

## NRF Competitive Research Programme (CRP) Frequently Asked Questions

### General

S/N	Question	Response
<b>Application</b>		
1	What is “use-inspired basic research”?	The research undertaken is inspired by the quest to advance fundamental scientific knowledge and understanding that is motivated by an unmet need or to address a practical problem. The research need not necessarily lead to immediate translation or commercialisation within the duration of the project.
2	Does CRP fund blue-sky or curiosity-driven research?	CRP does not fund research that is solely blue-sky, or curiosity driven. The research objective should be motivated or inspired by a problem to be solved or a potential use.
3	What is the main difference between CRP and MOE Academic Research Fund (AcRF) Tier 3?	Unlike AcRF, CRP does not fund research that is solely blue-sky, or curiosity driven. CRP is also open to eligible applicants from publicly funded institutions other than autonomous universities, such as A*STAR.
4	How important is industrial participation for the different CRP categories? Is it mandatory to include industrial partner(s)?	Industry partnership is not a requirement for CRP. It is not mandatory to include industrial partner(s). If industrial partner(s) are involved, they should provide letters of support with details of their contribution and/or commitment to the project.
5	Is stakeholder agency consultation required prior to submission?	This is not a mandatory requirement.
6	Can a PI submit multiple proposals under the same CRP category as the Lead PI at the same time?  Can a PI submit to both CRP and Frontier CRP as Lead PI in the same period?  Can an existing CRP Lead PI apply for another CRP as Lead PI?	Yes, if the proposals are substantially different and there are no overlaps in the scope of the work to be funded.
7	Can the Lead and Team PI be from the same group?	Yes.
8	Is collaboration with other institutions encouraged?	Yes, CRP aims to foster multi-disciplinary collaborative research programmes.

9	If a PI has submitted a proposal in another funding scheme which is pending review, can he/she still apply for CRP?	The PI should not submit the same proposal (which is pending review in another funding scheme) to CRP. He/she can submit a different proposal (with no overlaps in scope) to CRP.
10	Can the CRP scheme accept proposals with humanities or social sciences elements?	Yes, humanities and social sciences elements can be included in the proposals. However, the proposals should have a STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics) focus.
11	Is there a limit for CRP resubmission?	Proposals that have not been shortlisted for award are generally permitted only one resubmission in future grant calls, with amendments to address review feedback.
<b>Eligibility Criteria</b>		
12	Are early career scientists (e.g. post-docs) eligible to be Lead or Team PIs?  How do we determine if a PI meets the criteria of a Lead or Team PI?	We will leave it to the Institutions to endorse your qualification as either a Lead or Team PI, as there are institutional differences in designations, ranks, roles and responsibilities.  Institutions should read the Eligibility Criteria and ensure applicants meet the requirements.
13	Can a Team PI come from industry or overseas?	The Industry or Overseas PI must hold an adjunct position with a publicly funded institution in Singapore and serve residency in Singapore for at least 9 calendar months per year.  PIs who do not fulfil the above requirement to be a Team PI can participate as collaborators.
<b>Assessment</b>		
14	What is the expected TRL of CRP projects at completion?	The CRP scheme supports basic research which typically starts at TRL 1-3, and may end at TRL 3-5 upon completion.
15	What are the outcomes or Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) expected of CRP projects?	CRP projects will be assessed on the extent they have achieved their scientific deliverables (stated in their proposal) and how they have advanced fundamental scientific knowledge.  A good metric of successful research outcomes is the continuity of the research, and whether teams go on to secure larger grant funding, or contribute to establishing peaks of research excellence in Singapore.  As part of annual progress reports, NRF may request projects to report indicators such as publications, technical disclosures or patents etc for tracking purposes, but projects are <u>not</u> expected to provide targets for these indicators and will not be assessed solely based on these.

	What kind of feedback will be given for non-shortlisted proposals?	A comprehensive reviewer report will be provided for reference, for each non-shortlisted proposal. For proposals that are rejected without review, NRF will provide reasons for rejection (e.g. if the proposed research falls outside the scope of CRP).
<b>Budget</b>		
16	Can international collaborators receive funding for some elements of the research?	Applicants may propose OOE budget lines for Visiting Professors/Experts, which can cover honorarium, travel and accommodation expenses. Visiting Professors/Experts should be clearly identified in the proposal, or to NRF, with justifications for visits provided.
17	Does all the funding have to be spent within Singapore?	<p>RIE funding is intended to fund research activity conducted by the Team (Lead PI and Team PIs) within Singapore.</p> <p>Applicants may propose budget items under Overseas travel, e.g. attending overseas conferences or to access equipment/facilities overseas with justifications provided, excluding the conduct of R&amp;D activity.</p>
18	<p>Can the CRP grant support (under direct costs):</p> <p>a) Salaries of Lead and Team PIs?</p> <p>b) Hiring of management support officers (MSO)?</p> <p>c) Hiring of Project/Programme Manager?</p> <p>d) Subscription of GPU and cloud services?</p>	<p>(a) No, as Lead and Team PIs are already salaried by the Institution.</p> <p>(b) CRP does not support salaries of administrative staff, including MSOs.</p> <p>(c) Yes, if the Programme Manager's role is related to the Research, and not purely administrative.</p> <p>(d) Yes, applicants may propose OOE budget lines to support facilities usage, and subscription of services such as GPU and cloud usage.</p> <p>Please refer to the list of non-fundable direct costs in the Guidelines for the Management of Research Grants that is issued to the Host Institutions.</p>
19	Is there any nationality requirement for hiring of researchers?	All manpower hired under the CRP Grants must adhere to the PI's respective institution's policies on hiring and nationality waiver.
20	Do all CRP categories provide indirect costs?	<p>Yes, the indirect cost is 30% of the direct cost.</p> <p>For Frontier CRP, the S\$2M funding cap includes indirect costs.</p>
21	Is there a cap on total budget for overseas travel?	Please consult your institution's rules and provisions for overseas travel when proposing an overseas travel budget.

<b>Areas out of scope for CRP</b>		
22	<p>It is stated in the Grant Call information sheet that CRP is not intended to support research in the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) epidemiological and behavioural studies;</li> <li>(ii) observational studies (including cohort, longitudinal, case-control studies, etc.);</li> <li>(iii) clinical and drug trials;</li> <li>(iv) health services research/operations research;</li> <li>(v) infrastructure/facilities set-up; and</li> <li>(vi) market/drugs/product development.</li> </ul> <p>Can elements of the above be incorporated in CRP proposals?</p>	<p>Proposals with a research focus in the areas listed should be submitted to other more appropriate funding schemes in Singapore, for funding consideration.</p> <p>CRP proposals should be primarily driven by basic scientific discovery and advancement of scientific knowledge that is use-inspired, and should have a STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics) focus.</p> <p>Some elements of research in the areas listed can still be incorporated in CRP proposals, but should not form the sole or main objectives of the proposal, and their inclusion will need to be well justified.</p>
<b>Others</b>		
23	Where can the list of past awarded projects be found?	<p>Please refer to the NRF CRP website: <a href="https://www.nrf.gov.sg/grants/crp/">https://www.nrf.gov.sg/grants/crp/</a></p>

## CRP

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24	Is CRP intended to only fund large scale programmes?	The CRP supports programmes of varying sizes between a period of 3 to 5 years. It can fund small-scale programmes submitted by a smaller group of PIs, with a correspondingly smaller funding quantum that corresponds to the scope of the work to be accomplished. The proposals will be evaluated based on scientific merit.
25	For stage 1 review, will only the LOI (video & slides) be evaluated, and not the full proposal?	Yes, only the LOI (video & slides) will be evaluated at Stage 1.
26	What is the rationale for requesting PIs to submit both LOI and Full Proposal at the same time, if only the LOI is used for shortlisting?	NRF is aiming to shorten and streamline the proposal review cycle, by allowing applicants to submit both the Whitepaper and Full Proposal in the same step.

27	<p>Is there any action required from the team if a proposal is shortlisted to stage 2?</p> <p>Can the team amend/improve the full proposal if it is shortlisted to stage 2?</p>	<p>No action is required from the applicants. Eligible CRP Full Proposals will be sent for review, following the announcement of the LOI shortlisting outcome.</p> <p>Applicants are not allowed to amend the Full Proposal after submission. NRF may consider exceptions on a case-by-case basis, if there are strong justifications.</p>
28	How much preliminary data is expected for a CRP proposal?	Inclusion of preliminary data is encouraged but is <u>not</u> mandatory for a CRP proposal submission.
29	How will CRP proposals be reviewed? Will there be nominated external reviewers?	CRP proposals will be reviewed by a CRP evaluation panel comprised of international researchers/academics. Reviews may be supplemented by external reviewers who possess relevant subject-matter expertise.
30	To what extent do proposals have to be aligned to the 4 RIE domains and what could be the next stage of such projects?	It is not mandatory for proposals to have outcomes which explicitly align with RIE domain priorities. Proposals should articulate a pathway to impact for the scientific discoveries, but are not expected to achieve immediate translational outcomes within or by the end of the project term.

### Frontier CRP

S/N	Question	Response
31	Can Frontier CRP fund blue-sky research?	All CRP categories, including Frontier CRP, aim to fund use-inspired basic research, and not solely blue-sky or curiosity-driven research.
32	Although Frontier CRP does not require preliminary data, will proposals with preliminary data be favoured?	No, Frontier CRP proposals will be primarily assessed on their novelty, innovation and the feasibility of their scientific hypothesis and approach.
33	How important is the track record of PIs during the proposal evaluation? Will early career researchers be at disadvantage compared to senior/established PIs?	Early career researchers will not be disadvantaged compared to senior/established PIs. Frontier CRP proposals will be primarily assessed on their novelty, innovation and the feasibility of their scientific hypothesis and approach.
34	Can the time commitment of Team PI be less than 10%?	While NRF does not stipulate a minimum time commitment for applicants, applicants are expected to have a reasonable time commitment to the proposal if it is awarded.

35	How much emphasis is being placed on Forward Plan of a Frontier CRP proposal during the proposal review stage?	Both the initial 2-year plan and the Forward Plan in Frontier CRP Full Proposals will be evaluated during the proposal review stage.
36	What are the evaluation criteria at the Stage-gated Review?	<p>A stage-gated review will be implemented for Frontier CRP projects at the 2-year mark.</p> <p>At the stage-gated review, Frontier CRP projects will be evaluated on the fulfilment of their scientific deliverables, which are proposed by the applicants. The scientific deliverables proposed should be meaningful, to demonstrate the validity of the proposal's scientific hypothesis.</p> <p>Based on the outcomes of the stage-gated review, Frontier CRP projects that pass the review satisfactorily will be allowed to proceed to completion, while projects that do not will be given reasonable time to wrap up.</p> <p>NRF will not impose any penalties on PIs whose Frontier CRP projects do not pass the stage-gated review.</p>
37	How long is the Stage-gated Review at the 2-year mark expected to take? If the project does not pass the Stage-Gated Review, what is the buffer time after the evaluation before the funding ends?	<p>Frontier CRP projects will be scheduled for the stage-gated review as close as possible to the 2-year mark.</p> <p>Frontier CRP projects will be awarded the full requested budget up-front, and will be allowed to continue submitting reimbursement claims for research expenses incurred while awaiting the stage-gated review and its outcomes.</p>
38	Is the S\$2M cap only for the 2-year plan? Can PIs apply for additional funding for the Forward Plan?	The S\$2M cap (inclusive of indirect costs) is for the entire duration of the project including the 2-year Plan and the Forward Plan. There is no additional funding for the Forward Plan.
39	Is there any limit for the proposed budget in the 2-year Plan, e.g. less than 50%?	<p>Applicants may propose a reasonable budget for the 2-year Plan and Forward Plan of the Frontier CRP project.</p> <p>Projects will be allowed to spend within the proposed budget for the 2-year Plan, up to the 2-year mark. Projects past the 2-year mark will be allowed to spend within the proposed budget for the Forward Plan, until completion, or project wrap-up.</p>
40	Is there a limit on the number of projects that can go on to be supported for the Forward Plan, after the Stage-gated Review?	No, there is no limit to the number of Frontier CRP projects that can be supported for the Forward Plan, after the Stage-gated Review.

41	What are the expected outcomes or KPIs for Frontier CRP?	Frontier CRP projects will be assessed on the extent they have achieved their scientific deliverables and how they have advanced fundamental scientific knowledge.
42	Is there any black mark/penalty on the PI if the project does not pass the Stage-gated Review?	No, the project will wrap up after Stage-gated Review, just like any regular project completion. There will be no impact on future CRP grant applications or penalty on the PIs.