EXPLANATORY STATEMENT

Funding Rules made under section 60 of the Australian Research Council Act 2001

Linkage International

Issued by the authority of the Minister for Education, Science and Training

Subject: Australian Research Council Act 2001

Linkage International Funding Rules for Proposals for Submission in 2006

Authority

Section 60 of the Australian Research Council Act 2001 (the Act) provides that the Minister for Education, Science and Training must approve ARC funding rules.

Purpose and effect

Linkage International is a scheme funded under the Australian Research Council’s National Competitive Grants Program. The Linkage International Funding Rules for Proposals for Submission in 2006 sets out the eligibility and accountability requirements and other relevant matters for research programs which may be funded under this scheme. The scheme supports the movement of researchers between eligible Australian research organisations and centres of research excellence overseas, and to foster collaboration and networking between Australia-based and overseas researchers, which are approved by the Minister for Education, Science and Training.

In accordance with subsection 59 (2) of the Act, the Linkage International Funding Rules for Proposals for Submission in 2006 contain:

(a) the eligibility criteria to be met in order for a proposal to be approved for financial assistance (including criteria relating to the kinds of organisation that may receive assistance and the kinds of research program in respect of which assistance may be provided);
(b) how to apply for financial assistance;
(c) the assessment process for deciding which proposals will be recommended for approval;
(d) the ways in which, and circumstances in which, a funding approval may be varied; and
(e) any additional accountability requirements that the ARC Board thinks desirable.

In accordance with subsection 59 (2) of the Act, the Linkage International Funding Rules for Proposals for Submission in 2006 take account of, and are consistent with:

(a) the funding cap for the year, or each of the years, to which the rules apply; and
(b) the funding split determination for the year, or each of the years, to which the rules apply.

The Linkage International Funding Rules for Proposals for Submission in 2006 were approved by the Minister for Education, Science and Training, the Hon Julie Bishop MP, on 1 March 2006. No amendments have been made.

Documents incorporated by reference

The following documents are incorporated into the Funding Rules by reference:

- The Joint NHMRC/AVCC Statement and Guidelines on Research Practice (1997)/as applicable, the NHMRC’s National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Research Involving Humans; and/as applicable, the NHMRC’s other codes on animal research (see subsection 1.4.1.1 of the rules), available at (http://www.nhmrc.gov.au);
- Linkage International Instructions to Applicants for Proposals for Submission in 2006 (see subsection 7.4.4.2 of the rules), available at (http://www.arc.gov.au);
- The draft Funding Agreement (see subsection 10.1), available at (http://www.arc.gov.au); and
Consultation
On 21 June 2005, the ARC invited comments and feedback from all organisations eligible for ARC funding on funding rules for ARC schemes. The ARC also met with a number of key higher education institutions known as the ‘Group of Eight’ in the period 11-15 July 2005. Submissions were received by the ARC from a number of institutions in June/July 2005. The ARC considered these submissions and, where appropriate, the funding rules approved by the Minister reflect this feedback.

Likely impact and effect
These Funding Rules provide the key criteria and requirements for proposals for, and the allocation and administration of, funding under the Linkage International scheme for research projects where funding will commence in 2006.

Retrospectivity
This determination has effect from 1 March 2006, the date the Minister for Education, Science and Training, the Hon Julie Bishop MP approved funding rules for proposals. Payments may have been made to eligible organisations under the Scheme from this date. The retrospective commencement of this determination is beneficial to, and does not disadvantage, eligible recipients.

Explanation of provisions: provision by provision description
Section 1 outlines the objectives of the National Competitive Grants Program and the Linkage International scheme, and fundamental principles and requirements, including ethics and research practice, non-duplication, conflict of interest, and acknowledging ARC support.

Section 2 outlines changes from last year.

Section 3 covers funding details, including level and duration of funding, types of research supported, areas of investigation/work not supported, restrictions on budget items, and number of proposals and funded projects allowed.

Section 4 covers organisational types, roles and eligibility.

Section 5 outlines roles and eligibility for researchers, including eligibility criteria for Chief Investigators, Overseas Investigators, Partner Investigators and Australian Research Council International Fellowship (ARCIF) Fellows.

Section 6 deals with cross-scheme issues relating to funding, eligibility, and the funding of clinical and medical dental research.

Section 7 covers the application process, including eligibility rulings, proposals, certification, and submission of proposals.

Section 8 covers the selection and approval process, including selection criteria, assessment and selection procedures, and the offer of funding.

Section 9 outlines the appeals process.

Section 10 deals with the administration of funding, including funding agreement, varying the Funding Agreement or Funding Approval, and reporting requirements.

Section 11 covers other relevant matters, including applicable law, confidentiality, project descriptions, intellectual property, incomplete or misleading information, and insurance and liabilities.
Section 12 deals specifically with Linkage International Awards, including investigator types, roles and eligibility, funding rounds, level and duration of funding, budget items supported, number of proposals and selection criteria.

Section 13 deals specifically with ARC International Fellowships, including general requirements, funding details and selection criteria for all types of ARClF, and specific requirements and funding details for the following types of ARClFs:

- ARClF Proposals for Australia-based researchers to work in overseas research organisations (excluding AIFs);
- ARClF Proposals for overseas researchers to work in Australia (excluding AIFs and Anglo-Australian Observatory Fellowships);
- ARClFs pursuant to an agreement with the French Ministry of National Education, Research and Technology;
- ARClFs pursuant to an agreement with Alexander von Humboldt-Foundation (AvH), Federal Republic of Germany;
- ARClFs pursuant to an agreement with the Korea Science and Engineering Foundation (KOSEF);
- Australia-Israel Fellowships (AIFs); and
- Anglo-Australian Observatory Fellowships.

Section 14 covers Linkage International Internationally Coordinated Initiatives (ICIs), including: organisational types, roles and eligibility; eligible organisations; investigator types, roles and eligibility; types of research supported; funding details; budget items supported; budget items not supported; researchers from Commonwealth-funded Research Centres; number of proposals permitted; the application, selection and approval process; closing time for proposals; and other requirements.