

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQs)

National Intelligence Discovery Grants (NIDG) for funding commencing in 2025 (EIID25R1 and ID25R1)

Version 1 - Release date: 8 August 2024

- All participants should read the *Grant Guidelines for the National Intelligence Discovery Grants (NIDG) for funding commencing in 2025* (Grant Guidelines) and specific *Instructions to Applicants* (ITAs) documents available on [GrantConnect](#) as they contain important information for Research Office staff and individual participants preparing applications.
- ARC/ONI do not respond to queries from individual participants. Individual participants should direct all queries regarding NIDG grant opportunities to their Administering Organisation's Research Office (or equivalent). If further information regarding the NIDG program is required, the Research Office should email ARC-NIDG@arc.gov.au or call 02 6206 7206.
- Information regarding the *Research Management System* (RMS) is available at the Grants Services page on the [ARC website](#), or by contacting RMSSupport@arc.gov.au for assistance.
- To access the ONI version of RMS go to: <https://rmsoni.researchgrants.gov.au/RMS>
- Please ensure that your application is eligible in accordance with the *NIDG Grant Guidelines*.
- You must carefully read the Grant Guidelines for all eligibility requirements.
- This Frequently Asked Questions document will be updated as required.

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1 Grant Program Name Change to ‘NIDG’

1.1 Has the NISDRG Grant program been renamed?

Yes. The *National Intelligence and Security Discovery Research Grants* (NISDRG) Program has been simplified to the *National Intelligence Discovery Grants* (NIDG) Program for the 2024 grant round (for funding commencing in 2025). Please note the new **ONI-RMS Program Codes** have updated from **EINI** to **EIID** (EOI) and **NI** to **ID** (full application) [e.g. EIID25 & ID25 for 2025].

2 Differences from ARC grant programs

2.1 Is the NIDG Program funded by the ARC?

No. The NIDG Program has been fully funded by the *Office of National Intelligence* (ONI). It is not using any Australian Research Council (ARC) funding.

The ARC is providing grant services to ONI, which means the ARC will facilitate the application and assessment process, as well as undertake the day-to-day management of awarded grants on behalf of the ONI.

2.2 The ARC Policies only reference the National Competitive Grants Program (NCGP) and ARC funding, do they really apply?

Compliance with ARC Policies detailed in the *NIDG Grant Guidelines* and the *NIDG Grant Agreement* is required for the NIDG program.

Where Policies reference ‘ARC funding applications’ or ‘ARC funded projects’ this also means ‘funding applications for grants funded by other Commonwealth entities administered by the ARC’ and ‘funded projects of other entities administered by the ARC’.

2.3 Do NIDG applications or awarded grants count towards NCGP grant eligibility limits?

No. The NIDG Program applications and grants do not impact NCGP application or grant eligibility limits.

3 EOI Form

3.1 Matters to note before completing the EOI form

An EOI must be prepared and submitted through the [ONI portal](#) of the Research Management System (RMS) as a succinct but comprehensive summary of the proposed research. The EOI must contain all the information necessary for an assessment of the EOI without the need for further written or oral explanation, or reference to additional documentation including the internet. All details in the EOI must be current at the time of submission.

Participants can use their ARC RMS login ID and password to access the portal. More information about RMS, and links to the [ONI RMS portal](#) for this Grant Opportunity, is available on the [Research Grants website](#).

3.2 Can the CI change roles from the EOI to full application?

The CI named in the EOI application may remain the Lead CI in the full application, however when adding additional CIs to the full application, the roles can be changed for the betterment of the project. You will need to ensure that the Lead CI has the capacity to manage the project as per the Grant Guidelines.

3.3 Should I include details of the project team in the project description of my EOI application?

The EOI one-page project description should provide details about the proposed project and how it will significantly advance the science and technology area pertaining to the Challenge selected.

If successful, the full application will assess the academic (team) merit. Therefore, you do not need to provide project team details. However, you may add information about the project team in the EOI application, if you believe that adding information will enhance the focus on how the project will address the relevant Challenge.

3.4 Can a non-ongoing Postdoctoral Researcher submit an EOI application and then gather a team together if the EOI is successful?

Yes. The Grant Guidelines state that the first named CI (Project Lead) must be engaged by the Administering Organisation. Engaged means that a formal arrangement is in place that attaches the CI to the relevant eligible organisation. If not an employee, the researcher must have access to research support comparable to employees e.g. an emeritus appointment.

4 Full Application Form

4.1 Why do I have to provide passport or visa information for all Chief Investigators and Partner Investigators for Participant Eligibility in RMS? Where does this information go and for what purpose?

The Passport and Visa information entered in RMS enables the verification of Australian citizenship, Australian Permanent Residency or New Zealand Special Category Visa status of named participants on NIDG applications. Information will be checked with the document issuer or official record holder via third party systems for the purpose of confirmation. Information entered into RMS will not be visible to other applicants or assessors, although can be viewed by Research Office staff of the Administering Organisation for the application.

4.2 My passport has or is due to expire. I am planning to apply for a new passport but for the purpose of citizenship proof in F3, will this passport suffice?

Yes. As long as the details you enter into RMS are from the one document (a current or expired passport), your details will be able to be verified. If there are any issues regarding your citizenship we will contact you.

4.3 Are Australian National Intelligence Community member entities and their staff allowed to be named as participants in these grants?

No. Member entities of the Australian National Intelligence Community (NIC) (a list is available on the [ONI website](#)) and their staff are not to be named participants (Chief or Partner Investigators), and NIC member entities (agencies) are not to be listed as an Other Organisation in a NIDG application or funded grant.

4.4 Can Publicly Funded Research Agencies (PFRAs) be named as an Other Organisation in NIDG grants?

Yes, a PFRA can be named as an Other Organisation. However, there can be no flow of grant funds, either directly or indirectly, to the PFRA. The PFRA must contribute their own resources e.g. staff time, facility access, etc, into the Project.

4.5 Are letters of support from an intelligence agency permitted?

No. Letters of support from an intelligence agency are not permitted to be included as part of an application.

5 Awards, Fellowships & Scholarships

5.1 Who can apply for the for the NIDG Fellowship award?

The Fellowship award is available to Chief Investigators with less than 10 years since the award of their earliest PhD, including Allowable Career Interruptions. This may include Early-Mid Career Researchers (EMCR) and Engaged personnel as defined in the Grant Guidelines.

Only one NIDG Fellowship can be requested per grant. The NIDG Fellowship can be requested in addition to other personnel salary from eligible universities or other organisations. Note that the use of Fellowship funding must be identified in the Activity Budget (one-line item which also indicates if Fellowship is on top of other funding sources).

5.2 Who can apply for the for the NIDG Scholarship?

A postgraduate researcher can apply for the NIDG Scholarship, however only one NIDG Scholarship can be requested per grant (maximum \$60,000 per

project). The NIDG Scholarship can be requested in addition to other personnel salary (refer Grant Agreement Section A2.2.7) within the application and from eligible universities. Note that the use of Scholarship funds must be identified in the Activity Budget (one-line item which also indicates if Scholarship is on top of other funding sources).

5.3 Are the NIDG awards on top of the \$800,000 funding available?

No. The NIDG awards are included in the funding available to the project. The Awards have been designed to provide additional salary support to EMCR and post-graduate students.

5.4 Who can draw salary from the grant?

- Personnel that meet the citizen eligibility criteria
- CIs with less than 10 years since the award of earliest PhD, including Allowable Career Interruptions (*Fellowship only*)
- Postgraduate researchers (*salary plus NIDG scholarship*)
- Other personnel.

5.5 Who cannot draw a salary?

- Any CI not awarded a NIDG Fellowship
- Partner Investigators.

5.6 The Guidelines suggest that no more than one HDR can be requested in this scheme.

Salaries for multiple HDR, or students are allowable under the NIDG Grant Guidelines. Each student must be equivalent to 1.0 FTE, they can participate on a part-time basis, but they are individually a full employee for budget purposes.

6 Assessment

6.1 Would it be beneficial to have multiple institutions listed on a grant application?

The number of participants or institutions will not determine the success of an application. All applications are assessed based on the eligibility and assessment criteria outlined in the Grant Guidelines to determine merit and funding decisions. Applications should include the people and organisations most suitable and necessary to undertake the proposed research.

6.2 Are funding decisions made, based solely on application merit, or is the intention to fund a grant in each Challenge area?

The ideal scenario is that all Challenges are supported through the funded research. ARC will provide a list of meritorious grant applications to ONI and

the NIC. ONI and the NIC will determine the recommended grants based on the fit with the relevant set of Challenges, the National Intelligence Community priority research needs, Australia's national interest, including national security, applications already funded, and available funding.

7 Intelligence Challenges

7.1 What are the NIDG Intelligence Challenges and how do I find out more about them?

The Intelligence Challenges have been developed under the broad *National Security Science and Technology Priorities (2020)*.

The Intelligence Challenges are priority research areas which may be updated from round to round. Applications must address one or more (up to a maximum of three) of the Intelligence Challenges.

The Intelligence Challenges can be found on [GrantConnect](#):

- Forecast Opportunity – **ID25R1**

Information about the [Intelligence Challenges](#) is also available on the Research Grants Website. The Intelligence Challenges will not change between the EIID25 EOI and the ID25 full application Grant Opportunities.

7.2 Have the Challenges changed since the previous Grant Opportunity?

The Intelligence Challenges have been updated in 2024.

This includes the update of '*Emerging biological and material science exploitation challenges*' into two separate challenges: '*Emerging biological science challenges*' and '*Emerging material science challenges*'. As well as updates to applicable research fields within all Challenges.

It is recommended that you review the updated Challenges before you start work on your EOI application. Unsuccessful applicants from previous rounds are welcome to reapply. Information about the [Intelligence Challenges](#) is available on the Research Grants Website.

7.3 Will the Challenges be the same in the next Grant Opportunity opening next year?

The National Intelligence Challenges may be reviewed prior to the next Grant Opportunity.

8 Technological Readiness Level

8.1 A Technological Readiness Level (TRL) is required within the application form, do you expect proposed research to have a minimum TRL?

No. The TRL scale is used only to understand the Technological Readiness Level at the commencement of the proposed research. There is no minimum or maximum TRL expectation, however, the objective of the NIDG Program is to support fundamental research which is generally between TRL 1 and 3 at the time of project commencement.

9 Australian Sovereignty and Collaborations

9.1 Does everyone working on the Grant Project need to be an Australian Citizen?

All personnel **paid** from the grant must be an Australian citizen, have permanent residency or hold a New Zealand Special Category Visa as detailed in the Grant Guidelines at Section 4.17c and the Grant Agreement, at section A2.2.7 ('Specified Personnel') & A2.2.8 ('Other Personnel').

All named applicants must meet the citizenship eligibility requirements at the time of application submission, and if awarded, at all times throughout the grant.

Individuals working on the Project who would be named in publications or would otherwise link their association with the Government funded project must also comply with the citizenship eligibility criteria.

9.2 Other Organisations must be Australian organisations. What does 'Australian Organisation' mean for the purpose of the NIDG Program?

As per the glossary in the Grant Guidelines, an Australian Organisation has its headquarters in Australia, has a board with a majority of Australian citizens or Australian residents, and has an Australian Business Number (ABN).

9.3 Can the project collaborate with start-up companies?

Yes, while Grants are provided to Australian Universities, collaborative engagement with Australian start-up companies is strongly encouraged.

9.4 Are international collaborations supported by the grant?

Yes, however any international collaboration must be necessary to the Project and justified in relevant questions in the form, including the project description and budget justifications.

9.5 If I have an international collaboration, what should I be aware of?

Researchers may discuss their projects with outside parties however, they should be mindful of not divulging potential IP or discoveries that should be retained for the benefit of Australia. The projects are not Government classified, but we suggest that the research be discussed with respect to University foreign interference policies and guidelines.

Please talk to your heads of department, and make use of policies, systems and regulations within the university. Contact your University's Security Office (counter foreign interference officer) to seek specific consideration of the proposal and advice regarding international sharing and collaboration (e.g. project travel, potential collaborations and personnel engagement).

9.6 Should we be concerned about foreign interference?

Proposals and projects must comply with the Grant Guidelines and all relevant laws and regulations including having regard to the [Guidelines to Counter Foreign Interference in the Australian University Sector](#) published on the Department of Education website.

Early engagement with your University's Security Office (counter foreign interference officer) to seek specific consideration of the proposal and advice regarding international sharing and collaboration, in relation to project travel, potential collaborations and personnel engagement (e.g. eligibility requirements) is highly recommended.

10 Security and Outcome Publishing

10.1 As this program is funded by ONI is there a security classification requirement? Or will outcomes of the research be restricted?

The NIDG program is intended to facilitate unclassified research and therefore all research outputs may be published or made available in accordance with the ARC *Open Access Policy* available on the [ARC Website](#) (refer FAQ 9.5).

ONI requests notification of your peer-reviewed publications as and when they are published.

11 RMS Queries

11.1 Is the EOI and full application form available in RMS and how do I find the ONI RMS portal to apply?

EOI applications for the NIDG Grant Opportunity must be prepared and submitted through this specific [ONI RMS portal](#). The ONI-RMS portal can be found on the RGS website www.researchgrants.gov.au. You can locate the '*Applicant Expressions of Interest Management*' section in the Action Centre. Select the round from the drop-down selection and click '*Create Draft Expression of Interest*'.

If you are unable to locate the '*Applicant Expressions of Interest Management*' section in the Action Centre you will need an 'applicant role' applied to your account. Please contact your Research Office to have this role applied.

If you are a successful EOI applicant you will be invited to submit a full application. You will be able to access the application via [ONI RMS portal](#) once it has been created by your Research Office.

Participants can use their ARC RMS login ID and password to access the ONI RMS portal. More information about RMS, and links to the ONI RMS portal for this Grant Opportunity, are also available on the [Research Grants website](#).

11.2 If I modify my user details in ARC-RMS, does this get reflected in the NIDG application form?

The information currently stored in an RMS participant's 'Person Profile' will be utilised across all RMS portals for auto-populating sections of the application form. 'Person Profile' information can be edited by a participant in any portal and the change will be reflected in the others (i.e. if 'Person Profile' information is changed in the ONI portal of RMS these changes will be automatically reflected in the 'Person Profile' section of ARC-RMS).

Please check your RMS profile in the ONI RMS instance to ensure any Conflicts of Interest are captured and managed within RMS.

Please ensure you have updated your Personal Details page of RMS as there are questions that must be answered by applicants.

Note that all fields within your RMS 'Person Profile' flow across into other RMS instances except for Admin Organisation. If you are engaged with an Administering Organisation for an NIDG application/grant which differs from an existing ARC/NCGP grant, or you have changed your Administering Organisation for a NCGP grant, you may need to update your Admin Organisation in RMS.

11.3 Why aren't my Field of Research codes appearing in my RMS profile?

In 2020, a new set of ANZSRC Fields of Research (FoR) codes were released by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS). 2008 FoR codes can no longer be used – you will need to convert any existing 2008 codes to the 2020 codes within your person profile for them to auto-populate into the application form. More information about converting FoR codes can be found in the RMS User Management Guide located on the [Research Grants Website](#).

11.4 RMS Warning Messages

To help ensure eligibility criteria are met, the EOI and Full Application Forms include various warning messages. Please note that errors will clear once relevant information is provided or parameters are met.

11.5 For example, for Question A2, the full application form does not allow a user to select a Relevant Organisation. This then causes a validation error that states the Admin Organisation has no participants.

All organisations participating in the NIDG program and listed in Question A3 (Organisation Participant Summary) must have at least one named participant listed in Question A2 (Person Participant Summary).

For this question to validate all participants must complete the relevant question in **Part F** of the application form, once questions F10 and F11 are completed the error will disappear. If the error remains, check that the employment of the participant is the same as the organisation listed in Question A3 (you must select the organisation from the drop-down list and not type the name in).

11.6 Clarification of Section F7 Research Load from non-ONI sources in the application

Where the applicant is currently receiving funding for research that is from sources other than the NISDRG / NIDG program, including those funded by ONI, a document (PDF) listing details and formatted as outlined in the *Instructions to Applicants* should be uploaded. This section will assist the NIDG assessors and ONI with an indication of the work load that CIs and PIs will be undertaking should the application be funded.

11.7 I have completed the application, it is still in draft and cannot submit

If you have completed all questions and the Form titles have all changed from 'red' to 'green', but the form is still at Draft, close and re-open the application form. The form should now be at *Ready to Submit* and you should see the *Submit to the Research Office* button.

12 General Queries

12.1 Where can I find the key dates for the NIDG program?

You can find the NIDG key dates on the Research Grant Services website <https://www.researchgrants.gov.au/key-dates-nidg>

12.2 Can applications with a social sciences or humanities focus, or applications with a mix of STEM and non-STEM participants, be submitted for NIDG?

Yes, applications with a social science or humanities focus are encouraged. Multi-disciplinary projects are encouraged. Applications must address one or more (up to three maximum) of the Intelligence Challenges and will be assessed on their merits.

12.3 Does the DVCR and Participant certification within RMS replace the ARC written evidence document (certification proforma) for all named participants and their organisations?

The Certification Proforma document which was previously available on [GrantConnect](#) has been replaced with a simplified process through RMS.

The RMS process includes:

- participant certification within the RMS application form
- an additional Deputy Vice-Chancellor – Research (DVCR) certification clause in RMS prior to submission (delegate certification).

It remains the responsibility of the Administering Organisation to obtain and hold confirmation of participating organisation certification. A template is not required.

12.4 Section 10.6 of the Grant Guidelines states that unsuccessful NIDG applications may be considered for funding under an ARC scheme. Is this likely?

The intention of this clause is to enable the ARC to review, and if eligible, to fund unsuccessful NIDG applications. The ARC will only seek NIDG applications for review if the funding allocation for the NCGP is not exhausted by meritorious applications. Due to the high number and quality of submissions within the NCGP schemes it is unlikely that the ARC will require unsuccessful NIDG applications for funding.

12.5 Compliance with Artificial Intelligence (AI) policies

The proposed project, if successful, will need to comply with applicable AI policies, including:

- as applicable, *Artificial Intelligence: Australia's Ethics Framework* (2019) and [Australia's Artificial Intelligence \(AI\) Ethics Principles](#).

12.6 Can I use generative Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools in writing my application?

NIDG is being managed by the ARC on behalf of ONI. ARC policies on the use of generative AI in preparing your application will apply. Please see the advice to applicants in ARC's *Policy on Use of Generative Artificial Intelligence in ARC's grants programs* available on the [ARC website](#).

13 Post Award

13.1 Where will I find feedback about unsuccessful applications?

Upon announcement of an Opportunity, feedback is provided to applicants within RMS.

For further information on locating feedback to unsuccessful applicants please see the 'How to View Outcomes' page on the [Research Grants website](#).

13.2 Security Briefing

Each named participant must attend a security briefing conducted by ONI prior to commencing the project. This briefing will be held on-line via videoconference.

13.3 If the grant is awarded, how will progress be measured?

Each project is required to complete an Activity Plan which incorporates a Key Performance Indicator (KPI) report and a Recruitment Plan at the beginning of the project. The targets entered at this stage of the Project will be reported against in a six-monthly progress report. In addition, financial acquittals and outreach by ONI will provide additional insight into the progress of research funded under the NIDG program.

13.4 How will ONI's outreach for the NIDG program be conducted?

ONI or NIC outreach under the NIDG program will support the program objective to, 'enhance collaboration in the research, science and technology community'. Outreach will take the form of occasional university visits, the annual NIC Academic-Industry-Government Summit, and ad hoc virtual engagements, e.g. to follow up on published papers.

13.5 Presenting funded research outcomes at an annual Intelligence Community event

NIDG ONI grant recipients are required to present funded research outcomes at an annual National Intelligence Community (NIC) academic, industry and Government summit.

This is anticipated to be held late in the second half of each year in Canberra. At least one named project investigator should attend the event which will provide a networking opportunity with the National Intelligence Community and an opportunity to present your research to the attendees.

Applicants should include a line in each year of the budget for travel to the event (e.g. travel to Canberra) which can include accommodation for three nights and flights (depending on participants location). A registration fee is not applicable.

13.6 Reporting of publications and published materials

NIDG grant recipients are required to notify ONI/ARC and provide a pdf (electronic) copy as soon as practical after article, or research output, acceptance by the relevant publisher. Information regarding publications and published materials, including when publications are accepted, must also be provided in progress reports and the Final Report.