NEW CRC-P GUIDELINES – WHAT HAS CHANGED?

New guidelines for Round 6 of the CRC-P Program have been developed in accordance with the Streamlining Government Grants Administration Agenda which is designed to bring government grant programs in line with agreed whole of government terminology, templates and processes. Consistency across government programs will enable businesses to more easily apply for and enter into grant agreements for government programs.

The changes for Round 6 are relatively minor and largely administrative in nature. They do not change the scope or intent of the program. The key changes are:

- Introduction of the concepts of ‘eligible expenditure’ and ‘eligible special purpose expenditure’ to replace the previous terminology ‘Commonwealth funded activities’ and ‘participant funded activities’ which more closely align with whole of government terminology.
- Introduction of a minimum grant amount of $100,000. Based on program data to date setting a minimum threshold of $100,000 will help to deliver projects that represent the best value for money in the context of the objectives and outcomes of the program.
- Replacing the terminology ‘participant’ with ‘partner’ for consistency with other government programs.
- Streamlining and simplification of merit criteria to assist with the merit assessment of applications. Note the vast majority of the sub criteria from the previous guidelines has been mapped through to the new merit criteria.
- Medical Research Institutes are now considered research organisations and can therefore satisfy the research organisation eligibility participation requirement.
- Greater detail is provided in the guidelines, and subsequently required in applications, on eligible expenditure items for consistency with other government programs.
- Grant payments, other than the initial payment, will be paid in arrears based on eligible expenditure and eligible in-kind contributions.
- Staff in-kind contributions will now be based on a maximum value of $150,000 per financial year plus up to an additional 30% for associated on costs.

The CRC Projects Round 6 Grant Opportunity Guidelines apply to applicants and grantees awarded in Round 6 only. Previous grantees are subject to the relevant CRC-P Program guidelines that the CRC-P was awarded under. New grant opportunity guidelines will be published for each CRC-P selection round.
WHAT ACTIVITIES ARE ELIGIBLE?

CRC-P grant funds must only be spent on eligible expenditure activities as defined in your grant agreement. Your total project value may also include eligible special purpose expenditure. Eligible special purpose expenditure contributes to your total project value but is not included in the calculation of your grant amount. You cannot spend grant funds on these activities.

Further details are available in the CRC Projects Round 6 Grant Opportunity Guidelines:

- For guidance on eligible expenditure, see appendix C.
- For guidance on in-kind contributions, see appendix D.
- For guidance on eligible special purpose expenditure, see appendix E.
- For guidance on ineligible expenditure, see appendix F.

HOW DO I APPLY FOR A CRC PROJECT?

CRC Project applications must be submitted online through the application portal. The link to the portal is available on the CRC Projects page at business.gov.au.

You can only create and submit an application during an open selection round. The opening and closing dates and times for each selection round will be published on business.gov.au. Please remember that any specified times refer to Canberra time, whether AEST or AEDT.

Before you begin an application it is strongly advised that you familiarise yourself with the CRC Projects Round 6 Grant Opportunity Guidelines and the various CRC Projects Fact Sheets applicable for Round 6. All are available on business.gov.au.

Ensure you allow ample time to complete the online application – do not leave completion and submission of the application to the last minute. Submitting by the due time is your responsibility and incomplete or late applications will not be accepted.

Applications can only be submitted via the portal once all mandatory requirements have been met. An incorrectly completed application will not be able to be submitted. The portal will alert you to any mandatory fields that have not been completed, or in some cases, if information provided is invalid or unacceptable. Correcting such errors can be time-consuming, particularly against a looming deadline.

Please note that some browsers provide a better user experience than others when using the application portal. Chrome, Firefox or Safari will provide the best user interface, as they support on-screen text box sizing. Other browsers, including Internet Explorer and Microsoft Edge, have limitations in this regard and may only display a few lines of input text at a time.

It is possible to invite other parties to assist with completing the online application, for example the other partners collaborating on the Project. This is done through the application portal using the ‘Participants’ button on the ‘Application Summary’ page accessed from the ‘My Applications’ screen. Note that, once added, other parties can see all elements of the application except the ‘Applicant Financials’ screen.

Key tips when completing your application:

- SAVE regularly, the Continue button will make various checks on that screen’s data input, and move you on to the next screen, but it does NOT save your work. (Good practice would be to save every time you continue to a new screen, as well as within screens if they include significant input of data).
- Text entry fields DO NOT accept formatted text (all formatting will be lost if formatted text, including bold, italics, dot points, images etc is copied into these fields).
- Variable character limits apply to text entry fields (please note the relevant character limits within the information bubbles for each relevant question contained in the application).
- Use the CRC Project Application Financial Workbook to ensure that your project finances balance. No detailed checks are made on the proposed finances in the portal and it is the applicant’s responsibility to ensure that all financial information is accurate and that inputs balance with expenditures.
- Date fields require a date in the format dd/mm/yyyy.
All numerical value input fields require a value to be input (even if there is an existing grey zero by default).

When your application is submitted, you will see a screen confirming the submission which includes the submission time, date and a reference number. The status of your application in the portal will change from ‘draft’ to ‘submitted’.

Your submitted application will be able to be viewed through the screens in the portal, but you will no longer be able to amend the application. A submitted application can be withdrawn, but it cannot be retrieved or amended.

Submitted applications will be checked for eligibility and compliance. Compliant applications will proceed to assessment, and will be referred to the CRC Advisory Committee, an independent committee, to assess the merit of the application against the merit criteria and other applications.

WHAT IS A PARTNER DECLARATION?

The Partner Declaration is a declaration of intent made by a partner organisation to the Commonwealth to confirm its intention to participate in the proposed CRC-P should the application be successful. The declaration (and application form) should only include the resources that are intended as a firm commitment to the proposed CRC-P.

The Partner Declaration is not a contract between the Commonwealth and the partner organisation. The declaration does not create any binding legal obligation on the partner, nor does it create a binding legal relationship between the signatory and the other partner or the Commonwealth.

In signing the declaration the partner organisation affirms the truth and accuracy of the information provided and acknowledges the obligations on partners in the CRC-P.

A signed Partner Declaration for each partner organisation in the collaboration must be uploaded to the grant application. Failure by the applicant to do so will mean that the application is incomplete and may not be considered for assessment.

The template declaration is available at business.gov.au.

WHAT ARE THE REPORTING REQUIREMENTS?

Reports must be submitted through the portal in line with your grant agreement. We provide samples of these reports as appendices in the grant agreement and remind you of your reporting obligations before a report is due. Progress reports must:

- Include details of your progress towards completion of agreed project activities.
- Show the total project value to date, including a breakdown of:
  - the total eligible expenditure incurred;
  - the total special purpose expenditure incurred; and
  - in-kind contributions to the project.
- Include evidence of expenditure if requested.
- Be submitted by the report due date (you can submit reports ahead of time if you have completed relevant project activities).

We will only make grant payments when we receive satisfactory progress reports and may conduct compliance visits to confirm details of your reports if necessary.

Further details are available in the CRC Projects Round 6 Grant Opportunity Guidelines.

WHERE CAN I FIND OUT MORE INFORMATION?

For more information on the CRC Program visit business.gov.au or call 13 28 46.