

ARC Linkage Projects

HELPING INDUSTRY LEVERAGE RESEARCH INFRASTRUCTURE

Addressing Australia's challenges

The development of new future products or processes may call for external collaboration, or your company may be faced with a major scientific or technological problem that is too difficult to solve in-house. The *Linkage Projects* program gives your company the opportunity to become a "Partner Organisation" in an ARC *Linkage Projects* application. If successful, the grant provides your company with heavily subsidised access to an experienced research team that can pursue your research goals at a fraction of the cost of consulting.

Linkage Projects is a grant program of the Australian Research Council (ARC). It aims to create long-term research alliances between researchers in academia and industry to solve scientific and technological problems for the economic, social and/or cultural benefit of Australia. The ARC accepts applications to the *Linkage Projects* program from eligible higher education institutions, and then allocates funding on a competitive basis; funding levels range from AUD\$50,000 up to AUD\$300,000 per annum (p.a.) for up to 5 years. In exceptional circumstances, where an extremely high level of commitment is made by the industry partner, the ARC will consider funding levels of up to AUD\$2,000,000 p.a.

How does it work?

The *Linkage Projects* program requires that all parties in the research alliance make significant contributions to the total research effort: one or more university nodes of the AMMRF must commit to provide (a) the expertise and time of the academics who lead the project and (b) the facilities—such as scientific instrumentation, laboratories, libraries, IT networks—that are necessary to carry out the project.

As a Partner Organisation, your company must commit to provide a specific amount of cash and "in-kind" contributions (e.g., personnel time, raw materials or samples, access to industrial equipment, analysis costs, proprietary software) to help achieve the research goals of the project. The cash contribution from the Partner Organisation must be a minimum of 20% of the total amount of funding requested from the ARC, and the in-kind contributions must be sufficient to at least match the remainder of the requested funding.

This means that the cash obtained for the research program from the ARC represents an approximate **doubling** of your company's total investment in the project (cash and in-kind), and an up to **5 times return** on the actual cash investment. This also provides access to the expertise and time of the AMMRF team at no additional cost, and the **usual tax concessions for investment in R&D** are available on investment by Australian companies.

AN EXAMPLE: LEVERAGE IN ACTION

Suppose that your company and your AMMRF research partners decide that the project requires a total cash budget of AUD\$200,000 each year to hire the necessary research staff. In that case, the project contributions would be as follows (AUD\$):

ARC: *Linkage Projects* funding request = \$160,000 p.a.

Partner Organisation: Cash = \$40,000 p.a. (minimum);
In-kind = \$120,000 p.a. (minimum).

AMMRF: in-kind depends on the project; typical minimum \$60,000 p.a.

What does the investment provide?

The money from the ARC and the Partner Organisation is used to fund research fellows and research students to undertake the research project. These researchers are based at the relevant AMMRF node(s), but may be seconded to the Partner Organisation for certain periods; alternatively, they may spend a certain fraction of each week at your site. In general, the AMMRF prefers to work on challenging problems that require three-to-five-year *Linkage Projects*. However, the AMMRF, in collaboration with your company, usually devises milestones that achieve commercially significant outcomes within months of commencing the project to meet the need for rapid results in industry.

How to apply

The ARC *Linkage Projects* scheme runs on a continuous basis and proposals can be submitted at any time. Starting at least three months before the submission, the AMMRF and the Partner Organisation will develop the proposed *Linkage Project* application, with details of the research program goals, team, timeline of and the budget.

The ARC notifies successful applicants approximately six months after the original submission. Finally, an agreement must then be negotiated between the AMMRF node(s) and the Partner Organisation to equitably apportion the intellectual property that will be developed during the research. The ARC requires this agreement to be finalised before the research program begins. The Business Development Manager of the AMMRF welcomes all enquiries from industry:

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