



Australian Research Data Commons

Australian Data Partnerships Program: Open Call

v1.2, 27 August 2020

EOI closing date and time: 31 July 2020, 5pm AEST

RFP closing date and time: 18 September 2020, 5pm AEST

Closing date for questions: 11 September 2020, 5pm AEST

Announcement of Successful Proposals: December 2020

Project Commencement: January 2021

Revision history

Version	Date	Revision	Made by
v1.0	29 June 2020	First release	Catherine Brady
v1.1	9 July 2020	Co-investment labour/effort minimum requirement adjusted from 25% to 20%. Appendix 1 (Indicative EOI questions) removed and link provided to online EOI form.	Catherine Brady
v1.2	27 Aug 2020	Added: Appendix 1: Proposal terms; and Appendix 2: Schedule to project contract	Catherine Brady

Background

The Australian Research Data Commons ([ARDC](#)) is a National Collaborative Research Infrastructure Strategy ([NCRIS](#)) facility, providing Australian researchers with a competitive advantage through data. This “Australian Data Partnerships” program is part of the larger ARDC [National Data Assets](#) initiative. Projects in this initiative are a partnership between the ARDC and a set of stakeholders to establish or develop national scale data assets to support leading edge research.

The Australian Data Partnerships is the largest and most fundamental program of the data assets initiative; other programs are focused on particular stakeholders (public sector, NCRIS), particular data types (health studies), or collection maturity (emerging collections). This program has no such restrictions.

The “partnership” word in the title of this program (Australian Data Partnerships) is significant. Consortia of research organisations are deliberately prioritised in this program. ARDC’s strategic intent in this program is to support establishment and development of national level data assets where the centripetal force of a competitive and uncoordinated research market impedes the emergence of national scale data assets.

Data is infrastructure

The underpinning assumption of this program of work is that collections of data can be national research infrastructure when they:

- support leading edge research (publications, impact, science priorities, etc)
- are national (not institutional) in scale, i.e.:
 - Have data contributed by multiple organisations
 - Have data consumed by researchers, policy makers, industry, NGOs from multiple organisations
 - Have governance arrangements over the data that include multiple organisations.

National and institutional investment

The research benefits from such national-scale data assets cannot be realised without some Commonwealth investment. The necessary scale of infrastructure and the underpinning multi-party collaborations will not emerge naturally from individual research organisation investment and activity.

And yet Australian Data Partnership projects are not Commonwealth-only initiatives; they respect the ongoing domain and institutional investments in data collection as well as the unique role that Australia’s long-lived research institutions can play in long-term enduring data assets. In Australian Data Partnership projects, research communities and institutions bring stewardship, ‘ownership’ and longevity to the table, complemented by ARDC’s strategy to catalyse change and bring national data assets to a new national level of research application.

Open call details

Scope

Projects in the Australian Data Partnerships program aim to increase the quality and quantity of national data assets for research.

Projects will establish new or improve existing data collections. Eligible project activities include:

- Identification and documentation of the research purpose and target research community of the collection
- (appropriate to that purpose and community) improvements to
 - data quality
 - data coverage
 - data standards
 - discoverability and usability
 - access arrangements
- consensus building for adoption and implementation of the above improvements
- developing
 - data deposit/capture workflows
 - data processing and curation pipelines, and/or
 - interfaces to tools and platforms
- formalising data asset
 - policy statements
 - governance arrangements
 - operations and business models

The new or improved data asset itself is the output of the project, including new multi-party governance and collaborative arrangements needed to sustain it. Collaboration, visualisation and analytic tools or platforms used on the data assets are obviously necessary for benefit realisation but are not considered appropriate deliverables for this program. For projects that focus on developing platforms and virtual research environments to work with data, the [Platforms Open Call 2020](#) may be more appropriate. The Platforms Open Call is for development of platform infrastructure (by adoption or adaptation of existing solutions), and associated work on integrations and connections to data resources and tools.

Application prerequisites

1. The project proposes the establishment or enhancement of a national data asset
2. The project is led by an Australian organisation with an ABN
3. The project's participants reflect a national partnership
4. The proposed data asset is national in scale, i.e.:
 - a. Has data contributed by multiple organisations;
 - b. Has multiple beneficiaries from many organisations;
 - c. Has governance arrangements including multiple organisations

Applications that do not meet these prerequisites, will not be invited to submit a Request for Proposal.

Program criteria

1. The proposed national data asset supports leading-edge research
2. The proposed national data asset has a pathway to long-term impact, for example research efficiency, environmental, economic and social impacts
3. Project partners co-invest in the project.

Proposal evaluation and selection

Proposals will be evaluated by a selection panel to be appointed by the ARDC (composed of ARDC and external members), and scored according to selection criteria.

The decision to invest in proposals will not just be based on the results of the evaluation process. The ARDC is looking to fund a balanced portfolio of projects, and this will be a factor in the final decisions. The final decision to award funding to proposals rests with the ARDC Chief Executive Officer.

ARDC investment & support

ARDC is investing up to \$5.6M in total for the program. Proposals can apply for up to \$500K in total, for project durations up to two and a half years.

In addition to ARDC monetary investment, projects will be eligible for a package of other ARDC inputs including support for communities of practice, compute resources (confirmed for the duration of the project), specialist consultancy, and support for and access to ARDC national information services for identifiers, vocabularies, and catalogues.

Co-investment

ARDC recognises that the COVID-19 situation has placed financial constraints on many organisations, which are restricting the funds available for projects. To assist in the continued development of e-research infrastructure, 1:1 matching co-investment will not be mandatory for this Open Call. However, the level of co-investment will form part of the Proposal evaluation criteria.

Co-investment must be in an auditable form (in accordance with reporting and accountability requirements as specified by the Commonwealth Department of Education) and can be cash (from project partners or other grants), investment from other NCRIS Projects, or effort/labour. NOTE: if contributing effort/labour, work on the project must be a significant amount of the person's time, i.e. 20% or more).

Open call process

The solicitation of proposals will take place in two phases: the first stage is a call for Expressions of Interest (EOI), followed by a Request for Proposals (RFP).

Expression of Interest phase

The EOI phase is intended to encourage collaboration between researchers, research organisations and communities around a proposed national scale data asset investment, to maximise a data asset's potential impact. The EOI phase opens on **7 July** and closes at 5pm AEST on 31 July 2020. Submissions are received via the [EOI electronic form](#) on the ARDC website.

Eligible EOIs will be made public on the ARDC website, and we can facilitate discussions between similar EOIs so that combined proposals can be developed and submitted in the RFP phase. We will host a webinar on 22 July to assist research organisations and communities to understand the Australian Data Partnerships program and best position themselves to submit a proposal.

Request for Proposal phase

The RFP phase is a competitive funding call and will only be open to those who submitted an eligible EOI, and their collaborators.

Proposals must be submitted using the online form that will be available from [Australian Data Partnerships Open Call](#) on the ARDC website. Submissions open on **1 September** and close at 5pm AEST on 18 September 2020.

Proposal enquiries

Proposing organisations are encouraged to seek clarification if this documentation is unclear or they identify issues not covered by the provided documentation. Questions can be submitted via the [ask a question](#) form. Questions and corresponding responses will be deidentified and published in the [frequently asked questions](#). The closing date for questions is 5pm AEST 11 September 2020.

Project requirements

Enabling FAIR

The ARDC encourages the adoption of the [FAIR principles](#) as a valuable way of making research outputs more reusable, both for humans and machines. As an NCRIS facility ARDC is required to make the research outputs it enables FAIR (see the NCRIS principles). Before the RFP phase, ARDC will provide guidance and support to projects on how projects can produce FAIR (or FAIR-ready) data, and these expectations will form part of the project requirements and reporting.

Expected general outline of projects

Typical projects in this program would have the following elements:

Inputs →	Activity →	Outputs →	Outcome →	Impact
Resources from: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – ARDC – research organisations and facilities – research communities – beneficiary groups 	Changes to data: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – quality – standards – interfaces – access arrangements – governance – policy – workflow 	Improved national data asset for research Integration of data into research tools and platforms	Increased use of data in research	Improvements to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – research efficiency – environmental, social, economic consequences



Post-project

The formal project would typically finish after the “Output” stage above. It is assumed that after this stage the new capability will be maintained by the research institution partners as part of a new ‘business as usual’ footing. The project participants (including ARDC) will remain in formal communication beyond the Output stage to monitor and report Outcomes (research usage of the data) and Impacts (improvements to research efficiency as well as broader positive societal consequences). Before the RFP phase, ARDC will provide further guidance to projects on program requirements for impact monitoring and reporting.

Appendix 1: Proposal terms

1. The Proposer must inform the ARDC promptly in writing of any material change to any of the information contained in their submitted Proposal, and of any material change in circumstance that may affect the truth, completeness or accuracy of any of the information provided in, or in connection with the Proposal.
2. The Proposer acknowledges and agrees that:
 - 2.1 to the maximum extent permitted by law, neither the ARDC nor its employees, advisers or agents will in any way be liable to any person or entity for any cost, expense, loss, claim or damage arising out of or in connection with this RFP;
 - 2.2 they have not relied on any express or implied warranty or representation made by or on behalf of the ARDC other than as expressly contained in this RFP or an addendum to this RFP;
 - 2.3 they have not received improper assistance from any staff member of the ARDC;
 - 2.4 they have not colluded with other organisations to inflate funding estimates;
 - 2.5 they have no actual, perceived or potential conflict of interest in relation to the Proposal.
3. The Proposer acknowledges that the ARDC may alter this RFP, including its specifications / requirements, structure and timing, at any time and for any reason.
4. The Proposer understands that proposals will be treated as confidential by ARDC and that ARDC will not disclose Proposal contents and Proposal information, except:
 - 4.1 as required by law (including, for the avoidance of doubt, as required under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 (Vic) (FOI Act);
 - 4.2 for the purpose of investigations by the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission or other government authorities having relevant jurisdiction;
 - 4.3 to external consultants and advisers of ARDC engaged to assist with the Proposal Selection Process;
 - 4.4 to the Department of Education, Skills and Employment, at its request and if required, to enable transparency and accountability; and/or
 - 4.5 general information from Proposers required to be disclosed by government policy and as part of the RFP approval process.

Appendix 2: Schedule to project contract

This document is a template schedule for the project contract.

Schedule 1 Activity Details

1. Term of this Agreement

1.1 The Commencement Date for the Agreement is the date of signature of this Agreement.

1.2 The Agreement End Date is [insert].

1.3 The Subcontractor is required to undertake the Activities and submit the Reports described in this **Schedule 1**.

2. Activity

Project Title

[insert details]

Project Aims

[insert details]

Project Team

[Insert details of key personnel]

Milestones and Deliverables

	Milestone or Deliverable	Target Milestone Date	ARDC funds (\$)
M1	Contract signed	Q4 2020	20%
M2	Project plan delivered and approved	3 months from Commencement Date	20%
M3	Approved progress report #1	6 months from Commencement Date	
M4	Approved progress report #2	12 months from Commencement Date	20%
M5	Approved progress report #3	18 months from Commencement Date	

M6	Approved progress report #4	24 months from Commencement Date	20%
M7	Approved Final Report	On Completion	20%

where applicable:

	Research Outcomes Work Package approved	3 months from Commencement Date	extra 5%
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3. Budget

Provide details of a high-level budget breakdown

Description of expenditure	ARDC investment \$	Co-investment \$	Total
[insert details]	[insert details]	[insert details]	[insert details]
[insert details]	[insert details]	[insert details]	[insert details]
[insert details]	[insert details]	[insert details]	[insert details]

4. Reports

Report	Details	Due date
Project Plan	Detail the milestones and deliverables, define the project team, budget breakdown and assess risks	3 months from Commencement date
Progress report #1	Details of progress against agreed deliverables, enabling FAIR, and project impact.	6 months from Commencement date
Progress report #2	Details of progress against agreed deliverables, enabling FAIR, and project impact.	12 months from Commencement date

Annual acquitted financial statement #1	Details of expenditure of ARDC funds and signed by the subcontractor's representative.	12 months from Commencement date
Progress report #3	Details of progress against agreed deliverables, enabling FAIR, and project impact.	18 months from Commencement date
Progress report #4	Details of progress against agreed deliverables, enabling FAIR, and project impact.	24 months from Commencement date
Annual acquitted financial statement #2	Details of expenditure of ARDC funds and signed by the subcontractor's representative.	24 months from Commencement date
Final project report	Details of progress against agreed deliverables, enabling FAIR, and project impact.	On completion
Acquitted financial statement	Details of expenditure of ARDC funds and signed by the subcontractor's representative.	On completion

5. Financial reports

Report	Details	Due date
Annual acquitted financial statement #1	Details of expenditure, using the financial report template provided by ARDC, of ARDC funds and signed by the subcontractor's representative.	12 months from Commencement date
Annual acquitted financial statement #2	Details of expenditure, using the financial report template provided by ARDC, of ARDC funds and signed by the subcontractor's representative.	24 months from Commencement date
Acquitted financial statement	Details of expenditure, using the financial report template provided by ARDC, of ARDC funds and signed by the subcontractor's representative.	On completion

6. Assets

6.1 For the purposes of clause 17 of **Schedule 2**, the relevant amount is \$50,000.00 (excluding GST).

6.2 The format of the asset register is:

Item Number	Description	Funding Contributions	Other Contributions – Contractor	Other Contributions – Third Parties	Total Cost
<i>[insert reference]</i>	<i>[insert description of the Asset]</i>	<i>[insert amount of Funding contributed to this item]</i>	<i>[insert amount of Subcontractors own funds contributed to this item]</i>	<i>[insert amount of other sources of funding contributed to this item]</i>	<i>[insert total cost of the item]</i>

7. Party representatives and address for notices

7.1 For the purposes of this Agreement, the representative and address for notices of each Party is set out below.

ARDCL's representative and address

<i>[Name]</i>	<i>[insert details]</i>
<i>[Position]</i>	<i>[insert details]</i>
Postal/physical address(es)	<i>[insert details]</i>
Business hours telephone	<i>[insert details]</i>
Mobile	<i>[insert details]</i>
E-mail	<i>[insert details]</i>
<i>[Alternative contact]</i>	<i>[insert details]</i>

Subcontractor's representative and address

<i>[Name]</i>	<i>[insert details]</i>
<i>[Position]</i>	<i>[insert details]</i>
Postal/physical address(es)	<i>[insert details]</i>
Business hours telephone	<i>[insert details]</i>
Mobile	<i>[insert details]</i>
E-mail	<i>[insert details]</i>
<i>[Alternative contact]</i>	<i>[insert details]</i>

7.2 The Parties' representatives will be responsible for liaison and the day-to-day management of the Funding, as well as accepting and issuing any written notices in relation to the Funding.

7.3 The Parties may, by reasonable notice to the other party, update the details of their respective representatives.

8. Other insurance required

Not applicable

9. Subcontractors

[insert details]

10. Additional work Health and Safety Requirements

Not applicable

11. ARDC FAIR Data outputs

ARDCL is supportive of and encourages the adoption of the FAIR principles as a valuable way in making research outputs more reusable, both for humans and machines. As a consequence, ARDCL requires research outputs that enable it to be made FAIR (Findable, Accessible, Interoperable, Reusable) as per the NCRIS guidelines. It is expected that the Subcontractor will make the data outputs from the Activity FAIR. Also, the infrastructure that is developed in the Activity should enable making data and outputs FAIR during the Activity and beyond.

The ARDC FAIR Data Guidelines for Project Data Outputs [Link](#) provides the guidelines and resources for the Subcontractor to follow to ensure FAIR data principles are applied to Activity outputs.

12. Post-project reporting on research outcomes

ARDCL requires all funded projects to plan, implement and report on research outcomes and impact from funded activities. Please refer to ARDCL's [Research outcomes reporting, planning and implementation: Guidelines for Projects](#). These guidelines will form part of the project requirements and reporting.