
- As the ARC **assessment process progresses stay in contact with parties** and the Research Office – treat the rejoinder process very professionally and constructively

### Partner Organisations say *Linkage* provides:



**A long-term professional relationship** – the contacts and ongoing relationships developed through the project often led to other projects or the ability to discuss issues and keep in contact: this was highly valuable to each party

**Important research outcomes** – these included new knowledge or solving particular problems through the research project(s)

**Building capacity** – training and developing skills was an important factor identified by universities and their academic staff. Student placements are beneficial as potential new recruits or emerging researchers that know industry issues very well

**Better connected and leveraged research capability** – the projects brought together different expertise, knowledge and /or resources that would not have been available to the individual parties involved

# Tips and Tricks for industry collaboration

## Things to consider in developing when productive working with relationships with Partner Organisations:

- Monitoring their cash-contributions and address any issues in a timely way working with Partners in a timely way when issues arise.
- Managing expectations and levels of satisfaction about the collaboration and inclusion in the Project.
- Effective communication to help manage relationships and have clear strategies for ongoing engagement with researchers.
- Have a clear understanding about shared IP arrangements, and to help industry partners remain engaged during contract negotiations.
- Encourage industry to consideration of great ideas about student training and placements e.g ITRP

**ARC Industry Fellowships**

**Linkage Projects**

**Industrial Transformation Research Program**

**ARC Centres of Excellence**

## **A special thanks to the industry collaboration working group**

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Thank you