

Assessment of Stream Three Applications – “The Initial Research Advisory Board Assessment”

At the Information Workshop held on 25th October 2004, registrants were advised that the Research Advisory Board would be further considering the issue of duplication. Registrants were also advised that there would be a subsequent communication to them regarding the Board’s deliberations. The following information is provided to make clear how the Research Advisory Board will consider applications in the first step of the assessment process – the “Initial Research Advisory Board Assessment”.

The Australian Primary Health Care Research Institute has been established to “*Provide national leadership in improving the quality and effectiveness of primary health care through the conduct of high quality priority-driven research and the support and promotion of best practice.*” APHCRI has published its strategic plan (http://www.anu.edu.au/aphcri/Strategic_Plan/APHCRI_Strategic_Plan_2004-07.pdf) and determined that the first research program will address the three priority topics:

- Innovation in State/Commonwealth relationships
- Innovation in funding arrangements for new or existing services/models
- Innovation in organisation and linkages within the Primary Health Care sector

APHCRI will deliver its mission and aims through the virtual “Hub and Spoke” model. This means that Spokes will actively engage throughout the period of their work with the Hub. Together Hub and Spokes form APHCRI and deliver the outcomes for which APHCRI was established.

All applicants for funding within APHCRI’s research programs must clearly and unequivocally focus their proposals on APHCRI’s strategic purpose, and, in the case of Stream Three expressly address one or more of the three declared priorities.

The assessment processes published with regard to Stream Three (http://www.anu.edu.au/aphcri/Spokes_Research_Program/Documents/Stream_Three_Info_Applicants_rtf) identify two “gates” through which full proposals must pass before they are fully assessed by the Expert Review Committee.

Gate One – Strategic Intent

The first of these gates asks Research Advisory Board members to make a judgement as to whether the full proposal addresses APHCRI’s strategic intent and declared priorities. In making this assessment, Board members will consider the proposal against the aim of Stream Three, the declared priorities for Stream Three, and more generally against APHCRI’s Strategic Plan. Applicants should ensure that their full proposals address these. To this end, the RAB recommends that applicants make themselves familiar with APHCRI’s Strategic Plan.

Proposals that fail to address APHCRI’s strategic intent will not be considered further.

Gate Two - Duplication

The second gate addresses the notion of duplication. The Australian Primary Health Care Research Institute is supported by a grant from the Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing. The Australian Government expects to see these new funds achieve new outcomes against APHCRI’s strategic goals and specified aims. The RAB fully supports this expectation. Registrants are encouraged to reflect carefully on four different aspects of the notion of duplication, because the RAB will consider all of these aspects in its decisions.

1. Duplicating funded research

The first aspect is that of duplicating existing funded research activities – be they funded through competitive grant mechanisms or through contracts/consultancies/other funding arrangements in relevant areas. The application form requires all investigators to detail their relevant, currently funded, research activities. This information will be used to make this assessment.

2. Duplicating published research

The second aspect is that of duplicating work for which the results are already known. The application form requires applicants to succinctly articulate the knowledge gap that the proposal is addressing and locate that claim within the relevant literature.

3. A core funding responsibility of another entity

The third aspect of duplication occurs if APHCRI funds are being sought to support work that could be considered to be the clearly defined, fully funded responsibility of some other entity. For example, if a proposal seeks funding for the provision of a service and/or evaluation that is clearly the responsibility of a State or Territory, it would not be supported. The application for APHCRI funding must make clear the rationale for the funding requested, the use to which that funding will be put and justify the budget against APHCRI's declared research program, informed by APHCRI's Strategic Plan.

4. Submitting proposals to other funding bodies

The final aspect addresses the possibility that applicants may have already submitted or be in the process of submitting similar/identical proposals to funding bodies other than APHCRI. The duplication here is with respect to the number of applications for funding. At the time of application to APHCRI, applicants may not know the outcome of these submissions. The application form requires applicants to list all relevant pending submissions.

Duplication of the kind outlined in 1, 2 and 3 above will not be acceptable to APHCRI. Proposals that fail to meet one or more of these three duplication tests will not be considered further.

The fourth kind of duplication will not of itself exclude the proposal from further consideration. Depending on the recommendations of the Expert Review Committee and the outcomes of the other applications to different funding bodies for a particular proposal, the RAB reserves the right to enter into discussions with the applicant in such circumstances. The discussions will consider the particular proposal, the quantum of funds obtained from other funding bodies, and the use to which those funds are to be put. The RAB will then determine the contribution that APHCRI makes to the particular proposal to which this set of circumstances applies.

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