



Australian Government

Australian Research Council

Corporate Plan 2019–20

CEO INTRODUCTION



ARC CEO Professor Sue Thomas
Norman Plant Photography

As the Accountable Authority of the Australian Research Council (ARC), I am pleased to present the *ARC Corporate Plan 2019–20*, which covers the period 2019–20 to 2022–23, as required under subsection 35(1)(b) of the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013*.

The Corporate Plan is the ARC's principal planning document that sets out the agency's strategic vision, and ensures our resources and capabilities are directed towards the achievement of our immediate, intermediate and long-term objectives. It establishes clear lines of accountability, allowing the ARC's contribution to the growth of knowledge and innovation for the benefit of the Australian community to be monitored and evaluated.

The ARC will continue to fund the highest quality research through the National Competitive Grants Program; evaluate the quality, engagement and impact of research; and provide advice in relation to research matters. We remain dynamically responsive to community expectations, opportunities to improve our processes, and the national and international research policy environment.

Throughout 2018–19, the ARC continued to excel in the delivery of Australian Government programs, and committed itself to the ongoing development of our business processes. We administered selection rounds for ten grant schemes, continuing to provide vital support for growth and innovation in Australia's research sector. Key achievements over this period included the publication of the Excellence in Research for Australia 2018 outcomes, the finalisation of the inaugural Engagement and Impact 2018 assessment, and the enhancement of our Research Management System to allow for the auto-population of research outputs. We are appreciative of the time, effort and expertise the broader research sector has invested in the achievement of these outcomes.

Over forthcoming reporting periods, we will continue undertaking the streamlining of the National Competitive Grants Program. We will be actively reflecting on the outcomes of the Australian National Audit Office's audit of the ARC's administration of the National Competitive Grants Program, to identify further opportunities to improve our processes. The ARC will commence a review of the Excellence in Research for Australia and Engagement and Impact exercises to ensure they continue to use best practice evaluation methodologies and maintain the ongoing support of the university sector. We will also be finalising our contribution to the review of the Australian and New Zealand Standard Research Classification (ANZSRC) by mid-2020, to ensure the classification system aligns with changes in the research sector.

The ARC is proud to deliver outcomes that foster internationally recognised research excellence, tangible benefits for the Australian community, and productive commercial, government and community research partnerships with the higher education sector.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Sue Thomas', written in a cursive style.

Sue Thomas
Chief Executive Officer
Australian Research Council

Vision: Research for a creative, innovative and productive Australia

ARC Snapshot



Linkage Projects
Partners **\$1.91** : ARC **\$1**

The ARC funded
4050
new and ongoing
research projects in
2018



ERA 2018 included



506,294
research outputs from

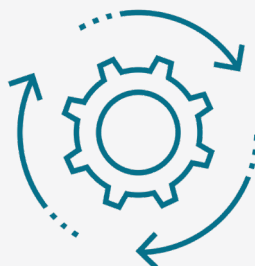


76,261
researchers



7.95%
of Australian Government
investment in research
and development
administered

8200
assessors produced nearly
26,700
peer review assessments
for the ARC in 2018



The ARC processes
5000+
applications and funds
1000+
new projects per year

81.5%
ARC research projects involving
international collaboration in
2018–19

The EI 2018 assessment included:
626 engagement narratives and
637 impact studies



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PURPOSE

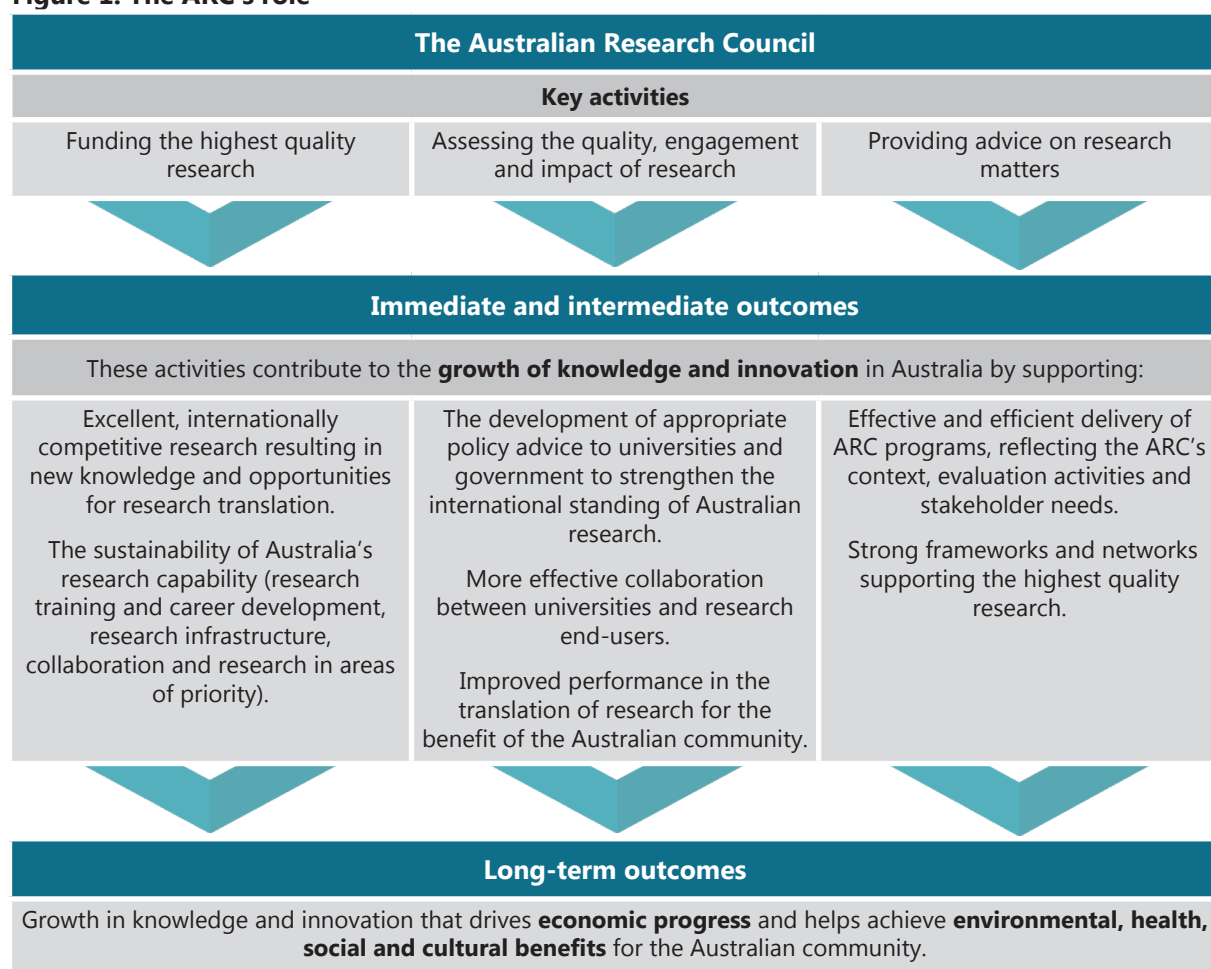
To grow knowledge and innovation for the benefit of the Australian community by funding the highest quality research, assessing the quality, engagement and impact of research and providing advice on research matters.

The ARC is a non-corporate Commonwealth entity established under the *Australian Research Council Act 2001* (ARC Act). It is located within the Australian Government's Education portfolio, reporting to the Minister for Education. The ARC's functions, as specified by the ARC Act, are administering the National Competitive Grants Program (NCGP), making recommendations to the Minister on funding for research proposals under the NCGP, and providing advice to the Minister on matters related to research.

The ARC's role

The ARC achieves its purpose through three key activities: funding the highest quality research; assessing the quality, engagement and impact of research; and providing advice on research matters. The ARC's role, in terms of the relationship between its key activities and its immediate, intermediate and long-term outcomes, is described in Figure 1.

Figure 1: The ARC's role





ENVIRONMENT

The ARC administers a substantial component of the Australian Government's investment in research and innovation that addresses the challenges facing the national and international community. The agency facilitates research in all disciplines, excluding medical and health research.¹ The independence and integrity of the ARC's peer review processes, and its innovative technological platforms, allow the agency to support the highest quality research.

A range of intersecting environmental factors affect the ARC's work, including national and international economic performance, technological change, policy developments, research trends and stakeholder activities. It is anticipated that the ARC's strategic and operating contexts will remain relatively stable through the four forthcoming reporting periods. The ARC will be addressing a range of key priorities during this time, reflecting the agency's responsiveness to its strategic and operating contexts.

The ARC actively engages with Australian research and innovation sector stakeholders. Australian universities are the main organisations eligible to receive NCGP funding. The ARC also works closely with Universities Australia, the National Health and Medical Research Council, other government agencies, Australia's learned academies, various university cohorts, discipline peak bodies, researchers, industry and publicly funded research agencies. The ARC is an important contributor to a global research system, which the agency monitors closely to remain responsive to international research trends.

The ARC recognises community expectations that the Australian Government funding it receives will contribute to outcomes that are beneficial to the Australian community. In late 2018, the Australian Government announced the introduction of the National Interest Test, to be applied to all NCGP schemes. The ARC will continue to develop its approach to administering this policy initiative over the next four years, ensuring the research funded by the agency contributes to the national interest through positive economic, commercial, environmental, social and cultural outcomes.

The agency will also be maintaining its proactive commitment to the Australian Government's 2015–16 *Digital Transformation Agenda*, which included a Streamlining Grants Administration Program. The ARC will continue to distribute NCGP Grant Guidelines and associated documentation through GrantConnect, the Australian Government's whole-of-government grant information system. The agency will also be further refining its capacity to administer grants in partnership with other Australian Government agencies through the *Special Research Initiatives* scheme. The ARC works closely with the Department of Finance to ensure ongoing compliance with Australian Government policy expectations.

The ARC successfully completed the 2018 Excellence in Research for Australia (ERA) and Engagement and Impact (EI) assessments. Over coming reporting periods, the agency will be engaging closely with stakeholders to review these research evaluation exercises. A key priority for the review will be to find ways to utilise recent advances in technology and data management in order to streamline reporting requirements and ensure that the assessments continue to meet stakeholder expectations.

¹ As defined in the *ARC Medical Research Policy*

CAPABILITIES

The ARC's achievement of its purpose is dependent upon strong organisational capabilities. The ARC delivers a robust peer review process through its organisational and governance arrangements. The relationship between the ARC's capabilities, including its people, processes, structures and systems, and the agency's key activities, is depicted in Figure 2.

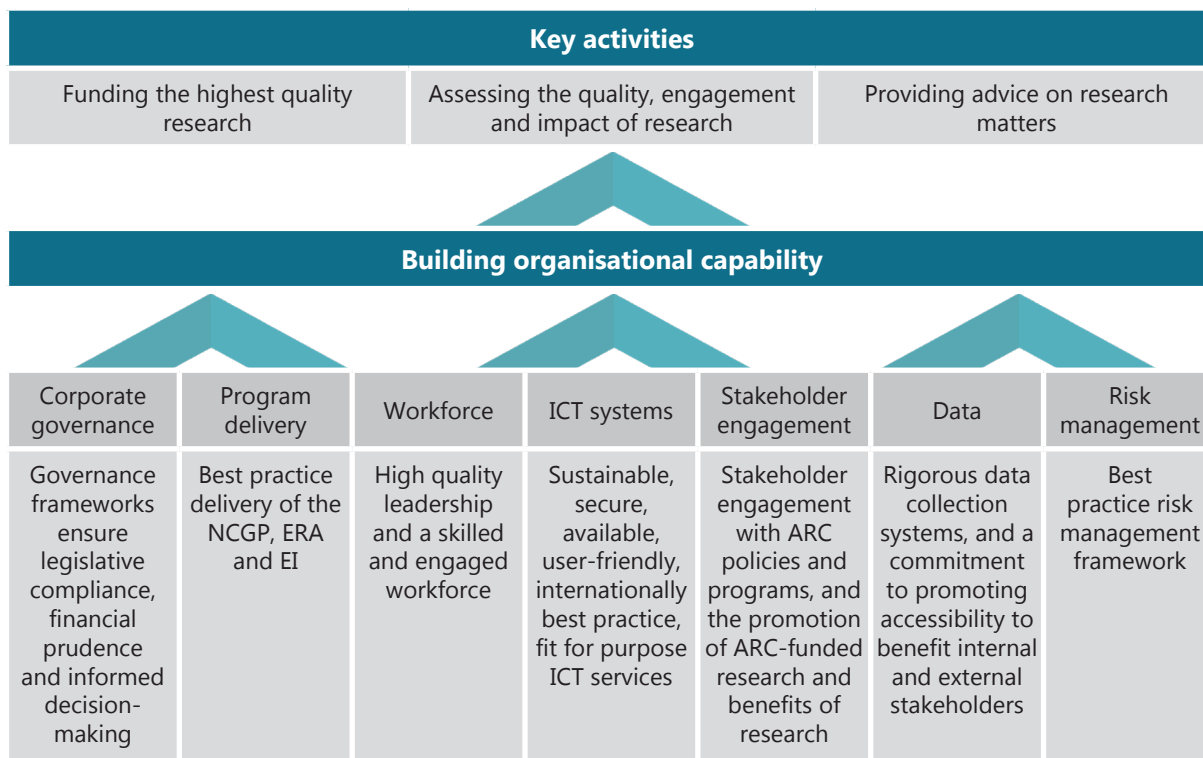


The ARC evaluates its capabilities on an ongoing basis, to ensure they enable the agency to perform its key activities efficiently and effectively. In maintaining an organisational culture of continuous improvement, the ARC regularly reviews its capabilities to:

- ensure the agency can respond effectively to current needs
- help build capability for emerging needs
- establish resilience to cope with the unexpected.

This approach ensures that the ARC's people, processes, structures and systems are aligned to its purpose and future priorities.

Figure 2: ARC organisational capabilities





Corporate governance

The ARC has comprehensive governance structures that facilitate the agency's performance of its responsibilities. These include the policies, strategies and frameworks underpinning the ARC's decision-making, performance measurement and reporting, financial management, audit practices, risk management and expectations surrounding staff conduct.

The ARC will continue developing a robust planning and reporting framework to transparently monitor and report on the agency's use of public funding. The ARC is committed to an ongoing program of internal audit, and maintains corporate governance oversight through senior management committees.

Program delivery

The ARC's capability to deliver the NCGP, and the ERA and EI assessments, relies upon Information and Communication Technology (ICT) systems, including the Research Management System (RMS) and the System to Evaluate Excellence in Research (SEER). Current strategies and future capability planning enable better practice program implementation, and support the successful achievement of long-term outcomes. The ARC will continue to improve the administrative and technical capability to deliver grant programs in partnership with other Australian Government agencies.

Workforce

The staff of the ARC comprises academics with strong research backgrounds (the Chief Executive Officer [CEO] and the Executive Directors) and over 130 public servants.

A key component of the ARC's capacity to deliver its purpose over forthcoming reporting periods will be the maintenance of a skilled and diverse workforce. Established policies and procedures will help to continue to develop a workforce with the skills, knowledge, experience and attitudes needed to support a productive, healthy and inclusive workplace.

The ARC encourages those in leadership positions to drive a high-performing workplace culture. The agency maintains a comprehensive program of learning and development for staff, and fosters a supportive and flexible workplace culture to promote work-life balance.

ICT systems

ICT services are fundamental to the efficiency and effectiveness with which the ARC can achieve its purpose. The ongoing adoption of new and emerging ICT will ensure ARC systems are current, responsive, efficient and secure. The ARC's ICT services are considered to be international best practice for a peer reviewed approach to grants administration.

The ARC has four primary ICT services, supporting the development of productive and mobile workspaces, specialised business applications, business intelligence underpinned by data analytics, and infrastructure supporting all ICT services.

Stakeholder engagement

The ARC is committed to communicating effectively with national and international stakeholders to ensure the highest quality performance in the delivery of its key activities. This includes promoting the value of ARC-funded research, improving stakeholder awareness of ARC programs and policies, and engaging in collaborative consultations across the higher education and research sectors.

The ARC's focus on funding the highest quality research and researchers reflects the Australian Government's commitment that funding will be used to best advantage, and will support a diverse and sustainable research workforce within the national university sector. The Linkage Program of the NCGP has a particular focus on promoting national and international research collaborations between researchers, industry and partner organisations.

Data

The ARC collects a range of NCGP, ERA and EI program and administrative data, along with data on Australia's research and innovation system. This resource is utilised by multiple stakeholders, including universities, researchers and policy makers. The priority for the ARC is to balance the demand from stakeholders for access to ARC data against the requirements of legislation and the resources of the agency.

The ARC will remain committed to expanding access to ARC data where appropriate, as evidenced by enhancements to the agency's Grants Search website functionality, increasing the availability of NCGP data to stakeholders. In addition, the ERA and EI 2018 National Reports have been released in a new interactive, web accessible format through the ARC online portal. The ARC Data Portal will provide external stakeholders with access to ERA and EI reports, outcomes, ERA submission data and EI impact studies that received a high rating.

The ARC is committed to promoting the outcomes of the research it funds and ensuring that non-sensitive data is made publicly available to extend the value and use of research.

Risk management

The ARC's Risk Management Framework (the Framework) provides a system for managing and overseeing risks and controls. The Framework complies with the *Commonwealth Risk Management Policy* and takes into consideration the unique context of the agency's functions. The *ARC Risk Management Policy* and *ARC Risk Management Plan and Toolkit* support the Framework by describing the ARC's approach to risk management.

The ARC manages risk through regular reviews of strategic, operational, project, financial and fraud risks, and their associated controls. The ARC has developed purpose-built, centralised tools for the ongoing collection, analysis and reporting of information relating to risk. The agency supports a positive risk culture through a network of risk champions, staff training and assurance activities. The ARC has a low tolerance for risks that potentially damage the ARC's reputation or the safety of ARC staff and stakeholders. The agency also rigorously manages risks associated with financial management.

Figure 3 highlights the relationship between the ARC's four strategic risks in 2019–20 and its three key activities.

Figure 3: ARC strategic risks 2019–20

Risks	Key activities		
	1	2	3
The ARC is perceived to not be funding the best research	x		
Outcomes from ERA and EI do not meet the needs of the government and/or research sector		x	
The ARC is not engaging effectively with its stakeholders (including across government and with the research sector)	x	x	x
The ARC fails to comply with its legislative requirements	x	x	x

PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT FRAMEWORK

The ARC's purpose involves the growth of knowledge and innovation through three key activities: funding the highest quality research; assessing the quality, engagement and impact of research; and providing advice on research matters. The broad level logic underpinning the ARC's performance measurement framework is represented in Figure 4 (see page 10). This figure outlines the relationship between the ARC's capabilities, activities and outcomes, and captures the organisational logic underpinning the development of the ARC's key performance indicators.

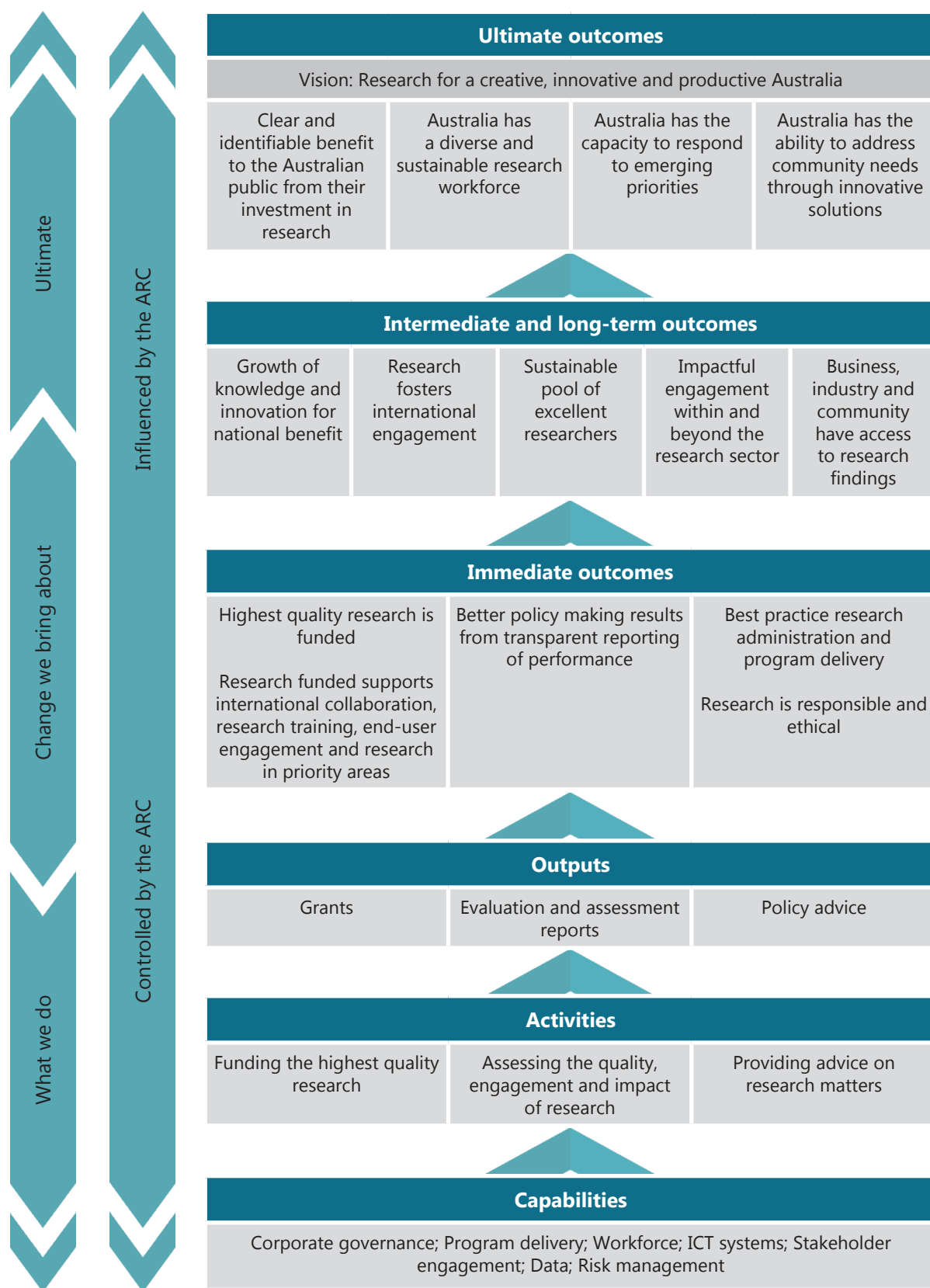
For each of the ARC's three key activities, the following information is provided: the ARC's intended outcomes; the strategies employed to achieve these outcomes; and the targets and measures that will demonstrate the agency's performance.

The ARC's performance outcomes may be influenced by factors beyond its control. Table 1 outlines the factors that influence the ARC's performance, and the extent to which the agency exerts control over these factors, for each key activity.

Table 1: Factors affecting ARC performance

Key activities	Within our control	Partially within our control	Outside our control
Funding the highest quality research	Quality of ICT services Efficiency and effectiveness of peer review and grant administration processes Policies underpinning achievement of scheme objectives	Stakeholder support for NCGP peer review and grant administration processes Demand for funding under the NCGP Quality of applications for funding received under the NCGP Preparedness of assessors to participate in peer review processes	Changes in policy environment
Assessing the quality, engagement and impact of research	Quality and robustness of the ERA and EI methodologies Effective implementation of the ERA and EI processes	Stakeholder support for the ERA and EI processes Quality of data and information submitted to ERA and EI	Changes in policy environment
Providing advice on research matters	Availability of appropriate information Policy development processes (including design, roles and accountabilities)	Participation in relevant Australian Government policy and program development activities Stakeholder engagement in policy development activities	Changes in policy environment

Figure 4: Performance measurement framework



Key Activity 1: Funding the highest quality research

Description

Under the NCGP, the ARC awards grants for the highest quality basic and applied research as assessed through a competitive peer review process. The NCGP provides funding for research projects, fellowships and awards, infrastructure acquisition and research centres and hubs. In 2018, the ARC administered funding for 4050 research projects; approximately 7300 assessors were involved in the agency's peer review system, providing nearly 23,000 assessments. Throughout the agency's grants administration and assessment processes, the ARC actively encourages research workforce diversity that reflects the composition of Australian society.



Intended outcomes

Immediate: Excellent research conducted by individuals and teams, collaborative research between university-based researchers and researchers in other sectors including industry, research training and career development, international collaboration, and research in priority areas.

Intermediate: Growth of knowledge and opportunities for innovation resulting from the outputs of ARC-funded research (for example, publications and patents).

Long-term: Growth in knowledge and innovation that drives economic progress and helps achieve environmental, health, social and cultural benefits for the Australian community.

Strategies

Strategies	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23
S1.1 Fund the highest quality basic and applied research across all disciplines, selected through competitive peer review, to build the scale of Australian research.	X	X	X	X
S1.2 Encourage national and international research partnerships between universities and government, industry and not-for-profit organisations.	X	X	X	X
S1.3 Maintain funding mechanisms that build capacity in, and foster efficient responses to, emerging research areas and Australian Government priorities.	X	X	X	X
S1.4 Improve and streamline NCGP processes, including through the use of innovative technologies such as RMS.	X	X	X	X
S1.5 Cultivate a system-wide culture of research integrity.	X	X	X	X

Performance measures

Outputs: Grants

Outcomes: The change or difference resulting from the initiatives over the following periods:

- Immediate
- Intermediate
- Long-term.

Performance criterion: The NCGP contributes to the growth of knowledge and innovation in Australia by funding: excellent research and researchers; research training and career development; international collaboration; and research in areas of priority. It produces outcomes that improve our fundamental understanding of the world and/or provide economic, environmental, social and/or cultural benefits to Australia.

Indicator	Metric/ Outcome	Methodology/ Data Source	Target	Baseline Data (1)
Volume/efficiency of activity and outputs—as indicated by:				
KA1.1 Length of <i>Linkage Projects</i> scheme application and assessment processes	Immediate	Quantitative Data mining from the ARC's data warehouse	100% of recommendations are made to the Minister within six months of submission	18–19: 100%
ARC funding supports excellent researchers—as indicated by:				
KA1.2 External recognition of the achievements of ARC-funded researchers	Immediate Intermediate	Qualitative Prizes and awards database	Prizes and awards are won by ARC-funded researchers	18–19: Met 17–18: Met
ARC funding supports research training and career development—as indicated by:				
KA1.3 Proportion of Discovery Program funding allocated to support early career researchers under the <i>Discovery Early Career Researcher Award</i> (DECRA) scheme	Immediate Intermediate	Quantitative Data mining from the ARC's data warehouse	Maintain proportion of Discovery Program funding allocated to support early career researchers under the DECRA scheme	18–19: 16.4% 17–18: 16.3% 16–17: 16.0% 15–16: 15.1%
KA1.4 Proportion of Linkage Program funding to support industrial research training under the <i>Industrial Transformation Training Centres</i> (ITTC) scheme	Immediate	Quantitative Data mining from the ARC's data warehouse	Maintain proportion of Linkage Program funding to support industrial research training under the ITTC scheme	18–19: 10.4% 17–18: 8.1% 16–17: 5.8% 15–16: 4.7%
KA1.5 Number of ARC-funded researchers who are fellows or awardees	Immediate	Quantitative Data mining from the ARC's data warehouse	Maintain	18–19: 320 17–18: 309 16–17: 320 15–16: 268

Indicator	Metric/ Outcome	Methodology/ Data Source	Target	Baseline Data (1)
KA1.6 Proportion of researchers on ARC-funded research projects who identified as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples	Immediate	Quantitative Data mining from the ARC's data warehouse	Maintain or increase	18–19: 1.1% 17–18: 1.2% 16–17: 1.0% 15–16: 0.9%
KA1.7 Proportion of researchers on ARC-funded research projects who are women	Immediate	Quantitative Data mining from the ARC's data warehouse	Maintain or increase	18–19: 31.0% 17–18: 29.2% 16–17: 26.7% 15–16: 25.9%
ARC funding supports international collaboration—as indicated by:				
KA1.8 Proportion of ARC-funded research that involves international collaboration	Immediate	Quantitative Data mining from NCGP applications	Maintain or increase the proportion of ARC research that involves international collaboration	18–19: 81.5% 17–18: 76.1% 16–17: 71.6% 15–16: 68.9%
ARC funding supports expanded engagement between researchers and end-users—as indicated by:				
KA1.9 Level of co-funding from partner organisations involved in ARC-funded research projects [Linkage Projects]	Immediate	Quantitative Data mining from <i>Linkage Projects</i> scheme applications	Maintain or increase the level of co-funding from partner organisations under the <i>Linkage Projects</i> scheme [\geq \$1 for every ARC dollar]	18–19: \$1.91 17–18: \$1.76 16–17: \$1.98 15–16: \$1.76
KA1.10 Proportion of participating organisations satisfied with research partnerships supported through Linkage Program [Linkage Projects]	Intermediate	Quantitative Data mining from <i>Linkage Projects</i> scheme final reports	Maintain stakeholder satisfaction with the research partnerships supported through <i>Linkage Projects</i> scheme research [with baseline based on four year rolling average]	18–19: 96.0% 17–18: 97.0% 16–17: 98.0% 15–16: 98.0%
ARC funding grows Australia's research capacity in priority research areas—as indicated by:				
KA1.11 Proportion of ARC-funded research projects that involve research in one of the Australian Government's Science and Research Priority areas	Immediate	Quantitative Data mining from NCGP applications	Maintain the proportion of ARC-funded research projects, fellowships and awards that involve research in one of the Australian Government's Science and Research Priority areas [with baseline based on four year rolling average]	18–19: 60.7% 17–18: 60.4% 16–17: 66.0%

Indicator	Metric/ Outcome	Methodology/ Data Source	Target	Baseline Data (1)
ARC funding grows knowledge and innovation—as indicated by:				
KA1.12 Proportion of established ARC Centres of Excellence demonstrating growth of knowledge and innovation	Intermediate Long-term	Quantitative Data mining from <i>ARC Centres of Excellence</i> scheme annual reports	100%	18–19: 100% 17–18: 100%
ARC-funded research produces outcomes of benefit—as indicated by:				
KA1.13 ARC-funded research projects meet their objectives	Intermediate	Quantitative/ Qualitative Data mining from NCGP final reports, and case studies from ARC's <i>Making a difference</i> publication	Evidence that ARC-funded research meets its objectives	Indicator being used for the first time in 19–20
KA1.14 NCGP funded projects, fellowships and awards contribute towards the growth of knowledge and innovation in Australia and produce outcomes that improve our fundamental understanding of the world and/or provide economic, environmental, social, health and/or cultural benefits to Australia	Intermediate Long-term	Qualitative Case studies from ARC's <i>Making a difference</i> publication	Evidence of impact arising from NCGP research projects, fellowships and awards improving our fundamental understanding of the world and/or providing economic, environmental, social, health and/or cultural benefits to Australia illustrated by published case studies	18–19: Met 17–18: Met 16–17: Met 15–16: Met

Notes

(1) Baseline data for 2018–19 reflect currently available information. These figures will be updated as further NCGP data are released.

Key Activity 2: Assessing the quality, engagement and impact of research

Description

The ARC administers two evaluation frameworks to assess the quality, engagement and impact of Australian research. ERA is an evaluation framework that identifies research excellence in Australian universities by comparing Australia's research effort against international benchmarks. ERA evaluates research quality using a combination of indicators and expert review by research evaluation committees. ERA 2018 involved 887 peer reviewers, who produced 3725 peer review assessments to support the evaluation.



42 Australian institutions participated in ERA 2018

The ARC is also responsible for administering the EI assessment. EI assesses the engagement of researchers with research end-users and shows how universities are translating their research into economic, social, environmental, cultural and other impacts. Assessments are made by expert panels of researchers and research end-users using narrative studies and supporting quantitative indicators. ERA and EI are internationally-recognised as employing best practice research evaluation methodologies and were developed in close collaboration with research sector stakeholders.

Intended outcomes

Immediate: Performance ratings and data on university research quality (through ERA) and university research engagement and impact (through EI) inform policy advice to the Australian Government, contribute to the strategic planning and reporting activities of universities and other stakeholders, and create incentives to improve research quality, engagement and impact.

Intermediate: Growth of knowledge and opportunities for innovation resulting from the public dissemination of ERA and EI outcomes (unique, evidence-based resources), to inform Australian Government research policy and university strategic decision-making, to encourage researchers to produce high-quality research with real world benefits, and to highlight the value of university research to the Australian public.

Long-term: Growth in knowledge and innovation that drives economic progress and helps achieve environmental, health, social and cultural benefits for the Australian community.

Strategies

Strategies		2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23
S2.1	Implement ERA and EI programs that are rigorous, minimise reporting burden and meet Australian Government objectives.	X	X	X	X
S2.2	Provide strategic policy advice on research quality, engagement and impact.	X	X	X	X
S2.3	Promote the understanding and use of ERA and EI data for stakeholder benefit across government, industry, the university sector and the Australian community.	X	X	X	X
S2.4	Engage with stakeholders on ERA and EI processes and outcomes.	X	X	X	X
S2.5	Review the ERA and EI programs to ensure they remain at the forefront of research evaluation and maintain ongoing stakeholder support.	X	—	—	—

Performance measures

Outputs: ERA evaluation and EI assessment reports

Outcomes: The change or difference resulting from the initiatives over the following periods:

- Immediate
- Intermediate
- Long-term.

Performance criterion: The ERA program, including the research quality evaluation framework and EI assessment framework, contributes to the growth of knowledge and innovation in Australia by providing assurance of the quality of research in Australia, encouraging internationally competitive research, and fostering impactful engagement within and beyond the research sector.

Indicator	Metric/ Outcome	Methodology/ Data Source	Target	Baseline Data
Outcomes—as indicated by:				
KA2.1 Use of ERA program data to inform Australian Government policies	Immediate Intermediate	Qualitative Information gathering	ERA program reports and activities inform Australian Government policy	18–19: Met 17–18: Met 16–17: Met 15–16: Met
KA2.2 Use of ERA program data to inform the strategic planning documents of eligible Australian higher education institutions	Immediate Intermediate	Quantitative/ Qualitative Survey and analysis of Australian university planning and reporting documents	ERA program reports and activities inform strategic planning at eligible Australian higher education institutions	18–19: Met 17–18: Met 16–17: Met 15–16: Met
KA2.3 ARC reporting (through the EI assessment) on Australian universities' engagement within and beyond the research sector	Intermediate	Quantitative/ Qualitative Analysis of EI assessment data	Will not be measured in 2019–20 (1)	18–19: Met
KA2.4 ARC reporting (through the EI assessment) on the translation of Australian university research into economic, social, environmental and other impacts	Intermediate Long-term	Quantitative/ Qualitative Analysis of EI assessment data and information	Will not be measured in 2019–20 (1)	18–19: Met
KA2.5 ARC reporting (through the ERA evaluations) on the quality of Australian university research	Intermediate Long-term	Quantitative Analysis of ERA evaluation data	Will not be measured in 2019–20 (1)	18–19: Met 17–18: n/a 16–17: n/a 15–16: Met

Notes

(1) Data not available in 2019–20, as ERA and EI are periodic exercises.

Key Activity 3: Providing advice on research matters

Description

The ARC provides policy advice to the Minister on matters related to research. A strong policy framework underpins the ARC's delivery of the NCGP, ERA and EI. The ARC also participates in and informs whole-of-government policy development activities relating to innovation, science and research. The quality of the ARC's policy advice is underpinned by the agency's research sector expertise, its data assurance protocols and the monitoring of global policy developments.



Intended outcomes

Immediate: Effective and efficient delivery of the ARC's programs, taking into account the context in which the ARC operates, the outcomes of evaluation and monitoring activities, and stakeholder requirements.

Intermediate: Growth of knowledge and opportunities for innovation resulting from facilitation of the highest quality research through ARC programs.

Long-term: Growth in knowledge and innovation that drives economic progress and helps achieve environmental, health, social and cultural benefits for the Australian community.

Strategies

Strategies		2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23
S3.1	Develop, review and promote policies to ensure the ARC continues to deliver on its purpose and the Australian Government's priorities.	X	X	X	X
S3.2	Monitor and evaluate program delivery outcomes.	X	X	X	X
S3.3	Participate in Australian Government policy development, and research and monitoring activities, as appropriate.	X	X	X	X
S3.4	Monitor and contribute to international developments in research activity.	X	X	X	X
S3.5	Ensure the ARC has appropriate policies and processes in place to protect the integrity of publicly funded research.	X	X	X	X
S3.6	Support the development of a sustainable and diverse research workforce through ARC policies and communications.	X	X	X	X
S3.7	Disseminate high quality strategic and policy advice to the Minister and the research sector to support a strong, sustainable and diverse research workforce and safeguard public confidence in the integrity and transparency of Australian research.	X	X	X	X
S3.8	Ensure that research classifications remain contemporary and reflect current practice through participation in the ANZSRC review.	X	—	—	—

Performance measures

Outputs: Policy advice

Outcomes: The change or difference resulting from the initiatives over the following periods:

- Immediate
- Intermediate
- Long-term.

Performance criterion: ARC policy advice contributes to the growth of knowledge and innovation in Australia by providing a robust framework for the administration of the NCGP, ERA and EI, and supporting the conduct of the highest quality research leading to outcomes of benefit for Australia.

Indicator	Metric/ Outcome	Methodology/ Data Source	Target	Baseline Data
Volume/efficiency of activity and outputs—as indicated by:				
KA3.1 Number of policies developed and reviewed	Activity	Quantitative Information gathering	n/a (1)	18–19: 6 17–18: 5
Outcomes—as indicated by:				
KA3.2 ARC policy advice reflecting Australian Government priorities and policies	Immediate	Qualitative Case studies	ARC policy advice reflects Australian Government priorities and policies	18–19: Met 17–18: Met 16–17: Met 15–16: Met
KA3.3 ARC policy advice supporting best practice research	Immediate Intermediate	Qualitative Case studies	ARC policy advice supports best practice research	18–19: Met 17–18: Met 16–17: Met 15–16: Met
KA3.4 Stakeholder engagement in ARC policy development activities (including international organisations and researchers)	Immediate Intermediate	Qualitative Case studies	Stakeholder engagement in ARC policy development activities	18–19: Met 17–18: Met 16–17: Met 15–16: Met
KA3.5 Stakeholder satisfaction with the quality of ARC policy advice	Immediate Intermediate	Qualitative Case studies	Stakeholders are satisfied with the quality of ARC policy advice	18–19: Met 17–18: Met 16–17: Met 15–16: Met

Notes

(1) n/a targets cannot be identified for some activity and output metrics as they are demand or need driven.

APPENDIX: ACRONYMS AND GLOSSARY

Acronyms

ANZSRC	Australian and New Zealand Standard Research Classification
ARC	Australian Research Council
ARC Act	<i>Australian Research Council Act 2001</i>
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
DECRA	Discovery Early Career Researcher Award
EI	Engagement and Impact
ERA	Excellence in Research for Australia
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
ITTC	Industrial Transformation Training Centres
NCGP	National Competitive Grants Program
RMS	Research Management System
SEER	System to Evaluate Excellence in Research

Glossary

Activities	What the ARC does with its inputs to fulfil its purpose
Applied research	Research that aims to address real-world problems by applying existing research theories or practices in a novel or innovative way
Basic research	Research that contributes to understanding the world through discoveries and the creation of new knowledge, theories and practices
Early career researcher	Researchers who have held a PhD or equivalent qualification for a period less than or equal to five years at the time of their application
Inputs	Resources for ARC activities
Outcomes	Benefits or changes to individuals or populations resulting from ARC activities
Outputs	Direct products of ARC activities, for example, grants
Partner Organisations	National or international organisations that satisfy the eligibility criteria for partner organisations under the NCGP including business, industry, not-for-profit, government and international higher education organisations
Peer review	Evaluation of research proposals by experts, usually in the same research discipline
Purpose	The strategic objective(s) that the agency intends to pursue over the reporting period
Science and Research Priorities	Nine research priority areas identified by the Australian Government which are food, soil and water, transport, cybersecurity, energy, resources, advanced manufacturing, environmental change and health



THE AUSTRALIAN RESEARCH COUNCIL

Contact details

Produced by: Australian Research Council
Location: 11 Lancaster Place, CANBERRA AIRPORT ACT 2609
Postal address: GPO Box 2702, CANBERRA ACT 2601
Telephone: +61 2 6287 6600
Facsimile: +61 2 6287 6601
Email: info@arc.gov.au (general enquiries)
Home page: www.arc.gov.au
Corporate plan: [www.arc.gov.au/news/publications/corporate plan](http://www.arc.gov.au/news/publications/corporate-plan)
Twitter: [@arc_gov_au](https://twitter.com/arc_gov_au)

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