



Australian Government  
Department of Industry,  
Science and Resources

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Cooperative Research  
Centres Program

# AI Accelerator scoping paper

## Overview

The [National AI Plan](#) sets out the Australian Government's ambition to position Australia as a leader in responsible, inclusive and innovative AI development and adoption. As part of the plan, the government is launching 'AI Accelerator' funding rounds of the Cooperative Research Centres (CRC) Program to support the development and commercialisation of AI by businesses and researchers across Australia. This will establish an [AI-focused CRC as part of Round 28 of the CRC Program, which will open in early 2027](#). Round 28 applications will also be open to other areas.

This scoping paper is a first look at what the government is seeking from applications for the AI-focused CRC in Round 28. It aims to give industry time to form research partnerships and develop applications, before the release of Round 28 Grant Opportunity Guidelines in early 2027.

## Government priorities

Applications for the AI-focused CRC should target the following priorities:

- **Building broad AI capability in Australia** to develop core AI technologies that are application agnostic and can apply across multiple sectors.
- **Applying AI technologies to solve real-world challenges** faced by industry and the community in sectors such as:
  - healthcare
  - agriculture
  - resources and energy
  - advanced manufacturing.
- **Supporting Australian AI businesses to innovate, scale and compete** on the global stage, including creating bespoke Australian AI models.
- **Strengthening Australia's AI research, development and commercialisation** capabilities by building partnerships between businesses and research organisations.
- **Aligning with the core goals of the National AI Plan** to capture the opportunities, spread the benefits, and keep Australians safe.

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| [business.gov.au/crc](https://business.gov.au/crc)

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## About the CRC Program

Applicants must apply for CRC grants as a group of partners who have agreed to collaborate. CRCs must include among their project partners at least three Australian industry entities and two Australian research organisations. The CRC Advisory Committee will evaluate eligible applications against assessment criteria including:

- alignment with program objectives and Government priorities
- quality of proposed research
- capacity, capability and resources to deliver the project
- impact Australian Government grant funding will have on the project.

The CRC Program funds CRCs for periods of between 3 and 10 years. There is no minimum and maximum grant amount. The government has allocated around \$50 million for an AI-focused CRC in Round 28. The amount requested should be proportional to the scope and complexity of the project. CRC consortia must at least match (in cash and/or in-kind) the grant funds requested.

The government will provide further guidance on eligibility, assessment criteria and available funding in the CRC Round 28 Grant Opportunity Guidelines. Learn more about the [CRC Program](#).