



Melbourne Collaborative Research Infrastructure Program

Stage Two Instructions to Applicants

1. Introduction

This document is intended to provide guidance and instructions to research infrastructure Platforms interested in applying for funding by the Melbourne Collaborative Research Infrastructure Program (MCRIP). It is intended to be read in conjunction with the following Supporting Documents, which can be found on the MCRIP [website](#):

- Stage Two Funding Rules
- Application templates
- Frequently asked questions

MCRIP Stage One funds have been fully committed and funded positions in 13 Platforms. MCRIP Stage Two will be implemented during the period 2016-2019 and will continue to support eligible existing Platforms and extend support to new Platforms.

2. Preparing your application

For MCRIP Stage Two there are three categories of application.

Category 1 Existing Platforms seeking continuation of support; no co-investment required.

Category 2 Existing Platforms requesting additional staff support above Stage One levels; co-investment required.

Category 3 New Platform activities seeking support for staff; co-investment required.

To confirm which category application to prepare for your Platform, please refer to the decision tree in [Appendix A](#).

2.1. Category 1: Existing Platforms seeking continuation of support; no co-investment required.

The application for Category 1 support consists of a four page application covering:

- A. Description of the three years of Platform activity during MCRIP Stage One, including;
 1. Funding arrangements (DVCR and cash co-investment investment amounts and term);
 2. Stage One personnel summary
 3. Platform activity summary
 4. Objectives and Key Performance Indicators and how these have been met.
 5. Successes during Stage One.
- B. MCRIP Stage Two Platform Operations Strategy, including;
 6. Funding request (cash investment amounts and term);
 7. Personnel budget summary;
 8. In-kind salary contributions to the Platform;
 9. Governance arrangements;
 10. Objectives and Key Performance Indicators for Stage Two.

A template for Category One applications is available on the scheme website.

2.2. Category 2: Existing Platforms requesting additional staff support; co-investment required.

The application for Category 2 support consists of an application document and a presentation to MCRIC.

- A. Two page application outlining the investment rationale including;
 1. Funding request (cash investment amounts and term);
 2. Personnel budget summary;
 3. Budget justification for the additional technical support;
- B. 15 minute presentation to MCRIC by the Platform Manager, that

- Briefly summarises the current activity within the Platform, highlights particular areas of success and the impact the Platform has had on the University's research impact or performance;
- Articulates the future plans for the Platform, including but not limited to:
 - Reiterated (or revised) vision and mission statements;
 - Objectives and key performance indicators over the new term;
 - How increased staff levels will facilitate Platform growth in terms of usage and/or equipment; and
 - Any particular areas of focus for the Platform arising from the new positions.

The presentation will be used as a record of these elements and as such should be self-contained in its provision of information. The Platform Academic Champion and one member of the User Group should also be in attendance to answer any questions from MCRIC following the presentation. A template for Category 2 applications is available on the scheme [website](#).

2.3. Category 3: New Platform activities seeking support; co-investment required.

The application for Category 3 support consists of an application document and a presentation to MCRIC:

- A. Ten page applications that addresses the Business Planning Guidelines (Section 3, below), and a detailed budget. The detailed budget should include;

- Budget projections over the term of the funding;
- Forecast of usage and salary on costs, indexation and increments.

Instructions on how to prepare the budget can be found in Section 4 and a template is available on the MCRIP [website](#).

- B. 15 minute presentation to MCRIC by the Academic Champion/Platform Manager, that
- Briefly summarises the current activity within the Platform, highlights particular areas of success and the impact the Platform has had on the University's research impact or performance.
 - Articulates how the Platform addresses the criteria of collaborative research infrastructure.
 - Describes three year plan for the Platform, including but not limited to:
 - Vision and mission statements;
 - Objectives and key performance indicators;
 - Service, training and engagement offerings of the Platform.

The presentation will be used as a record of these elements and as such should be self-contained in its provision of information. Following the presentation MCRIC will ask questions of the applicants. Templates for Category 3 applications are available on the scheme website.

3. Business Planning Guidelines for Category 3 applications

Note. All examples are for illustrative purposes only.

3.1 Mission and Vision

The Platform must clearly define its Mission (fundamental purpose) and Vision (what the Platform strives to achieve in the future). In communicating a purpose it is helpful to identify core values, principal products and/or

Example

Mission: The University of Melbourne's Cytometry Platform will collaborate with researchers of the University, Precinct and industry in applying cutting-edge cytometric technology to research. Its service will exemplify quality, customer care, and ongoing education and development.

Vision: The University of Melbourne's Cytometry Platform will be the leader in a coordinated sharing of cytometry infrastructure across the Precinct, and will be first to acquire the latest cutting-edge technology in support of the research community.

sectors serviced. Consider whether the Platform is primarily about quality service, provision of training or access to state of the art equipment. The Vision should capture a strategic intent that focuses and inspires the Platform to work towards a common goal.

3.2 Strategic Objectives and the Research Case

Outline specific strategic objectives for the short-term (1-2 years) and the medium-term (3-5 years), and propose the steps to be taken to meet these objectives. Clearly argue the case for how meeting these objectives furthers the research endeavours of the University. How will the Platform leverage future opportunities, including, where appropriate, the National Collaborative Research Infrastructure Scheme and/or the Australian Research Council's Linkage Infrastructure, Equipment and Facilities grants?

Example

Short-term Strategic Objectives:

- Recruit senior cytometry specialist/manager (HEW 9+)
- Consolidate service contracts on equipment
- Have Imaging Cytometry be available to Biomedical researchers
- Organise an Annual Workshop for the Precinct
- Precinct/site licence of analysis software
- Introduce QA/QC framework

Medium-term Strategic Objectives:

- In partnership with VLSCI, introduce Bioinformatics tools for cytometry data analysis
- Organise MOUs with Cytometry Platforms of WEHI, MCRI, VCCC (Peter Mac) for shared access, pricing, etc
- Obtain CyTOF Mass Spectrometry Cytometry capability (ARC LIEF)

3.3 Key Assets and/or Services

Provide a list of the all the key assets and services to be incorporated into the Platform. For assets, include locations, replacement costs and the source (or sources) of original funding.

Example

Services:

- Particle sorting (FACS)
- Particle analysis (including Imaging Cytometry)
- Experiment and panel design
- Data Analysis

Key Assets:

- Department of Microbiology and Immunology (Building 184)
 - 2x FACSCalibur (\$150K each)
 - 2x MoFlo Astrios (\$500K each)
- Melbourne Dental School (Building 702)
 - MoFlo XDP (\$500K)
 - FC500 (\$150K)
- Melbourne Brain Centre (Building 144)
 - Aria III (\$500K)
 - Cyan (\$200K)
- Department of Chemical & Biomolecular Engineering (Building 165)
 - Amnis Image Stream (\$500k)
 - Partec (\$200K)
- Department of Medicine (RMH)
 - Cyan HyperCyt (\$250K)

3.4 Stakeholders

List all the relevant stakeholders of the Platform. This would normally entail the University's Faculties and Departments, but may also include external (precinct) partners. Any specific academic 'champions' representing the Platform should also be noted. In both cases, the reasoning for them being a significant stakeholder, apart from being a user, should be noted.

Example

- Two principal Faculties in MDHS and Engineering
- Key Precinct stakeholders include WEHI, MCRI and soon to be Peter Mac through VCCC
- Department of Microbiology and Immunology, largest node in the University under the leadership of Dale Godfrey
- Melbourne Dental School
- Melbourne Brain Centre, under the leadership of Martin Pera (Stem Cell)
- Department of Chemical & Biomolecular Engineering, under the leadership of Angus Johnston and Frank Caruso (Nanotechnology)

3.5 Leadership and Governance

The overall governance of the University's research infrastructure falls to the DVC (Research), with delegated authority to provide leadership to the portfolio by the PVC (Research Infrastructure & Systems). The Melbourne Collaborative Research Infrastructure Committee (MCRIC) provides high-level advice to the DVC(R) (. Note that existing infrastructure/Platforms may have legacy agreements as part of the LIEF/NCRIS/EIF arrangements with other organisations, where governance frameworks are often dictated by funding rules, and a period of transition may be required to fully adopt new University governance frameworks. Nevertheless, new and existing governance structures of the University must comply with the following core principles:

- Specific leadership and accountability for strategic direction of research capabilities are to be identified;
- The leadership group will be representative of all vested stakeholders for each specific capability; and
- A mechanism for end-user feedback on operational performance aspects of Platforms must co-exist with the strategic leadership group.

It is recommended that each capability area develop strategic leadership through/via a Steering Committee, whilst a User Committee is established to provide ongoing input on operational effectiveness of underlying Platforms. These two groups are discussed in detail below.

3.6 Capability Steering Committee

The Steering Committee must nominate a Chair to represent and speak for the capability and the representative Platforms. It is anticipated that the formation of the Steering Committee is the first step in initiating the coordination activity of any capability, including oversight in preparation of the business plan guided by this document and ensuring conformance to future research infrastructure related policy. The MCRIC representative within the Steering Committee will assist in shepherding the business plan development process.

Example

- Dale Godfrey (Chair, Microbiology & Immunology)
- Martin Pera (MBC/Stem Cell Australia)
- Angus Johnston (Chemical & Biomolecular Engineering, technical expertise and AFI Platform 'node' Leader)
- Melbourne Dental School representative
- Precinct representative (e.g. WEHI's Head of Flow Cytometry)
- Platform Manager (to be appointed)
- Chair of the User Committee
- Sach Jayasinghe (MCRIC representative and technical expertise)

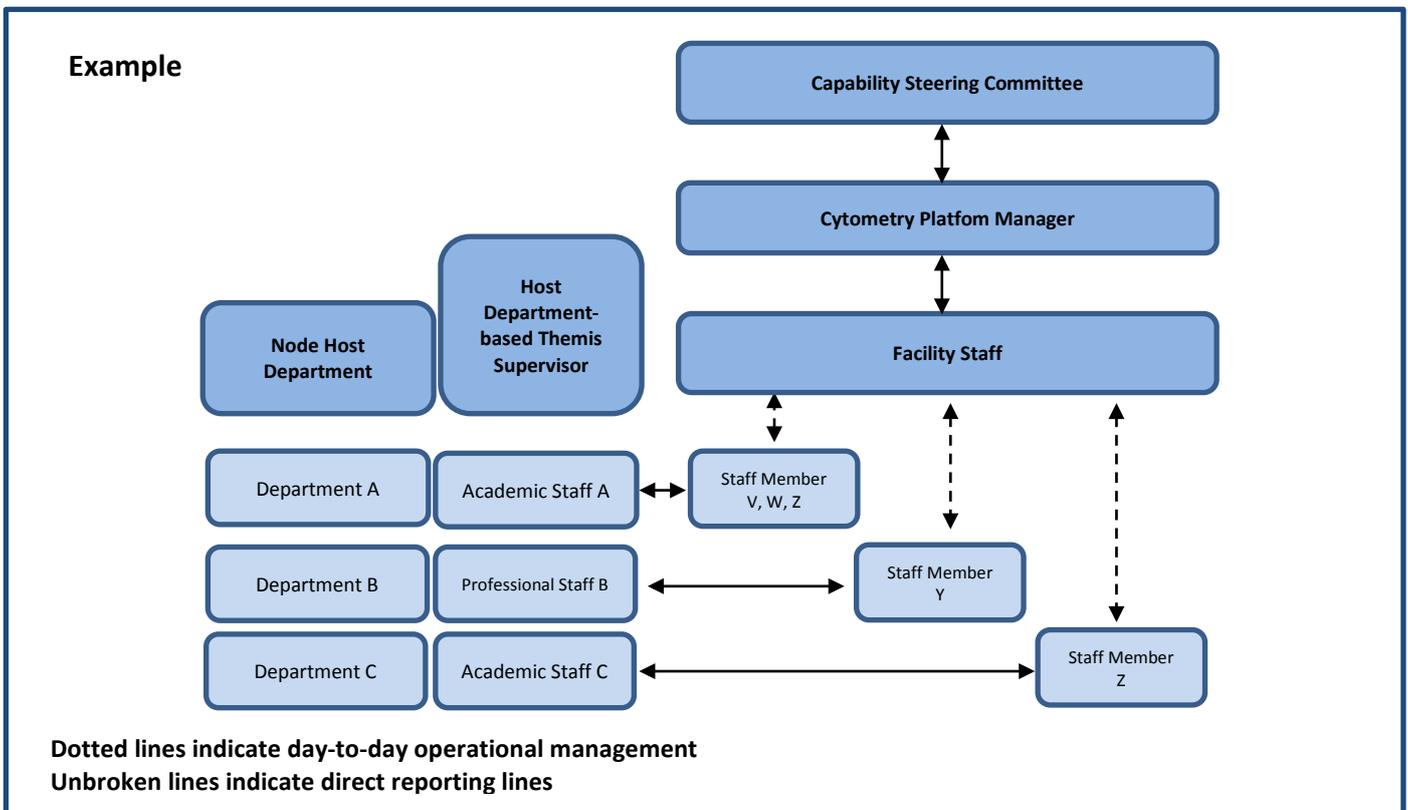
3.7 Platform User Committee

Each Platform is to have a User Committee with a nominated Chair to represent the interests of the end-users. The Chair cannot be a member of MCRIC or the Platform’s Steering Committee. However, it is recommended that a member of the Steering Committee be part of the User Committee to facilitate communication between the strategic and operational levels of the governance framework. Please identify the Chair of the User Committee and stipulate the regularity of the meetings as well as the procedure for reporting to the Steering Committee.

3.8 Technical Expertise and Professional Operations

Describe the professional management and technical expertise for the Platform. Explicitly identify the relevant staff and stipulate details: human resource scale (i.e. professional or academic) and classification level, proportional commitment to the Platform (i.e. FTE equivalence), and level of expertise and any specialisation required related to the research infrastructure capability. Convey how the technical staff align with the assets of the Platform and/or services provided. For example, is there a need for a one-to-one relationship between a technical officer and particular piece of equipment, or does a specialist skill set directly correlate with a singular service provided by the Platform? In addition, outline the career development opportunities for each of the staff members, and stipulate key performance indicators set for each level of the staff hierarchy in order to advance careers.

Outline the policy and procedures of how operations are managed across faculty, institute, departmental and/or organisational boundaries in regards to consolidated purchasing, management of staff and overall decision making. Full autonomy localised to individual nodes will be seen to be inconsistent with the criteria of MCRIP as defined in the Stage Two Funding Rules. Where appropriate, evidence of Heads, Deans and/or Institute Directors authorisation should be submitted endorsing coordinated ‘control’ across multiple nodes of a single Platform. For example, technical staff may report to a department-based ‘Themis’ supervisor, but take day-to-day operational direction from capability-specific leadership outside of the divisional boundaries (i.e. a matrix supervision structure).



3.9 Benchmarking

The proposed Platform should be benchmarked against at least two other national or international Platforms (if none exist, compare against Platforms of a similar capability). Consider the levels of technical expertise, operational procedures (access and fees), breadth of serviced provided, and/or extent of access to cutting-edge instrumentation; whatever is relevant to the particular capability area should be compared, contrasted and any gaps clearly identified. Based on the benchmarking, propose pragmatic options to address gaps of concern and articulate future aspirations.

3.10 Promotion

Outline the avenues to be used to promote the Platform, both internally and externally. To reflect the University-wide representation, each capability branding will precede with 'Melbourne' (e.g. Melbourne Cytometry). However, individual Platforms and nodes can promote existing divisional/partnership/agreement-based branding. Each Platform will have its own dedicated website, and any existing sites that are localised to individual departmental nodes will be consolidated under one University-branded website. However, individual nodes may continue to be linked back to departmental or institute websites. All collaborative research infrastructure capabilities will be captured under the University's central web pages with links to the aforementioned consolidated Platform website. Nominate the individual with overall responsibility for keeping the website information up to date.

Example

Central Website (www.research.unimelb.edu.au/research-infrastructure)

Cytometry is a technique for counting and characterising particles, such as cells and nanoparticles, using a stream of fluid, integration by a laser source and passing them by an electronic detection apparatus. It allows simultaneous multi-parametric analysis of the physical and/or chemical characteristics of up to thousands of particles per second. Flow cytometry describes one of its earliest incarnation, with recent expansion into other technological approaches such as imaging and laser scanning cytometry. Fluorescent activated cell sorting (FACS) describes the ability to physically isolate populations of interest, based on aforementioned physical and/or chemical characteristics, allowing for further downstream interrogation through application of other research tools.

The University of Melbourne has flow cytometry, imaging cytometry and FACS capabilities that cater to many research disciplines, including immunology, microbiology, stem cell biology, cancer biology and bioengineering. There is capability to detect up to 16 fluorescent parameters and sort 6 distinct populations simultaneously, and the ability to capture CCD image of each particle using the Amnis Imagestream Platform. The University also has dedicated technical specialists that can provide experiment design and data analysis expertise.

3.12 Precinct Positioning

Clearly identify the position of the proposed Platform within the Precinct, the State and/or Australia. For example, is the Platform duplicating a capability that already exists within the Precinct? Is the Platform likely to compete with others within the State? Any unique value propositions must be clearly articulated, and where appropriate, sound arguments must be presented to justify establishment of a University Platform in light of access to other local facilities.

3.13 Access Procedures and Schedule of Fees

Clearly outline the access policies and procedures. It is mandated that all Platforms will have an open policy to all users within the Precinct. However, any preferential access should be noted with appropriate justification. Outline the schedule of fees for all services and access to instrumentation within the Platform. Commercial

rates must represent charges that are inclusive of all direct and indirect costs of the Platform, and should not be subsidised by any public funding and adhere to **national competitive neutrality policy**.

3.14 Funding Arrangements Summary

Summarise the funding arrangements for the MCRIP funded positions for the Platform. It is important to ensure that for new Platforms the 1:1 DVCR : Academic Division (Faculty/School/Department) is clearly articulated.

Example

	Year One (2017)	Year Two (2018)	Year Three (2019)	TOTAL
Faculty X	30,000	\$30,000	\$30,000	90,000
Department Y	\$5,000	\$10,000	\$15,000	\$30,000
Faculty Z	\$30,000	\$20,000	\$10,000	\$65,000
SUB TOTAL	\$65,000	\$60,000	\$55,000	\$180,000
MCRIP request	\$60,000	\$60,000	\$60,000	\$180,000
			GRAND TOTAL	\$260,000

3.15 Education and Workshops

There must be at least one annual workshop directly related to the Platform with a focus on applying capability to research and end-user education.

3.16 Information Management

Outline the information systems used to capture end-user demographics, monitoring of operating budget, output in relation to contribution to publications, etcetera. The focus here should be maximising efficiency and reducing the administrative burden by using available information technology and software tools.

3.17 Defining and Reporting on Key Performance Indicators

Each Platform must clearly define its key performance indicators (KPIs) which are specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time-bound. There are likely to be capability-specific KPIs. However, there is a set of standard KPIs that are expected to apply to every Platform: reporting on customer (end-user) satisfaction, productivity/utilisation (e.g. percentage of downtime), adherence to budget, contribution to published research, educational/workshop activity, success (or attempts) in acquiring new services or technology, and account of career development activity of the Platform staff. The KPIs must be reported to the Steering Committee (or other defined leadership group), and in turn to the Melbourne Collaborative Research Infrastructure Committee.

3.18 Annual Reports

The information in your application will shape the content of the annual report and enable MCRIC to assess the Platforms. Each Platform will be required to provide an annual report to MCRIC based on each calendar year of operations. The report shall contain:

- A two page executive summary, providing a brief address to Platform objectives and KPIs;
- A detailed summary of Platform governance and staffing arrangements;
- An address of each KPI, including infrastructure utilisation metrics, provision of user training and highlights of Platform activities and output (eg. publications, conference presentation and grant support);
- Evaluation of Platform objectives and future plans, including justification for realignment if it is necessary;
- A financial report, including an income and expenditure statement and a budget estimate ;
- Any supporting material (eg. publication, user feedback) incorporated as appendices.

This report should be tabled to MCRIC and form the basis of evaluating the performance of the Platform and/or overall Program. Feedback from the committee will be provided to Platform governance, which may include guidance from a Committee member, Chancellery Research or RIC Major Initiatives staff member as appropriate.

4. Annual Operating Budget

An excel spreadsheet template is provided for the preparation of the platforms forecast operating budget. At present, the University will not take depreciation of assets as a budget consideration, and will rely on acquiring technology through public funding opportunities and strategic co-investments. It is anticipated that only direct costs or a proportion of direct costs will be forwarded to academic and precinct users (the total 'real' costs will be forwarded to commercial clients) – this is the **direct cost recovery level**. Alternatively, full recovery of direct costs can be proposed for the Platform, but must be considered in light of current national practices for a particular capability as determined from benchmarking.

The indirect administrative burden of the Platform must be elaborated to include the proportional of resourcing towards various activities. For example, stipulate the cost of departmental management staff related to the Platform.

The income stream should consider the current sources of funding based on past usage and any application to the Melbourne Collaborative Research Infrastructure Program. The difference between income and expenditure is defined as the **subsidisation level** – this gap will need to be met by the Faculties/Departments (as such, authority will need to be gained from Heads, Deans and Institute Directors). Regardless of the model adopted, the various co- contributions to the operating budget must be explicit in naming the funding sources.

A. Direct Expenditure

Direct costs may include salaries, staff development, education programs, maintenance and service contracts, consumables and annual subscriptions, such as software.

B. Indirect Expenditure

Indirect costs include administration, space charges and cost of utilities.

C. Income

Income streams include end-users (program/project grants and commercial industry), contributions from Melbourne Research, faculties/departments, philanthropy and major funding rounds, such as the National Collaborative Research Infrastructure Scheme.

The final operating budget submitted must include the current year as well as forecasting over the next 2 years (i.e. a budget capturing a total of three years).

Appendix A: Decision Tree for Application Category

