



Australian Research Data Commons

Cross-NCRIS National Data Assets Program

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. ARDC proposes an initiative where ARDC partners with a set of National Collaborative Research Infrastructure Strategy (NCRIS) facilities to establish or develop national scale data assets to support leading edge research. This program is part of the ARDC [National Data Assets](#) initiative.

National scale data assets are already a natural fit for NCRIS facilities given the facilities' inherent national scope and the increasingly pervasive role of data in research. Some facilities are naturally “digital technology ventures” with a predominance of their investments already made in aggregating data and providing data access, integration, and analytic platforms, while other NCRIS invest significantly in sensors and instruments. Increasingly the value of the data generated by all facilities is being recognised as a research asset itself on a par with the other equipment. ARDC supports in systemic ways the journey of all NCRIS to being data-centric investments through ARDC core competencies, expertise, infrastructure, services, and support.

Cross-NCRIS national data assets

Over and above such systemic support for NCRIS facilities, the ARDC now proposes to establish a special set of data partnerships with clusters of NCRIS facilities targeting the establishment and development of cross-NCRIS national data assets. ARDC will co-invest with a consortium of facilities, and will also bring other resources to the table, such as underpinning storage and cloud support, information services, specialist consultancies, as well as developing capability and communities of practice. These special cross-NCRIS data partnerships will target shared, aggregated, or federated data assets that

- Would not naturally develop from the independent work plans of facilities
- Would not reach the same scale or effectiveness in separate facilities
- Would provide better value to end-users (research, industry, public policy) as combined, coherent, and standardised assets.

By partnering with clusters of NCRIS facilities, this ARDC program expects to create value by

- Bringing together complementary data types (eg genomic, phenomic, environmental)
- Producing data assets at a scale that provides new insights or efficiencies (eg large image sets ready for machine learning)
- Providing integrated or integratable data (eg, cross-NCRIS common essential variables) for impactful applications (eg, environmental prediction for agriculture or natural resource management)
- Bringing together similar data assets from distributed facilities into a more usable asset (eg spatial layers)

This ARDC program acts as an inter-facility “glue” in higher risk, frontier, multi-stakeholder areas to realise the ARDC mission of national scale data assets to support leading edge research. These partnerships are proposed on the basis of 1:1 matching investment between ARDC and a cluster of NCRIS facilities with other project stakeholders.

Core deliverables of such partnerships are the enhanced data assets themselves, including new multi-party governance and collaborative arrangements needed to sustain them. Access and analytic tools and platforms deployed over the data assets are perhaps necessary for benefit realisation but are not considered deliverables for this program. ARDC has other programs targeted at platforms; moreover research communities and other partners can be expected to bring significant energy to tool development. This program focuses on collating national data assets across facilities and making them analysis-ready, policy-ready, ML-ready, industry-ready, integration-ready, etc.

Monitoring of research outcomes (publications, grants, projects) and broader impact (social, environmental, economic) is an essential part of the partnership with ARDC. Specific work packages to plan for, realise, and monitor these outcomes and impacts will be a default and standard component of all projects. The initiative seeks to realise outcomes and benefits within the project as well as continue to monitor these well after the “build” phase.

Call Process

The solicitation of proposals will take place in three phases: Expression of Interest (EOI) and Request for Proposal (RFP), and a facilitation phase in between these.

Expression of Interest phase: 27 March – 4 May

On **March 27th 2020**, ARDC will launch a call for EOI. The EOI submission will **close on May 4th, 2020**. The expression of interest (EOI) phase is intended to elicit preliminary ideas for the Cross-NCRIS national data asset program. All EOIs will be made public at the end of the EOI period. Feedback on the EOIs and the subsequent facilitation phase will start from **May 18th 2020**.

Facilitation phase: 18 May - 20 July

The objective of this program is to foster inter-NCRIS collaboration (not competition), so the facilitation phase will promote convergence between stakeholders around feasible project ideas. During this period ARDC seeks to achieve rough consensus amongst clusters of NCRIS facilities on viable proposals for the RFP stage.

Request for Proposal phase: 20 July-10 August

A call for proposal submissions will open on **July 20th 2020** and will close on **August 10th, 2020**. Proposals will be invited from the EOI participants that have participated in the facilitation process.

Selection Criteria for the EOI

- Project includes at least 2 NCRIS facilities as project partners.
- Proposal includes identified beneficiaries as project partners or active stakeholders
- Project establishes or improves a cross-NCRIS data asset that includes data from at least 2 NCRIS facilities.
- Cross-NCRIS national data asset combine the data for added value through means such as :
 - more integrated or more integratable data across facilities
 - complementary data types from facilities being more usable together
 - similar data from distributed facilities being available in a larger, unified, more usable asset
- Proposed cross facility data assets:
 - will support new research programs, insights or efficiencies; AND
 - have impactful application beyond research; AND
 - meet FAIR and quality standards appropriate to the discipline and application targeted in the project.
- Co-investment can be attained (**Note: 1:1 co-investment is required**).

If you have a question please use the form [here](#). These questions and their answers will be entered into a publicly available [FAQ's Register](#).

If you are interested to submit an EOI please follow the link [here](#).