



Australian Government

Department of Industry, Innovation,
Climate Change, Science, Research
and Tertiary Education

innovation.gov.au

National Collaborative Research Infrastructure Strategy

Program Guidelines

2013-14 – 2014-15

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1 Introduction

1.1 Intent of the National Collaborative Research Infrastructure Strategy (2013)

The intent of the National Collaborative Research Infrastructure Strategy (2013) is to ensure currently operational national, collaborative research infrastructure facilities most critical to support broader government policy agendas will continue to function while review and evaluation is undertaken to plan and manage strategic, long-term future funding and investments. This encompasses research infrastructure funded under the initial NCRIS program (NCRIS 2006) and the Super Science Initiative.

National collaborative research infrastructure is necessary to deliver high quality research and innovation outcomes, to improve national wellbeing and enable Australian researchers to address key national and global challenges.

The original National Collaborative Research Infrastructure Strategy (NCRIS 2006) investments were guided by the *2006 NCRIS Strategic Roadmap*. The Super Science Initiative investments were guided by the *2008 Strategic Roadmap for Research Infrastructure Investment*. Both Roadmaps were the result of extensive consultation with the research community, industry and government agencies at all levels, which identified Australia's medium-to-large research infrastructure requirements over a five to ten year period.

NCRIS 2006 and the Super Science Initiative adopted a strategic approach to the provision of research infrastructure to avoid unnecessary, overprovided or duplicated infrastructure, and to minimise gaps in infrastructure delivery.

1.2 Australian Government's role in research infrastructure funding

1.2.1 National, collaborative research infrastructure funding

National, collaborative research infrastructure is necessary to deliver high quality research and innovation outcomes, to improve national wellbeing and enable Australian researchers to address key national and global challenges.

It is internationally acknowledged that major national research infrastructure is at a scale that cannot be funded by business or individual research organisations¹, and that funding through cost recovery is not practical and can skew access in favour of host institutions². Consequently, national governments have a central role in providing support for research infrastructure programs. Since 2001, the Australian Government has provided a series of funding programs for large-scale research infrastructure, including the Major National Research Facilities Program (\$183 million over five years), the Systemic Infrastructure Initiative (\$246 million over five years), the National Collaborative Research Infrastructure Strategy (NCRIS - \$542 million over six years) and the Super Science Initiative (\$901 million over four years).

The fiscal stimulus funding provided through the Super Science Initiative has boosted the nation's research infrastructure capacity, equipped Australia to respond to societal challenges and established a key national asset.

1.2.2 National Research Investment Plan

In October 2012, the Australian Government endorsed the National Research Investment Plan³ which sets out a framework to guide and coordinate investment in research. The plan identifies the five fundamental elements required to develop a strong, sustainable national research fabric. Each of these elements is essential to the conduct of research and the absence of any one will severely reduce the effectiveness of the government's investment as a whole. Research infrastructure is one of these key elements.

1.2.3 Strategic Research Priorities

On 21 June 2013 the Australian Government released its Strategic Research Priorities⁴, 15 priorities under 5 national challenges for strategic research to drive investment in those areas which can help address Australia's most important economic, environmental and social challenges. Under the National Research Investment Plan, the 15 Priorities will be updated every three years to mobilise Australia's scientists and researchers and direct our research investment to meet the challenges of national importance.

The challenges addressed by the Strategic Research Priorities are:

- Living in a changing environment
- Promoting population health and wellbeing
- Managing food and water assets
- Securing Australia's place in a changing world

¹ *Large Facilities Roadmap 2010*, Research Councils UK, 2010.

² *2001 Major National Research Facilities (MNRF) Programme Evaluation*, DEST, 2006

³ <http://www.innovation.gov.au/Research/Pages/NationalResearchInvestmentPlan.aspx>

⁴ <http://www.innovation.gov.au/Research/Pages/StrategicResearchPriorities.aspx>

- Lifting productivity and economic growth

The NCRIS 2013 funding program will not reflect the Strategic Research Priorities. However, project level evaluations that will be undertaken during the NCRIS 2013 period will help build a body of evidence for future long-term national collaborative research infrastructure investment decisions. These decisions will take into account the Strategic Research Priorities.

2 Key Dates

Timeframe	Activity
Mid- July 2013	Department assesses all NCRIS and Super Science funded projects against eligibility criteria.
Mid-July 2013	Funding allocation model applied to eligible projects – eligible projects informed of outcomes.
By end July 2013	Lead agents complete consultations and develop proposals identifying activities to be undertaken and quantum of funds (to indicative maximum) required for each eligible project.
By end July	Funding agreement negotiations commence with eligible projects.
By end August 2013	Project Evaluation Framework published on website
By end September 2013	First deliverables under funding agreements received
By end September 2013	First payments made under NCRIS
By 1 October 2013	Project evaluations commence
By 31 December 2013	50% of funding agreements executed
By 31 March 2014	75% of funding agreements executed
By 31 May 2014	100% of funding agreements executed

3 NCRIS 2013 funding allocation

3.1 Purpose of the NCRIS 2013 funding allocation

The purpose of NCRIS 2013 is to:

- ensure the availability of national, collaborative research infrastructure established and operated under NCRIS 2006 and/or the Super Science Initiative prior to the 2013-14 Budget; and
- position the Australian Government to make long-term national, collaborative research infrastructure investment decisions by allowing time for complementary activities, including project level evaluations to identify improvements to project implementation, and consideration of the implementation of the Strategic Research Priorities.

It is **not** the purpose of NCRIS 2013 to supplant other Australian Government decisions concerning operational funding for specific research infrastructure projects or activities.

3.2 Scope of NCRIS 2013

The scope of NCRIS 2013 includes:

- the provision of funds to enable the operation and maintenance of existing national, collaborative research infrastructure established and operated under NCRIS 2006 and/or the Super Science Initiative prior to the 2013-14 Budget, from 1 July 2013 to 30 June 2015;
 - Up to \$180 million is available for this purpose; and
- the evaluation of NCRIS 2006 and Super Science projects funded and operated prior to the date of the 2013/14 Budget (14 May 2013).

The scope of NCRIS 2013 does **not** include:

- the expansion of the capacity and/or capability of existing national, collaborative research infrastructure established and operated under NCRIS and the Super Science Initiative prior to the 2013/14 Budget (see Section 3.4);
- the funding of research infrastructure not supported by NCRIS 2006 funding or the Super Science Initiative; or
- the implementation of the 2011 *Strategic Roadmap for Australian Research Infrastructure*.

3.3 Objectives of NCRIS 2013

The objectives of the NCRIS 2013 are to:

- enable the continued operation and maintenance of national collaborative research infrastructure projects established under NCRIS 2006 and/or the Super Science Initiative prior to the 2013/14 Budget; and
- evaluate the national collaborative research infrastructure projects funded and operated under the NCRIS 2006 and/or the Super Science Initiative prior to the 2013/14 Budget.

3.4 Use of NCRIS 2013 funds

The use of NCRIS 2013 funds is limited to the below:

- operational activities for eligible research infrastructure, including the provision of technical personnel to operate the infrastructure;
- maintenance of eligible research infrastructure, which may include routine replacement of equipment and plant at the end of its useful life;
- management, governance and administration activities required to ensure the national, collaborative research infrastructure project is undertaken in an efficient, effective and accessible manner; and
- the continuation of activities supported under NCRIS 2006 and/or the Super Science Initiative, including access subsidies, voucher programs, the purchase of access or time on international facilities, membership of international organisations related to research infrastructure, or the generation of data-as-infrastructure.

NCRIS 2013 funds **may not** be used for:

- capital works of any kind beyond routine maintenance;
- the expansion of the funding recipient's research infrastructure capacity or capability beyond that incidentally enabled as a result of maintenance of infrastructure;
- research activities, including the undertaking of research, or the engagement of personnel whose primary function is related to research rather the provision of research infrastructure;
- activities that are outside the scope of the project as it was operated under NCRIS and/or Super Science; or
- activities currently being funded by the Collaborative Research Infrastructure Scheme or other Eligible Provisions.

3.5 Process for determining funding

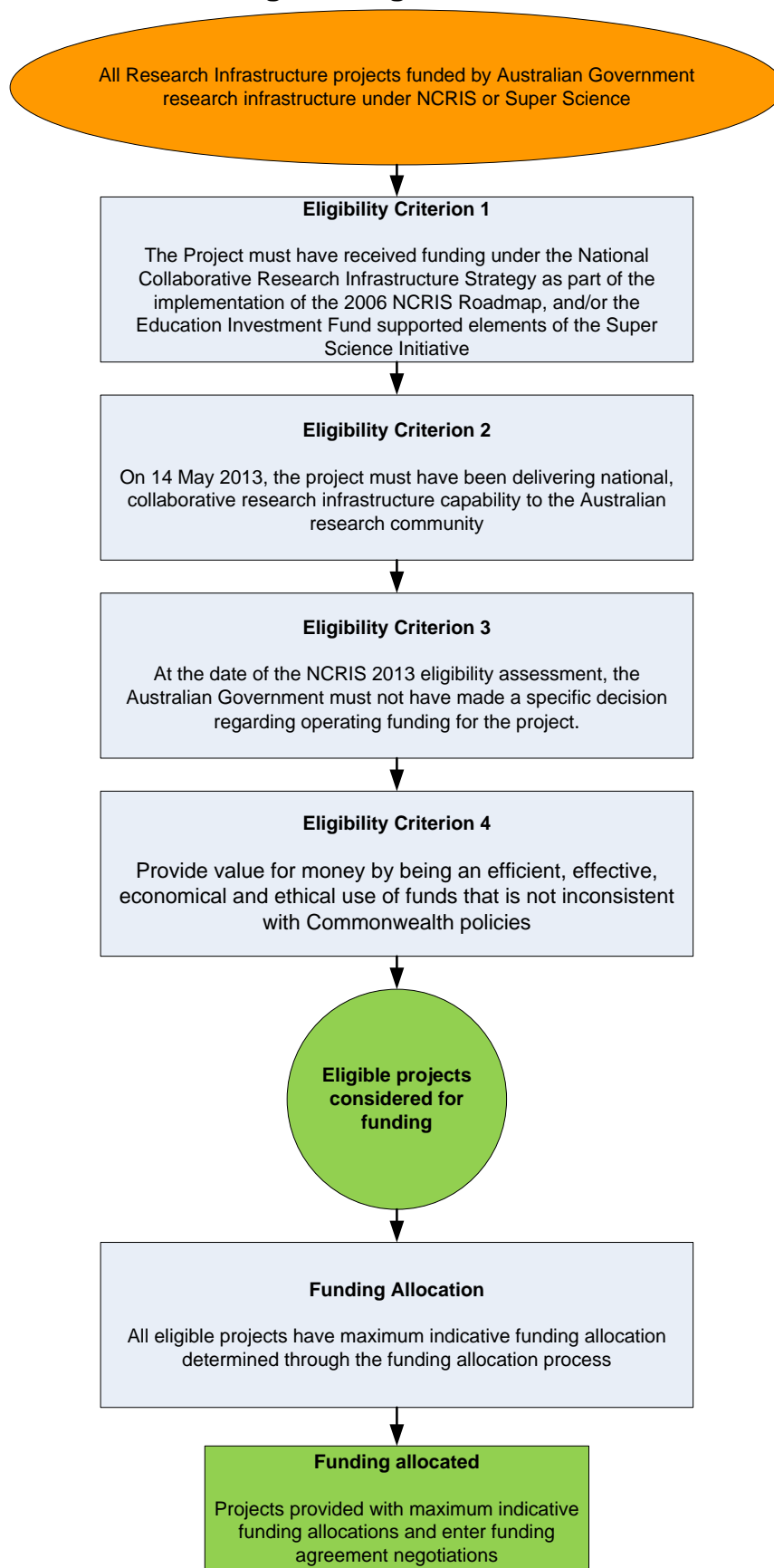


Figure 1 - NCRIS Funding Determination Flowchart

4 Eligibility

4.1 Eligibility Criteria

To be considered for funding, research infrastructure projects must meet the following eligibility criteria:

1. The Project must have received funding under the National Collaborative Research Infrastructure Strategy as part of the implementation of the 2006 NCRIS Roadmap, and/or the Education Investment Fund supported elements of the Super Science Initiative.
2. On 14 May 2013, the project must have been delivering national, collaborative research infrastructure capability to the Australian research community.
3. At the date of the NCRIS 2013 eligibility assessment, the Australian Government must not have made a specific decision regarding operating funding for the project.
4. Provide value for money by being an efficient, effective, economical and ethical use of funds that is not inconsistent with Commonwealth policies.

4.2 Assessment of eligibility

Eligibility will be determined by the Department using information held by the Department.

Eligibility will be determined using the Eligibility Assessment Form at Attachment A.

All research infrastructure projects that had a funding agreement with the Australian Government under NCRIS as part of the 2006 NCRIS Roadmap, or the Super Science Initiative will have eligibility assessments completed. **Projects should not submit any information to be assessed against the eligibility criteria.**

5 Funding allocation process

5.1 Use of funding allocation model

NCRIS 2013 funding will be allocated on the basis of a funding allocation formula, subject to negotiations set out in Section 5.3.2. This provides a simple, transparent, objective and consistent basis for determining maximum indicative funding allocations as the basis for commencing negotiations around final funding amounts in a timely manner. It is also consistent with the policy intent and two year timeframe for NCRIS 2013.

The process to finalise funding amounts is set out in Section 3.5, and includes:

1. Identification of an indicative maximum funding amount using a formula
2. Consultation by Lead Agents to developed proposed activities and costs
3. Negotiation between the Department and Lead Agent to determine activities to be undertaken and associated costs
4. Execution of funding agreement and subsequent project implementation and management.

5.2 Indicative maximum funding allocation model

Work conducted by the OECD⁵ has identified that the benchmark annual operating expense across major research infrastructures is approximately 10% of their project establishment cost. Using this as a base, the indicative maximum funding allocation model for NCRIS 2013 has three core principles:

1. for the period 1 July 2013 to 30 June 2015, all eligible projects should be provided with total Australian Government support as close as possible to this internationally recognised measure;
2. allocations under NCRIS 2013 must take into account Australian Government funds allocated under CRIS and other Eligible Provisions for the period 1 July 2013 to 30 June 2015; and
3. the minimum funding level for eligible projects is the *pro-rata* level of funding provided under CRIS to allow operations to continue from 1 January 2015 to 30 June 2015.

5.2.1 Establishment operational factor (EOF) model

The formula to determine the EOF-based allocation is:

$$EOF = \text{Project Establishment cost} \times \text{Operational benchmark} \\ \times \# \text{years NCRIS 2013 operates for} - \text{Eligible Provisions}$$

The EOF model takes into account the project establishment cost, the international operational benchmark, the duration of the NCRIS 2013 funding and all Eligible Provisions for the operation of the project over the NCRIS 2013 period:

- Project establishment cost is defined as the total funding the project received from the Australian Government under NCRIS and Super Science. NCRIS funding will be weighted by a factor of 1.5, representing the longevity of NCRIS projects as compared to Super Science

⁵ Establishing Large International Research Infrastructures: Issues and Options (2010) OECD-GSF. <http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/17/22/47027330.pdf>

project, and the fact that NCRIS funding terminated in 2011, resulting in a higher deferred maintenance backlog in these projects than the relatively newer Super Science projects.

- The Operational Benchmark is defined in the referenced paper at 10% of project establishment cost. For NCRIS 2013, the EOF model will begin with a figure of 10%; this level will be adjusted if required to ensure the sum of the maximum indicative funding allocation for all eligible projects does not exceed \$180 million.
- NCRIS 2013 operates for two years.
- Recognising the holistic approach taken by the Australian Government to funding national, collaborative research infrastructure, any funding already committed to the operation of eligible infrastructure from 1 July 2013 to 30 June 2015 will be deducted from the initial allocation. These are referred to as Eligible Provisions and include CRIS funds and other specific co-investment allocated to the operations of the project. This will help to ensure NCRIS 2013 results in additional support for researchers and does not shift costs already committed to operating projects back onto NCRIS 2013.

5.2.2 CRIS pro-rata (CPR) model

The formula to determine the CPR is:

$$CPR = \frac{\text{Project Awarded CRIS Grant Amount}}{3}$$

The CPR model takes into account the total quantum of a project's awarded CRIS grant, and extrapolates a figure for 24 months of support over the period of NCRIS 2013, based on the CRIS support over 18 months.

5.3 Determining actual funding

5.3.1 Consultation

Once an indicative maximum funding allocation has been calculated, the Lead Agent for each eligible project will be:

- informed of the project's indicative maximum funding allocation;
- required to consult with project partners and its user community as to how to best utilise this funding; and
- required to develop a draft Implementation Plan setting out how the funding could be utilised in line with these Program Guidelines, the previous activities undertaken by the project, and the needs of the relevant research community.

Lead agents will have two calendar months from the date they are sent advice regarding the indicative maximum funding amount for a project to provide the Department with an Implementation Plan. The Implementation Plan template will be provided to projects when informed of their indicative maximum funding allocation.

5.3.2 Negotiation

On receipt of a properly completed Implementation Plan, the Department will consider the proposed activities and costs, and, if it considers necessary, negotiate with the Lead Agent as required. The Department will be guided by the NCRIS Principles at Attachment B when considering the proposed activities and costs. The Department will ensure that the Implementation Plan meets

the requirements detailed in these Program Guidelines, which may result in the reduction of the final agreed funding allocation compared to the maximum indicative funding allocation.

Once agreement is reached between the Department and Lead Agent on activities and costs, a funding agreement will be negotiated using the template for NCRIS 2013. The template will be provided early in the process to enable fair consideration by the Lead Agent, and appropriate consultation by the Lead Agent.

5.4 Provision of funding

Funds will be provided to Lead Agents on the acceptance by the Department of identified deliverables. The deliverables, and all other contractual arrangements, will be set out in a funding agreement between the Department and the lead agent. See Section 20 for more detail on funding arrangements.

Lead Agents will be required to enter into suitable arrangements with projects partners and other parties.

5.5 Under allocation of funding

Should the sum of actual funding allocations under the model be less than the quantum of funds available, the Department may increase the amount available to specific funding recipients should need be demonstrated.

5.6 Outcome of the funding allocation model

In line with the Commonwealth Grants Guidelines, the Department will publish a complete list of funding allocated under NCRIS 2013 on its website at www.innovation.gov.au. Indicative allocations will not be published.

6 Project evaluations

6.1 Intent of the evaluations

Evaluation of NCRIS 2006 and Super Science projects is a requirement under the NCRIS 2013, and will complement the 2009 NCRIS program evaluation.

The main purpose of the project evaluations is to determine the effectiveness of the implementation of national collaborative research infrastructure projects funded under NCRIS 2006 and the Super Science Initiative, enabling the Department to learn lessons from its previous activities and implement better practices in any future national, collaborative research infrastructure program.

Note: Resourcing constraints may lead to the Department evaluating only a subset of all projects that receive NCRIS 2013 funding.

6.2 Evaluation Framework

The National Collaborative Research Infrastructure Project Evaluation Framework (Evaluation Framework) will provide the basis for the project evaluations, and may include the following elements:

- matters to be addressed;
- stages of the evaluations; and
- methodology/ies.

The Evaluation Framework is currently under development, and will be provided to projects to be evaluated.

6.3 Matters that may be addressed

Matters that may be addressed in project evaluations include:

- strategic intent, and in particular project alignment to key policies;
- selection and establishment process, including the effectiveness of facilitation, and selection of participants and lead institutions;
- implementation arrangements including governance, planning and reporting, access, pricing policies, the evolution of the project over time and the impact or relevance of policy decisions taken after the commencement of each project; and
- outcomes against the objectives of each project, the services delivered and the satisfaction of stakeholders with them and legacy operational capacity post project funding.

6.4 Timeframes

Proposed timeframes for the stages of the projects evaluations are:

- framework developed by end August 2013, including consultations;
- evaluations commence from 1 October 2013, subject to resourcing constraint impacts on number and scheduling of evaluations; and
- evaluations completed by 31 March 2014.

6.5 Evaluation a requirement

Agreeing to be evaluated will be a requirement in all funding agreements for NCRIS 2013. The exact nature of the evaluations, and the requirements on projects selected to be evaluated, will be described in the Evaluation Framework.

7 Links to other funding programs

7.1 NCRIS 2006

NCRIS 2006 was an initiative that aimed to bring greater strategic direction and coordination to national research infrastructure investments. Funding of \$542 million over seven years from 2004-05 to 2010-11 to provide researchers with access to major research facilities by supporting infrastructure and networks necessary for world-class research. NCRIS terminated on 30 June 2011.

Projects funded as part of the NCRIS 2006 form one of the two predecessor pools of national, collaborative research infrastructure projects to be considered for eligibility under the NCRIS 2013. NCRIS 2006 is the direct predecessor to NCRIS 2013.

7.2 Super Science Initiative

Through the Education Investment Fund under the Super Science Initiative, \$901 million was invested in cutting-edge research infrastructure over 2009-10 to 2012-13 to give Australia's top researchers the tools they need to get on with the job in three areas of world-leading scientific capability: space science and astronomy; marine and climate science; and future industries. The infrastructure projects funded under the Super Science initiative were identified as priorities in the *2008 Strategic Roadmap for Australian Research Infrastructure*, released in September 2008. Super Science funding terminated on 30 June 2013.

Projects funded under the Education Investment Fund component of the Super Science Initiative form one of the two predecessor pools of national, collaborative research infrastructure projects to be considered for eligibility under NCRIS 2013.

7.3 Collaborative Research Infrastructure Scheme

The Collaborative Research Infrastructure Scheme was established as a temporary measure to allow priority research infrastructure projects funded under NCRIS 2006 and/or the Super Science Initiative to remain operational during the 2013 and 2014 calendar years. Funding of \$60 million has been redirected from other *Higher Education Support Act 2003* research block grants.

CRIS funding was provided to projects that will also to be considered for eligibility under the NCRIS 2013 program. Therefore, CRIS funding amounts will be taken into account in NCRIS 2013 funding models.

7.4 Education Investment Fund competitive funding rounds

The Education Investment Fund (EIF) is one of three Nation-building funds established by the Government, along with the Building Australia Fund and the Health and Hospitals Fund. The role of the EIF is to build a modern, productive, internationally competitive Australian economy by supporting world-leading, strategically-focused infrastructure investments that will transform Australian tertiary education and research.

Five competitive rounds have been held under the EIF: EIF Round 1 (outcomes announced December 2008); EIF Round 2 (outcomes announced May 2009); EIF Round 3 (outcomes announced mid-2010);

and the EIF Sustainability Round (outcomes announced mid-2010), and the Regional Priorities Round (outcomes announced late 2012 – mid 2013).

NCRIS 2013 funding has no relationship to activities or projects funded under the Education Investment Fund competitive funding rounds. Projects, or elements of projects, funded under EIF competitive round funding agreements will not be considered in the NCRIS 2013 funding allocation models. Projects, or elements of projects, funded under EIF competitive round funding agreements are not considered eligible activities for NCRIS 2013 expenditure unless the project can demonstrate:

1. that the project, or element of a project, funded under an EIF competitive round is national collaborative research infrastructure; and
2. that provision for maintaining the operations for this project element is not incorporated in the undertakings provided under the EIF competitive round stage 2 application form.

Note: A project's funding allocation will not change regardless of it successfully demonstrating points 1 and 2.

7.5 Non-exclusion from any future funding

Any future program supporting national, collaborative research infrastructure will be developed independently to NCRIS 2013, and receiving funding from NCRIS 2013 will not necessarily have any bearing on eligibility or any other provision associated with any future funding program.

8 Roles and Responsibilities

8.1 Minister

The NCRIS program is administered by the Minister for innovation, Industry, Science and Research.

The Minister is responsible for:

- Determining the objectives of the NCRIS program;
- Approving the eligibility criteria for the NCRIS program;
- Approving the funding allocation mechanism for the NCRIS program; and
- Issuing program guidelines.

8.2 The Department

The Department of Industry, Innovation, Climate Change, Science, Research and Tertiary Education will:

- Provide advice to the Minister;
- Deal fairly with lead agents and their nominated representatives;
- Manage the development and implementation of the NCRIS 2013, including application of the eligibility criteria and funding allocation mechanism, including determining initial and final funding allocations;
- Request further information from eligible projects as required;
- Undertake project-level evaluations;
- Approve final funding amounts and payments; and
- Negotiate, monitor and manage funding agreements for funded projects.

The Minister has delegated the following responsibilities to the Department:

- Application of the eligibility criteria and determining projects to be entered into the funding allocation process (see Section 4);
- Application of the funding allocation model and the determination of indicative maximum funding allocation (See Section 5);
- Negotiation and execution of funding agreements;
- Negotiation and approval actual final funding amounts for each eligible project;
- Making payments to projects receiving funding; and
- Administration of the program.

8.3 Lead agents

Lead agents are the organisations that the Department has executed a funding agreement with for a specific project. Lead agents and their nominated representatives will:

- Deal fairly with the Department;
- Consult with relevant stakeholder where required, particularly governance and management partners and project participants and subcontractors; and
- Deal fairly with governance and management partners and project participants and subcontractors.

9 Funding Arrangements

9.1 Conditions of Funding

Funding is provided in accordance with and subject to the requirements outlined in the *Financial Management and Accountability Regulations Act 1997 (FMA Act)* and the *Financial Management and Accountability Regulations 1997 (FMA Regulations)*.

In addition to the outcomes of the project to be achieved, the payment arrangements, financial and reporting requirements and acquittal of grants processes, the following are some key conditions that may be included in the agreements:

- funding must be spent within agreed timeframes set out in the funding or project agreements;
- research infrastructure funded through this program must be operated in a national, collaborative manner consistent with the NCRIS Principles (see Attachment B);
- projects must develop an access and pricing policy for the research infrastructure funded under this program;
- funding can only be expended on operational and maintenance costs as detailed in section 5.3 of the program guidelines;
- all Australian Government monies must be placed in a high interest bearing account where feasible and interest earned must be both expended on the project and reported to the Department,
- the distribution of financial benefits arising from the projects will be clearly articulated;
- funding recipients will be expected to participate in project level evaluations and report at regular intervals;
- the grant must be spent in accordance with the conditions of the funding agreement;
- projects must not make large-scale changes to project governance arrangements without prior written consent from the Department; and
- any unexpended funds including interest accrued on grant monies at the end of the project are to be returned to the Australian Government.

The list above is indicative only and is not intended to be exhaustive. In finalising the terms of the funding agreement, the funding agreement takes precedence if it is inconsistent with these Guidelines.

9.2 Performance Reporting

9.2.1 Program level reporting

Projects receiving funding will be required to report against program level performance indicators developed by the Department. These indicators may include, but are not limited to:

- User numbers;
- Number of research projects supported;
- Number of collaborative agreements; and
- Number of positions created/sustained.

A template for program level reporting will be made available to funding recipients before the due date of the first project reporting deliverable.

9.2.2 Project level reporting

Monitoring and reporting requirements will be specified in the funding agreement and will be tailored to suit the individual project.

Grant recipients will be required to provide annual business plans, annual reports, and a final report on the conduct of the project as specified in the funding agreement. Grant recipients are required to take a risk-mitigation based approach to project management and to advise the program delegate if they are experiencing significant issues.

Reports will, among other things, detail project outcomes, short and long-term benefits/gains (quantitative and qualitative) and overall financial performance. This will support an evaluation of the overall benefits delivered by the project and in turn the program. The Department may select institutions or funded projects for site visits and/or program audits.

9.3 Variations to funding agreements

Requests to vary the funding agreement (for example, extensions to a project's timeframe or changes in scope) must be made to the program delegate specified in the relevant agreement. Approval of variations to a funding agreement is at the discretion of the relevant Minister or the Minister's delegate. All variations to agreements would be by written agreement of the parties.

9.4 Goods and Services Tax

The total funding payable to the funding recipient by the Australian Government does not generally include an amount to cover GST. Applicants are advised to consider the likely implications of the *New Tax System (Goods and Services Tax) Act 1999* (GST Act) on the funding provided by the Australian Government.

Applicants are encouraged to seek their own advice on the treatment of funding under the agreement.

Where GST is payable, the Australian Government will increase the funds payable to the funding recipient by the amount of GST that is payable for the purposes of the GST Act. For example, if payment due at a particular milestone is \$1.0 million and GST is payable on this amount, then the Australian Government will increase the payment amount provided to the funding recipient to \$1.1 million.

10 Additional Information

10.1 Freedom of Information

All documents in the possession of DIICCSRTE with regard to NCRIS are subject to the Freedom of Information Act 1982 (“FOI Act”). Decisions regarding requests for access will be made by the authorised FOI decision-maker in accordance with the requirements of the FOI Act.

The decision-maker will consult with officers within the Department and relevant third parties before deciding whether any exemptions apply and whether to provide access to the documents or to parts of the documents.

All FOI requests are to be referred to the FOI Coordinator, Legal Services Branch, Corporate Division, in DIICCSRTE’s National Office.

By post:

FOI Coordinator
Legal Branch
GPO Box 9839
CANBERRA ACT 2601

By email:

FOI@innovation.gov.au

10.2 The *Privacy Act 1988*

The Department is bound in administering the NCRIS 2013 program by the provisions of the Privacy Act 1988. Section 14 of the Privacy Act contains the Information Privacy Principles (IPPs) which prescribe the rules for handling personal information.

Persons, bodies and organisations contracted by the Department to assist in the implementation and administration of the NCRIS 2013 program must abide by the IPPs and the Privacy Act when handling personal information collected for the purposes of that program. In brief, those persons, bodies and organisations must ensure that:

- personal information is collected in accordance with IPPs 1-3,
- suitable storage arrangements, including appropriate filing procedures are in place,
- suitable security arrangements exist for all records containing personal information,
- access to a person’s own personal information held by the organisation is made available to the person at no charge,
- records are accurate, up-to-date, complete and not misleading,
- where a record is found to be inaccurate, the correction is made,
- where a person requests that a record be amended because it is inaccurate but the record is found to be accurate, the details of the request for amendment are noted on the record,
- the personal information is only to be used for the purposes for which it was collected, unless an exception under IPP 10 applies, and
- personal information is only disclosed in accordance with IPP 11.

10.3 Privacy complaints and advice

Complaints about breaches of privacy should be referred to:

Principal Legal Counsel
Administrative Law Section
Legal Branch
DIICCSRTE
GPO Box 9839
CANBERRA ACT 2601

Privacy complaints can be made directly to the Federal Privacy Commissioner, however the Federal Privacy Commissioner will generally prefer that the relevant Department be given an opportunity to deal with the complaint in the first instance.

10.4 Conflict of Interest

A conflict of interest arises where a person makes a decision or exercises a power in a way that may be, or may be perceived to be, influenced by either material personal interest (financial or non-financial) or material personal associations.

Department and Agency staff are bound by the Department's Conflict of Interest and Insider Trading policy available at www.innovation.gov.au.

Departmental officers involved in the eligibility assessment process will be required to declare any perceived or actual conflict of interest or confidentiality issues before undertaking an assessment. Potential funding recipients are required to disclose to the Department in the Implementation Plan, any situation or relationship which may constitute an actual or potential conflict of interest. Where a conflict of interest is identified, the potential funding recipient should specify how they propose to address the issue and manage the potential for conflicts to arise.

Notified conflicts of interest will be recorded by the Department. For funding recipients with a noted conflict of interest, the conflict of interest will be managed through the negotiation of the Funding Agreement.

10.5 Scope of projects

The Department may, at its absolute discretion, decide the scope of activities to be undertaken in a project. For example, a project's scope may be expanded to cover pre-existing research infrastructure that is to be funded.

10.6 Definitions

The following definitions are to be used in conjunction with the terms that appear on the program guidelines. Terms may be capitalised or non-capitalised. For any inconsistencies with other documents, please refer to Section 10.7.

Assessment Framework	The NCRIS Project Eligibility Assessment Framework
Collaborative Research Infrastructure Strategy	An interim funding measure approved in 2012 to keep priority research infrastructure projects operational over 1 July 2013-

	31 December 2014 at survival levels. Funding was reallocated out of other <i>Higher Education Support Act 2003</i> Research Block Grants.
Department	The Department of Industry, Innovation, Climate Change, Science, Research and Tertiary Education
Eligible Provisions	Existing, specific provisions made for operation of a project over the NCRIS 2013 period. Includes funding provided under the Collaborative Research Infrastructure Scheme and undertakings made to directly continue a project's operation. Co-investments linked to another program (such as CRIS) are not eligible provisions.
Eligible Project	A project that has been assessed against and meets both of the Eligibility Criteria described in the Program Guidelines.
Funding Agreement	An agreement made between the Commonwealth, as represented by the Department, and a Lead Agent, to undertake a set of activities over a prescribed period for a prescribed amount of funds.
Lead Agent	The non-Department party to a Funding Agreement.
National, Collaborative Research Infrastructure	This term, and any variants, refers to Projects that incorporate all the following characteristics: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is available to researchers outside the Project and Project Partners with minimal barriers to access; • Has a primary focus on delivering the project outputs to the Australian research community; and • Operates research infrastructure (including data infrastructure) on a collaborative, national, non-exclusive basis
NCRIS	National Collaborative Research Infrastructure Strategy
NCRIS 2006	This term refers to the \$542m of NCRIS funding announced in the 2004-05 Budget.
NCRIS 2013	This term refers to the \$185.9m of NCRIS funding announced in the 2013-14 Budget.
NCRIS Project Eligibility Assessment Form	The form to be used by Assessment Officers to complete an assessment of eligibility for NCRIS funding.
Program	Synonym for NCRIS 2013
Program Guidelines	The NCRIS 2013 Program Guidelines (this document)
Super Science Initiative	A package of projects, including some funded from the Education Investment Fund, announced in the 2009/10 Budget.

10.7 Review of decisions and external review

In the first instance, if an applicant is dissatisfied with the way their application was dealt with, they should set out their concerns in writing and send them to:

Head of Division
Science and Research Division

If, subsequent to consideration by the Head of Division, Science and Research Division, an applicant is dissatisfied with the way their application was dealt with by the Department, they can approach the Commonwealth Ombudsman's office for external review of the administrative actions of the Department.

Applicants may be able to seek judicial review of decisions under the Administrative Decisions (Judicial Review) Act 1977 or the common law, and should seek their own advice in relation to this.

10.8 Hierarchy of decision documentation

Any inconsistency between these Guidelines and any other decision making documents are resolved in the following hierarchical order:

1. *NCRIS Program Guidelines 2013*
2. *NCRIS Procedures Manual 2013*
3. *NCRIS Project Eligibility Assessment Framework*
4. *NCRIS Project Evaluation Framework*
5. All non-decision making documents

10.9 Web-based reporting of grants

Within 14 days of execution of a Funding Agreement with the Commonwealth, the Department will report details regarding the award of each grant on its website, as per the requirements of *Finance Circular 2013/02: Grants - Reporting Requirements*.

10.10 Further Information

Information on NCRIS and other research infrastructure funding programs is available on the Department's website - www.innovation.gov.au/researchinfrastructure

ATTACHMENT A – NCRIS PROJECT ELIGIBILITY ASSESSMENT FORM

NCRIS Project Eligibility Assessment Form

This assessment form is to be used in conjunction with the NCRIS Project Eligibility Assessment Framework and the *NCRIS Program Guidelines 2013*.

Project Information:

Project name: (common)	
Project name: (announcement)	NCRIS:
	Super Science:
Lead Agent:	

Eligibility assessment

Criterion 1 - The Project must have received funding under the National Collaborative Research Infrastructure Strategy as part of the implementation of the 2006 NCRIS Roadmap, and/or the Education Investment Fund component of the Super Science Initiative

Does the project meet criterion 1? Yes/no
Justify the statement: (limit 100 words)

Criterion 2 – On 14 May 2013, the project must currently be delivering national, collaborative research infrastructure capability to the Australian research community.

Does the project meet criterion 2? Yes/no
Justify the statement: (limit 100 words)

Criterion 3 – At the date of the NCRIS eligibility assessment, the Australian Government must not have made a decision regarding operating funding for the research infrastructure.

Does the project meet criterion 3? Yes/no

Justify the statement: (limit 100 words)

Criterion 4 – Does the project provide value for money by being an efficient, effective, economical and ethical use of funds that is not inconsistent with Commonwealth policies.

Does the project meet criterion 4? Yes/no

Justify the statement: (limit 100 words)

Final eligibility

Is the project eligible for funding consideration under the NCRIS 2013 funding program?

Yes , the project is eligible/ No , the project is rendered ineligible under Criterion X.

Assessment Personnel

Assessor	Approver
Assessor name:	Approver name:
Position and team:	Position and team:
Date assessed:	Date approved:
Assessor signed:	Approver signed:

ATTACHMENT B – NCRIS PRINCIPLES

The key principles underpinning NCRIS are that:

- Australia's investment in research infrastructure should be planned and developed with the aim of maximising the contributions of the R&D system to economic development, national security, social wellbeing and environmental sustainability;
- Infrastructure resources should be focussed in areas where Australia is, or has the potential to be, world-class (in both discovery and application driven research) and provide international leadership;
- Major infrastructure should be developed on a collaborative, national, nonexclusive basis. Infrastructure funded through NCRIS should serve the research and innovation system broadly, not just the host/funded institutions. Funding and eligibility rules should encourage collaboration and coinvestment. It should not be the function of NCRIS to support institutional level (or even small-scale collaborative) infrastructure;
- Access is a critical issue in the drive to optimise Australia's research infrastructure. In terms of NCRIS funding there should be as few barriers as possible to accessing major infrastructure for those undertaking meritorious research;
- Due regard be given to the whole-of-life costs of major infrastructure, with funding available for operational costs where appropriate; and
- The Strategy should seek to enable the fuller participation of Australian researchers in the international research system.