
COLLABORATIVE RESEARCH ACCELERATOR GRANT SCHEME

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Please refer to this list of frequently asked questions for the National Breast Cancer Foundation (NBCF) *Pink Horizon Research Strategy* and *Collaborative Research Accelerator* grant scheme. This is a living document and will be updated regularly. If you have additional questions, please email research@nbcf.org.au

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Contents

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS.....	1
Contents.....	2
Pink Horizon Research Strategy.....	3
Applications.....	3
Intellectual Property.....	4
Expression Of Interest (EOI)	5
Research Team.....	5
Collaborations	7
People With a Lived Experience.....	8
Funding.....	8
Co-Funding	9
Funding – Previously Funded Projects	10
Budget.....	11
Reviewers	12
Contracts and Governance.....	12

Pink Horizon Research Strategy

1. Is the NBCF vision of Zero Deaths from breast cancer focused on all deaths in people with breast cancer or only deaths caused by breast cancer?

The NBCF vision of Zero Deaths from breast cancer reflects an ambition to stop people dying as a direct result of their breast cancer diagnosis. We acknowledge that there are primary and contributory causes to breast cancer mortality, and researchers must clearly justify in their proposals how their research will drive progress to help end mortality from this disease.

2. <https://nbcf.org.au/research-strategy/>Why does the Pink Horizon Research Strategy not include quality of life research as a priority area?

The Pink Horizon Research Strategy is singularly focused on encouraging and funding research that will accelerate progress towards achieving our vision of Zero Deaths from breast cancer.

While Survivorship, Supportive Care and/or Quality of Life research are not specifically defined as key objectives for the Strategy, NBCF welcomes consideration of these research areas. It is up to the researcher to clearly justify how the proposed research will help reduce deaths from breast cancer.

We acknowledge that not all research endeavours will be funded through the Pink Horizon Research Strategy. However, our 5-year strategy has been purposefully and collaboratively designed to bring us closer to our vision and meet the funding expectations of our donors.

Applications

3. Are Collaborative Research Accelerators separate to project grants?

Yes, the Collaborative Research Accelerator grant scheme is a standalone grant scheme. NBCF will continue to run an annual Research Project Grant Scheme.

4. Is there a limit on the number of applications that can be received from a single institution?

There is no upper limit on the number of Collaborative Research Accelerator applications that an institution can submit.

5. Is there a limit on the number of applications that a Principal Investigator can apply for?

Principal Investigator can only submit one CRA application as a PI, however, they can be named on another CRA application as a Co-Investigator or Associate Investigator in the same round. See grant guidelines for more information.

6. What is the eligibility for being the Lead Institution?

The Lead Institution must be an Australian Administering Institution with an ABN committed to sub-contracting other collaborating institutions. See grant guidelines for more information.

7. Can a Collaborative Research Accelerator target more than one of the four *Pink Horizon Research Strategy* objectives?

Yes. However, the research proposed must be of sufficient depth to enable tangible progress to be made towards the vision of *Zero Deaths from breast cancer*.

Related questions:

7a. Is a grant application that covers more than one domain likely to be preferred to an application that covers a single domain?

The Collaborative Research Accelerator grant scheme is intended to fund research to address intractable questions that will enable progress to be made towards the vision of *Zero Deaths from breast cancer*. Bold applications are encouraged, whether these tackle one or more domains.

7b. Relating to the core objectives, would projects with a non-biomedical focus be considered? For example: a program of research focused on personalised risk assessments and interventions regarding modifiable lifestyle risk factors?

NBCF is calling for research teams to develop compelling grant applications incorporating any type(s) of research that are appropriate to accelerating progress towards our vision of *Zero Deaths from breast cancer*. Applicants must be able to align their research with, and deliver on, one or more of the four objectives under the *Pink Horizon Strategy* and researchers will need to be able to demonstrate that the research has a direct line of sight to our vision.

8. Given the number of applicants on a Collaborative Research Accelerator grant, is NBCF considering ways to streamline the administrative requirements of the application?

NBCF is continually looking for ways to minimise the administrative requirements for grant applications and reporting. The two-staged application process (EOI and Full Application) will mean that only the strongest applications will be invited to submit a full application and required to provide in-depth information. The online application form includes all necessary detail to capture applicants' and project information needed for assessment.

9. Can you apply to the Collaborative Research Accelerator Grant Scheme if you have existing funding from the NBCF?

Researchers who hold other NBCF funding in the form of a Research Project Grant (RPG), Investigator-Initiated Research Scheme (IIRS) or Pink Sky (PS) grant scheme are eligible to apply for / be named on a Collaborative Research Accelerator application. However, a Principal Investigator (PI) who holds an active CRA is not eligible to apply as Principal Investigator for any additional NBCF grants (CRA, RPG or Pink Sky) while their CRA grants is active. Other investigators (Co-I's, AI's, Additional Personnel) are eligible to apply for the CRA. See NBCF PI Eligibility guidelines on the website.

Intellectual Property

10. Would first-in-human clinical testing of a novel agent be considered "commercial development" under the CRA guidelines in relation to IP?

Based on best-practice definitions, commercial development of IP typically refers to activities directly aimed at advancing a product toward market readiness.

For example: optimisation of the drug itself, manufacturing scale-up, or activities materially increasing the commercial value of the IP.

In contrast, clinical testing that is investigator-led and focused on evaluating safety, feasibility, or early signals of efficacy in patients, where the IP (such as the compound, formulation, or manufacturing methods) has already been fully developed by the commercial entity, is generally not categorised as commercial development. In these situations, the research is primarily contributing new clinical knowledge rather than increasing or enhancing the underlying IP.

Expression Of Interest (EOI)

11. Where can I find the EOI Application Template?

All CRA Applications must be completed online via the NBCF Grants Portal. If you want to review the full application before completing it online, you can use the 'preview' function.

To do this, log into the NBCF Grants Portal, begin preparing an application and select 'preview' the application in the top right-hand corner. Selecting the 'preview' option will enable you to download the application in full.

12. What is the difference between the EOI and Full Application process?

The EOI Application is a shorter, streamlined application aimed to provide an overview of the research project and team.

The EOI Application must be completed and submitted by the CRA PI.

Top ranking EOI applications that best meet the EOI criteria will be invited to submit a more comprehensive Full Application. The Full Application will require significantly more detail about the proposed research, governance frameworks, risk, collaboration and justification for funding.

Applicants who submit a Full Application will also be invited to present their proposal to the Expert Review Committee as part of a panel interview.

Related questions:

12a. Does the budget need to be included in the EOI?

Yes, summary budget information is to be captured in the NBCF Grants Portal during the EOI stage. A separate, comprehensive budget spreadsheet will be completed and uploaded at Full Application stage.

Minor budget changes between the EOI stage and the Full Application stage are acceptable.

12b. Is the team locked in after the EOI?

No, applicants can change the team composition if invited to submit a Full Application.

Research Team

13. Can an investigator be named on multiple Collaborative Research Accelerator applications in a given funding round?

As per the Eligibility Criteria outlined in the CRA Guidelines, only one CRA can be submitted by a Principal Investigator in any CRA Grant Round. Additionally, a Principal Investigator can only hold one active CRA grant at any point in time.

There is no limit on the number of Co-Is that can be named on an application. There is no limit on the number of AIs that can be named on an application. There are no restrictions on the number of applications a Co-I or AI can be named on for this grant opportunity, and a PI can be named on another application as a Co-I or AI.

14. Is there a specific focus on early to mid-career researchers?

As per the Funding Principles outlined in the CRA Guidelines, all research proposals supported under the Pink Horizon Research Strategy must describe and demonstrate clear opportunities for early and mid-career researcher development.

Collaborative Research Accelerators are intended to fund a multidisciplinary, multistate, multi-institutional ecosystem of researchers and research activity. A diverse team (in terms of career stage, gender, and scientific disciplines) that provides synergistic expertise and builds capacity aligned to the research question is encouraged.

Early to Mid-Career Researchers should be actively involved in this grant opportunity as Co-Investigators or Associate Investigators. An Early to Mid-Career Researcher is defined as an individual who is within ten years of their PhD award date, excluding career disruptions.

15. Am I eligible to apply for this grant if I am holding a working visa?

The Principal Investigator must be an Australian citizen / permanent resident or have the appropriate working visa valid for the duration of the grant and be affiliated with / employed by an Australian Administering Institution.

At least half of the nominated Co-Investigators must:

- reside in Australia (or intend to reside in Australia) throughout the grant period
- be Australian citizens, have resident status or have an appropriate visa to work in Australia for the entire duration of the funding period.

16. Can an individual be a Co-Investigator on an NBCF Research Project Grant and a Collaborative Research Accelerator grant?

A person can be named as a Co-Investigator on an NBCF Research Project Grant, and a Collaborative Research Investigator grant at the same time.

17. What is the eligibility for a Principal Investigator?

If you are employed by the proposed Lead Institution, you are eligible to be a Principal Investigator. NBCF will ask the Principal Investigator to provide either proof of employment by the Lead Institution or a letter providing documentation about the affiliation of the Principal Investigator with the Lead Institution.

Related question

16a. What details on the researchers involved (Principal Investigator, Lead Co-Investigator(s), and Co-Investigator(s)) are required at EOI and Full Application stages?

In the EOI application and Full Application the required details are:

- individual researchers must provide details of their, 5 most significant peer-reviewed publications, reports and/or contributions and the 5 most recent peer-reviewed publications (original research, reviews, books/ chapters)
- the collective research team's expertise and proven track record in delivering the proposed research project
- the team's composition and roles across institutions showing the appropriate mix of skills and diversity to enable successful delivery of the project.

In addition to the assessable information, NBCF is asking for administrative information about investigators including name, position in department, Host Institution and Visa status.

18. Can a NBCF Endowed Chair be named on a Collaborative Research Accelerator?

NBCF Endowed Chairs are eligible to apply for and / or be named on a Collaborative Research Accelerator application.

Collaborations

19. Is there a cap on the number of institutions collaborating as part of a Collaborative Research Accelerator?

There is no limit on the number of institutions who can participate in a Collaborative Research Accelerator. However, Lead and Collaborating Institutions must have in place, and maintain for the term of the funding agreement, policies and procedures for the management of public funds, management of Intellectual Property and for good scientific conduct.

20. Are Collaborative Research Accelerators meant to include teams from different states?

Collaborative Research Accelerators are intended to fund a multidisciplinary, multistate, multi-institutional ecosystem of researchers and research activity. A diverse team (in terms of career stage, gender, and scientific disciplines) that provides synergistic expertise and builds capacity aligned to the research question is encouraged.

Proposals must include at least two collaborating research institutions, including more than one Australian institution.

Related question:

19a. Will NBCF provide a forum to enable collaborators to come together?

Research teams are expected to form their own collaborations in line with the research question(s) they seek to address.

21. Can a Collaborative Research Accelerator include commercial / for profit organisations (e.g. pharmaceutical and biotechnology companies) as participating institutions and / or financial contributors?

Commercial / for profit organisations may participate as part of a Collaborative Research Accelerator where their contribution will strengthen the research. Commercial / for profit organisations will not be directly funded as a Lead or Collaborating Institution.

NBCF reserves the right to review individual requests for participation in a Collaborative Research Accelerator by a commercial / for profit organisation in line with its Conflict of Interest policy.

22. Are all Institutions expected to provide a letter of support at application stage?

This information is detailed in the CRA Guidelines. At the EOI Application stage, the Lead Institution will be required to provide a commitment letter confirming endorsement of the application. At the Full Application stage, Collaborating Institutions will be required to provide commitment letters confirming endorsement of the application and co-funding commitments.

23. Can funding be provided to International Institutions participating as part of a Collaborative Research Accelerator?

A maximum of 20% of the total value of the CRA grant is permitted to be paid to International Institutions. However, an International Institution cannot lead a Workstream, and a researcher based at an International Institution cannot be nominated as a Workstream Lead. International Institutions can, however, form part of a Research Workstream led from an Australian Lead or national Collaborating Institution.

24. Does the Lead Institution need to be an NHMRC approved administering institution?

If the institution can provide an Australian Business Number (ABN) and fulfil the requirements as noted in the Funding Agreement, it is eligible to apply as Lead Institution.

People With a Lived Experience

25. Do you expect teams to include people with lived experience of metastatic breast cancer?

Bilateral engagement with people with a lived experience of any stage of breast cancer relevant to the research is mandated.

Applicants are also strongly encouraged to consider involving people with lived experience of breast cancer as members of the research team. Eligibility outlined in the guidelines includes: Active involvement of people with a lived experience of breast cancer appropriate to the type of research (including a minimum of two named consumers).

Funding

26. What is the funding amount for Collaborative Research Accelerator grants?

Each Collaborative Research Accelerator is capped at a total value of AU\$25 million. The funding period is capped at a maximum of 5 years. While there is no minimum value, NBCF expects applications to reflect the scale of ambition underpinning these grants. A co-funding commitment from participating Institutions is expected at 20% of the total Collaborative Research Accelerator award value, comprising a minimum 10% cash contribution. The remaining balance can be in-kind support or further cash contributions.

27. How many Collaborative Research Accelerator applications will be funded in this grant round?

NBCF aims to fund one Collaborative Research Accelerator grant, up to the value of AU\$25 million, with funding to commence in 2027.

Related question:

26a. What proportion of applications does NBCF expect to fund in this grant round?

There is no pre-subscribed quota of applications that will be funded. However, given the expected scale of the applications, it is anticipated that one Collaborative Research Accelerator will be awarded in this round.

28. Will Collaborative Research Accelerators be offered in years ahead? / Will this funding opportunity be offered every year?

The total number of Collaborative Research Accelerators to be funded over the 5 years of the *Pink Horizon Research Strategy* will depend on fundraising efforts and the number of fundable applications.

29. Is there a minimum value for a Collaborative Research Accelerator grant?

There is no minimum value for a Collaborative Research Accelerator grant. NBCF is expecting that applications will be at a scale that will enable significant progress towards the vision of *Zero Deaths from breast cancer*. It is expected that applicants will consider the budget required to successfully execute the research objectives and expected outcomes.

Co-Funding

30. What are the expectations for co-funding of a Collaborative Research Accelerator? Is this a cash or in-kind contribution?

Applications must include a commitment to provide at least 20% of the total grant funding requested in co-funding, comprising a minimum 10% cash contribution. The remaining balance can be in-kind support or further cash contributions. Applicants must provide details of their co-funding commitment, specifying both the total amount and the proportions of cash and in-kind contributions.

For example, if a Collaborative Research Accelerator is submitted with a total budget of AU\$25 million, NBCF will fund AU\$20 million and a total combined co-contribution of AU\$5 million over 5 years is expected to be provided by the Lead and/or Collaborating Institutions. The contribution by each institution should be agreed by the Collaborative Research Accelerator applicants with due consideration of the size of each institution, their capacity to contribute co-funding and the proposed research involvement of each institution in the Collaborative Research Accelerator research.

If a Collaborative Research Accelerator includes an International Institution, a cash or in-kind co-funding contribution from the International Institution is encouraged.

Related questions:

29a. Is the co-funding additional to or part of the AU\$25 million total grant allocation?

Co-funding is expected as part of the AU\$25, million total Collaborative Research Accelerator budget. For example, if a team requests a total budget of \$25 million, they will be required to provide \$5 million of this total (comprising a minimum of \$2.5 million in cash), with \$20 million to be provided by NBCF.

29b. Is co-funding required from the beginning of the funding period?

The 20% co-funding contribution is an annual contribution, and payment is to be provided yearly, as set out in the Funding Agreement.

29c. Are institutions from all Collaborating Institutions expected to contribute 20%?

NBCF acknowledges that the capacity to contribute co-funding will vary by institutional size and type. The proportional contribution made by each Collaborating Institution should be agreed by the Collaborative Research Accelerator applicants with due consideration of the size of each institution, their capacity to contribute co-funding and the proposed involvement of each institution in the Collaborative Research Accelerator research.

29d. When and how do we have to show that we have institutional co-funding?

Applicants will be expected to indicate their intention to provide a 20% co-funding contribution as part of the EOI. As part of the Full application, applicants will be required to provide a detailed budget and a letter of commitment to the provision of the 20% co-contribution.

29e. Are there any restrictions on the sources of the required 20% co-funding contribution?

NBCF does not mandate where the 20% co-funding contribution comes from.

29f. Can salaries that are (already) paid by the lead or collaborating institutions be counted towards the in-kind co-funding contribution?

Up to 10% of total project expenditure can be in the form of in-kind contributions. Proportional salaries for established research personnel or other specialist experts can be included as in-kind contributions where it is demonstrated that they will be working directly on the project. For further details on other acceptable in-kind contributions refer to the Guidelines section 4.3.

31. Does NBCF have advice on how to raise the 20% co-funding contribution?

An application must include a commitment to provide at least 20% in co-funding, comprising a minimum 10% cash contribution. NBCF is unable to offer guidance on how applicants source their 20% co-funding contribution.

Funding – Previously Funded Projects

32. Can Collaborative Research Accelerator grant funding be used to augment prior funding (by NBCF or another funder) to continue research that shows promising results?

Collaborative Research Accelerators can build on existing evidence and knowledge but should not duplicate existing or planned research. In building on previous research, it is important to note that Collaborative Research Accelerator grants aim to fund a collaborative ecosystem of researchers and research teams working together on a series of directly connected Research Workstreams to address an intractable question/s with a clear line of sight to *Zero Deaths from breast cancer*. It will be important that any extension of existing research reflects this ambition.

In the event of similar funding being offered concomitantly to an applicant by NBCF and another research funder, NBCF reserves the right to withdraw the offer of funding wholly or in part.

Budget

33. In the Budget section of the EOI Application, does the “Total Grant Expenditure” circled in red below, include the 10% cash-contribution?

Budget category	Year 1 (\$)	Year 2 (\$)	Year 3 (\$)	Year 4 (\$)	Year 5 (\$)	Total (\$)
Infrastructure						
Consumables						
Equipment						
International collaboration						
Investigator salaries (PI, Co-I, AI)						
Additional personnel salaries						
Total grant expenditure						
Total funds requested from NBCF						
Total cash co-contributions (min 10%)						
Remaining co-contributions value (in-kind)						
Total grant funding						

Yes, the Total Grant Expenditure does include the cash-contribution. The rows that follow are where the funding arrangements are broken down (e.g. NBCF funds, co-funds)

34. Which budget items can be requested in a Collaborative Research Accelerator?

See NBCF CRA Guidelines and Grant Expenditure Guidelines for detailed information. The elements that will be considered in the budget for a Collaborative Research Accelerator include:

- salary support for Principal Investigator, Lead Co-Investigator, Co-Investigators, and Associate Investigators.
- research support staff deemed appropriate to ensure the successful completion of the research (e.g. research assistants / officers, junior postdoctoral fellows, and specialised personnel such as bio-informaticians, statisticians, project managers)
- PhD stipends
- Infrastructure, equipment, consumables, and other research related costs, including consumer-related activities.

Related question:

31a. Will full salary costs be provided?

Full salary support can be provided for the Principal Investigator, Co-Investigator(s), Associate Investigators and for research support staff. Requested salaries must be justified, competitive and consistent with university / institute scales and will be reviewed as part of the application process.

35. In the EOI Budget, a category for 'other' research costs appears to be missing. Where can I include costs that fall outside of the current seven categories?

For the EOI please include any 'other' research costs into Infrastructure.

The Full Application Budget Template will have a category for "Infrastructure and Other"

Reviewers

36. Will grant scores and reviewers' comments be provided to applicants? / Will application feedback (against selection criteria) be provided to unsuccessful applicants?

EOI applications will not receive specific feedback on their applications.

All Full Applications will receive general feedback following the outcome of their applications, which may include reviewer comments.

37. Who will be on the review panel for the Collaborative Research Accelerators?

The Expert Review Committee will include national and international researchers, clinical researchers, and consumers. The panel will reflect the key areas needed to review applications against the assessment criteria.

Panel members will need to declare any conflicts of interest in relation to any applications under review in order to ensure a fair and transparent process. NBCF intends to use the same committee for review of EOI and full applications.

Contracts and Governance

38. What are the governance requirements for a Collaborative Research Accelerator?

See Section 7 of the grant guidelines for detailed information. Collaborative Research Accelerators must be overseen by a self-formed Governance Committee. The Committee should have an agreed Governance Lead (most likely the Principal Investigator for the Collaborative Research Accelerator), each Co-I named as a Workstream Lead, representation from each Collaborating Institution and should include at least one early career researcher and at least one consumer.

The Governance Committee will oversee the integrity, performance and collaborative nature of the research conducted under the Collaborative Research Accelerator.

The functions and processes of the Collaborative Research Accelerator Governance Committee must be transparent to the Lead Institution, all Collaborating Institutions, International Institutions and all Collaborative Research Accelerator researchers.

Research governance of individual Research Workstreams should occur in line with the policies of the institutions in which the research is being conducted.

39. Will NBCF manage the contractual agreement with partners?

NBCF is not responsible for managing the contractual agreements between the Lead Institution and the collaborating partners. The Lead Institution is responsible for managing the contractual arrangements with collaborating partners and must align with the terms of the Funding Agreement.

40. What funding agreement template will be used for the Collaborative Research Accelerator grant?

For the Collaborative Research Accelerator grant scheme, NBCF will provide a template for the Funding Agreement to all teams invited to submit a full application. Once an application is successful, the funding agreement will be between NBCF and the Lead Institution.

NBCF will not mandate a template for the Institution Agreements to be made between the Lead Institution and all participating institutions. However, these Agreements will be expected to reference and reflect the terms of the NBCF Funding Agreement.

41. Will NBCF fund research that addresses issues relevant to government policy or programs?

Applicants should note that NBCF funds research through its competitive grant schemes, with all applications independently peer-reviewed and assessed on scientific excellence and merit. NBCF supports research across four priority areas: **prevent, detect, stop, and treat** breast cancer. To be competitive, applications must demonstrate a clear line of sight to meaningful impact, including how the proposed research will contribute to improved outcomes and ultimately reduce deaths from breast cancer.

Supporting Documents

42. Where can I find the most recent versions of the NBCF Grant Expenditure Guidelines and the CRA Guidelines?

All supporting documents for NBCF Grant Schemes can be found on the [NBCF Grant Scheme | National Breast Cancer Foundation](#) website. Please only use the Guidelines linked to this page of the website (rather than googling them) in order to ensure you are using the most recent version.