

Tactical Research Fund application process

The Bushfire and Natural Hazards CRC has established a Tactical Research Fund to encourage the development of short duration research projects meeting the well-defined near-term needs of CRC end-user partners. The broad aim of the Tactical Research Fund is to provide a source of funding for short-term, end-user focused research projects, addressing strategic issues for the sector and that have national significance. The Tactical Research Fund is funded by the CRC to contribute to sector wide and agency based forward planning, which align with the [National Research Priorities for Natural Hazards and Emergency Management](#).

The Tactical Research Fund is highly competitive. The CRC typically allocates \$250,000 (ex-GST) per year and on average funds three projects a year. Only those proposals that can demonstrate a need for the proposed research outcomes and have a fully developed (ready-to-start) project plan endorsed by CRC end-user partners will be accepted for consideration. The CRC will prioritise project proposals that improve Australia's disaster resilience, close capability gaps, align with the [National Research Priorities for Natural Hazards and Emergency Management](#) and have a clear pathway to utilisation by supporting end-user partners.

Not everyone can apply. Tactical Research Fund applications are limited to end-user partners, who make cash contributions as part of their membership

of the CRC (see <http://www.bnhcrc.com.au/about/organisations-partners> for details. (Note: those end-users listed as collaborations are those that do not make cash contributions as part of their CRC membership and will not be eligible to submit an application for funding, or be considered as one of the four cash funding CRC end-user partners required to endorse the proposal. However, these parties are encouraged to collaborate with CRC end-users in the development and delivery of Tactical Research Fund projects, please see section C of the Assessment criteria below for end-user endorsement requirements).

If you are unsure of your proposal's eligibility, please see the [Frequently Asked Questions](#) document, contact David Boxshall david.boxshall@bnhcr.com.au or contact a member of the CRC research team. CRC research team contact details are listed on the [CRC website](#).

What project types can be proposed through the tactical research fund?

There are a variety of projects that can apply for funding through the Tactical Research Fund, and these include:

-) New research initiatives, including scoping studies, synthesis studies and literature reviews
-) Project extensions that increase the value and benefit of existing

research projects, but are not utilisation projects

-) Represent continuations or extensions of previously funded projects
-) Provide an avenue for new partners to link to the CRC.

However, it is important to note that the following project types will **not** be accepted for funding:

-) Short term purely consultancy activities
-) Product testing.

How will my proposal be assessed?

Assessment criteria

Applications are assessed on the extent to which proposals meet the CRC and Tactical Research Fund program objectives and will be prioritised in order of a proposal's capacity to meet the following assessment criteria:

A. Generate new knowledge leading to improved outcomes for the sector and community

-) Encompasses clarity of research objectives and theoretical concepts
-) Demonstrates appropriateness and robustness of the proposed methodologies or research strategy
-) Is feasible within the proposed budget, personnel and timeline
-) Will contribute to improving disaster resilience within Australia
-) Align with the [National Research Priorities for Natural Hazards and Emergency Management](#)
-) Demonstrate value to the sector and wider community.

B. Promote effective transfer of research outcomes into policy and practice

-) The quality of the project to be translated from research into utilisation
-) The involvement of end-users in the planning, implementation and uptake of research outcomes
-) Demonstrate a commitment of supporting agencies to utilise research outcomes.

C. Capacity to meet the Tactical Research Fund compulsory application requirements

(Note: applications will be rendered non-compliant if the following items are not sufficiently demonstrated)

-) Must support the CRC's mission and objectives
-) Must be proposed by end-user partners, who make cash contributions as part of their membership of the CRC or by the CRC itself (see list of formal end-user partners [here](#))
-) May be of any duration not exceeding 12 months
-) Can request up to \$100,000 (ex-GST) in funding from the CRC
-) Complete and meet all requirements of the Tactical Research Fund eligibility check list (attached to the proposal application)
-) Read and accept the Tactical Research Fund contract [Terms and Conditions](#)
-) Must have the written support of:
 - o At least four end-user partners, who make cash contributions as part of their membership of the CRC, or
 - o the formal written support of an AFAC Collaboration Group, or

- the formal written support of AFAC Council or ACSES
-) Each letter of support must include the following:
 - Be written on the end user's official letterhead
 - Indicate why this research is important to the organisation and the sector
 - Indicate how the outcomes of this research will be utilised within their organisation
 - Indicate how much, if any, cash and/or in-kind will be contributed to the project from all the contributors, and who those contributors are
 - Signatory must indicate that they accept all details in the proposal including proposed approach, what is in scope and out of scope for the project
 - Must be signed by an authorised representative at Assistant Commissioner (or equivalent) level or above, or Chair of an AFAC collaboration group.
 - Included as an attachment to the project proposal

Application process

The CRC has undertaken a review of the Tactical Research Fund application process to better serve the needs of the sector and to improve application quality. As of February 2019 the application process has been updated to a two-stage process. The aim of the new process is to be able to better target available funds to projects that are ready to go immediately rather than lock up funds while projects are being scoped.

To qualify, applicants must successfully progress through both stages.

The Tactical Research Fund will accept proposals from **18 February 2019** and will close when all available funding has been contracted to projects, or on **31 October 2019**. Applications submitted after the closing date will not be considered for funding but can be re-submitted in future Tactical Research Funding rounds.

The CRC will assess each application when received. The CRC will not wait until all applications have been submitted. The CRC will award funding to those projects that successfully progress through the following two-stage application process and are contracted. *Note: A Tactical Research Fund project only starts upon full execution of a project agreement (contract).*

Stage one: project proposal phase

Progressing through the first stage requires:

-) That a proposal be submitted (using the Tactical Research Fund application form) to the CRC that is sufficiently well described, meeting all of the compulsory assessment requirements in particular section C (listed in the assessment criteria above)
 - It is essential that you discuss your proposal with a CRC research team member prior to submitting your application.
-) Proposals to be reviewed and accepted by the CRC research team
 - Those proposals accepted are eligible to progress to stage two

- o The CRC research team will assist in stage two
- o Proposals not accepted will be returned to the applicant with feedback. Proposals can be re-submitted with amendments prior to the Tactical Research Fund round closing date or be amended and re-submitted at a later round.

Stage two: project planning phase

Progressing through the second stage requires:

- J The endorsement of the CRC to progress to stage two
- J That applicants prepare a sufficiently well-developed project plan that meets the Tactical Research Fund *Assessment criteria* and clearly articulates compliance with all of the *Assessment criteria* in particular section C. (see above *Assessment criteria* for details).
 - o the CRC will advise applicants on project plan development
- J The CRC's final endorsement of the project plan confirming that funding has been granted and the project plan is ready to go to contract.

Note: *unsuccessful applicants will be given advice on how to improve applications for future rounds or be advised on other opportunities including through CRC or external research funding streams.*

Two-stage process break-down: *Process flow of the two stage Tactical Research Fund application process*

STAGE 1

PREPARE A TACTICAL RESEARCH FUND APPLICATION FORM

Use the CRC Tactical Research Fund application form

APPLICATION SUBMITTED TO CRC FOR REVIEW

Application submitted between round opening and closing dates

CRC REVIEWS APPLICATIONS

Proposals accepted will be eligible to begin stage two (note: progression to stage two will not automatically secure funding)

Proposals not accepted will be returned with feedback and CRC may advise on other funding opportunities



STAGE 2

APPLICANT WILL BE REQUIRED TO PRODUCE A FULL PROJECT PLAN

The CRC provides a project plan template

THE CRC WILL ADVISE ON PROJECT PLAN

Project planning can expand or change a project significantly in which case a project may no longer meet Tactical Research Fund requirements. As a result, the CRC may then advise applicants on more suitable funding options.

CRC REVIEWS FINAL PROJECT PLAN

Accepted projects will be endorsed for contracting

Project plans not approved will be returned with feedback and advice on more suitable funding options



CONTRACTING

To be successful in your application, the CRC recommends the following:

Following these recommendations may increase the likelihood of your project qualifying, but will not secure qualification. The CRC will prioritise applications that successfully meet the *Assessment criteria*, and those that progress through both stages.

- J Read the *Assessment criteria* carefully and respond to each point when writing your application
- J Contact the CRC to seek advice on project suitability, scoping, resourcing and project planning
- J Set up a workshop or meeting with your application team: this should include the envisaged research team and end-user cohort to ensure proposal consistency, compliance, suitability, to identify and mitigate risks, and measure expectations
- J Get support: projects supported by additional funds and in-kind contributions from proposing groups will go a long way to demonstrating a need for their research.
- J Read and accept the CRC's standard contract [Terms and Conditions](#) prior to submitting an application
- J Read the [FAQ document](#)

Things to consider

Unsuccessful projects:

In earlier rounds of the Tactical Research Fund, the following issues have led to significant delays in the development of the final project:

- J Failure to consider the operations or cost implications of research outcomes, for example potential

- changes to Protective Personal Equipment (PPE) or retraining staff
- J Failure to get agreement to objectives with all stakeholders, not just proposers
- J Failure to consider external factors, such as political or bureaucratic requirements
- J Failure to engage with AFAC Groups early on
- J Failure to gain consensus from legal and contracting departments regarding agreement [Terms and Conditions](#)
- J Failure to realistically consider risk variables such as the weather, ethics applications, access to external databases and staffing requirements
- J Failure to fully interrogate the scope of the project, including clearly defining all things out of scope.

Successful projects:

In earlier rounds, projects that successfully secured funding and maintained timelines did the following:

- J Provided a fully scoped project proposal, which was workshopped with project partners prior to applying for funding
- J Clearly defined out of scope parameters
- J Undertook a risk assessment
- J Project teams were ready to begin research upon signing of the contract
- J Project proposals fully budgeted

Please note that the application forms were updated on 18 February 2019. All applications for funding are required to use this application form.

Outcomes of projects must be made available to all CRC partners, and will be published on the CRC website.