Research Infrastructure Investment Initiatives Fund (RIIF) Collaborative Equipment Grant (CEG) 2023 Instructions to Applicants

1. Introduction
This document is intended to provide guidance and instructions to applicants on completing the application for the RIIF Collaborative Equipment Grant in 2023. It is intended to be read in conjunction with the following supporting documents, which can be found on the RIIF Collaborative Equipment Grant Scheme website:

- Funding Rules
- Application form (available online via SmartyGrants)
- Instructions to Applicants (this document)
- Frequently Asked Questions
- Co-Investment Approval Form

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Milestone</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Applications open</td>
<td>Thursday, May 18th, 2023</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Applications close</td>
<td>Monday, July 3rd, 2023, 9 am</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Notification of outcome</td>
<td>Friday, August 18th, 2023</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acquittal of Funds</td>
<td>Monday, December 18th, 2023 (pending confirmation of year-end calendar)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. Preparing your application
A complete application consists of the following:

- A completed application form submitted through SmartyGrants. An application number will be generated once you have started the application. Please retain this number and use it for any queries relating to the application.

- A quote for the requested equipment in AUD (excluding GST). Under exceptional circumstances, the quotations could be obtained in foreign currencies; however, applicants will be responsible for bearing the cost difference in the event of currency fluctuations. Currency conversion rates should be included within the application.

- Applicants are recommended to engage with University Procurement services in seeking assistance with negotiating competitive pricing and including an extended warranty (multi-year) as part of the quotation package. Where possible, it is encouraged to secure the validity of the quotation for a three-month period.

- Evidence of cash co-investment greater than or equal to 25% of the total purchase cost of the equipment from the relevant signatory. A Co-Investment Approval Form should be downloaded and completed. Please ensure that all contributors sign at the prescribed areas of the form. This form can then be uploaded when prompted within SmartyGrants under Section 5.

- Evidence of support for the proposed equipment location from the relevant signatory. Email documentation from the Head of Department, Dean or Associate Dean of Research stating that support for the proposed physical location is considered acceptable. If the requested equipment is to be located within an existing Research Platform (MCRIP-funded or otherwise), you should include evidence of endorsement for inclusion into the Research Platform by the Platform Manager and/or Platform Steering Committee.

- If the application you are considering for RIIF CEG funding is eligible for funding under the ARC LIEF scheme, clear justification needs to be provided for why it was not submitted through the ARC LIEF scheme and why it is a suitable application for RIIF CEG.
3. Application form
To ensure the applicants adhere to the application template requirements, word limits are applied to text boxes and drop-down lists to select options. Please adhere to these.

Section 1 Application Overview
Please ensure that a copy of the complete Co-Investment Approval Form is forwarded to your Faculty research office (contacts are available via Research Gateway).

Section 2 to 4 Applicant Details
Complete details for each applicant. A maximum of three applicants may be listed. Please note that there is no evaluation weighting given to the track record of the applicants, and early/mid-career researchers, Platform Managers, professional staff and female applicants are particularly encouraged to apply.

Section 5 Equipment Details
Equipment cost
If the cost does not meet the Equipment Cost Threshold of $100,000, please ensure you provide a written rationale (300 words or less) for the following types of application:

- Discipline-specific
- A one-off software purchase with a minimum threshold of $50,000.

Trade-in of old equipment
Please indicate if the obsolete or superseded equipment was traded in at the time of obtaining the quotation.
If you selected ‘Yes’, please provide the detail of the trade-in price and/or financial return offered by the vendor. Please also indicate the value within the quote.

Currency used in quotation
If the quotation is provided in a foreign currency, please provide the following information:

- Rationale
- Type of currency
- Total cost in the foreign currency
- Conversion rate

Equipment Components and Suppliers
Outline the equipment’s cost (in AUD) as a numbered list of components and their corresponding prices (excluding GST) and attach quotes from the preferred supplier to your application when prompted. While there is no set maximum permitted value of equipment requests, the investment will be guided by a whole-of-University perspective on collaborative equipment needs.

While it is only necessary to obtain quotes from the preferred supplier, the Alternate Supplier section asks for the names of other potential suppliers. Purchases above $400,000 are required to progress through University Procurement Review Board evaluation in accordance with the Procurement Policy (MPF1087). These processes may require identification of and engagement with multiple suppliers, and this section will facilitate that process should an application be successful.
Cash Co-Investment  
Please provide a list of contributors (the name of the Department/School/Faculty) and the corresponding contribution amounts. At the prompt to download the “Co-Investment Approval Form”, if you haven’t done so already (the Form is also available via the RIIF CEG scheme webpage). Complete the Form and upload a copy at the prompt to “Attach Co-Investment Approval Form here (with signatures)”. Noting that the minimum co-investment level is 25% of the total cost of equipment, a higher level of co-investment will be viewed favourably, particularly regarding equipment requests of high value.

N.B Any cash co-investments for refurbishment, operational or maintenance costs should not be included in the percentage cash co-investment calculation.

Section 6 Equipment Justification  
Section 6.1 requires the applicants to outline the need for and proposed use of the equipment.

- Is this a new piece of equipment?
- Is this replacing, repairing, or updating ageing critical research infrastructure?

If “new piece of equipment” was selected in 6.1:

- Section 6.2 requires that the applicants outline the steps taken to determine that the specific equipment, or equipment with a similar function, is not currently available within existing Research Platforms (MCRIP-funded or otherwise) on campus.

  If selected ‘Yes’:  
  Sections 6.2a and 6.2b require applicants to provide contact and location details for the equipment and the outcome of any enquiries made regarding gaining access to the equipment. Reasons for being unable to access or use the equipment should be provided.

- Section 6.4 requires the applicants to outline the need for and proposed use of the equipment:

  Section 6.4a should address the following:
  - Will the equipment be used for research, training, and/or teaching?
  - What is the projected utilisation and expected life of the equipment?
  - How does it pass the ‘collaborative test’? Refer to Section 11 of the Funding Rules for collaborative test information.

  Section 6.4b asks applicants to summarise the equipment’s potential to increase the University’s research capability, quality and output. Supporting evidence will be essential to make a compelling case.

If “replacing, repairing, or updating ageing critical research infrastructure” was selected in 6.1, section 6.5 requires applicants to provide details on the research infrastructure being replaced, repaired or upgraded:

- Section 6.5a requires applicants to name the equipment being replaced, repaired or upgraded.
- Section 6.5b requires applicants to indicate the equipment’s current age (in years).
- Section 6.5c asks applicants to outline the need to replace, repair or upgrade the equipment, including:
  - Is the equipment used for research, training, and/or teaching?
  - What is the utilisation and expected life of the equipment?
  - How does it pass the ‘collaborative test’? Refer to Section 11 of the Funding Rules for collaborative test information.
- Section 6.5d asks applicants to summarise the potential impact on the University’s research capability, quality, and output if the infrastructure were not replaced, repaired or updated. Supporting evidence will be essential to make a compelling case.
Section 6.6 requires applicants to identify whether the equipment meets the eligibility requirements of the Australian Research Council’s Linkage Infrastructure, Equipment and Facilities (LIEF) scheme. Equipment considered eligible for LIEF would not usually be regarded as eligible for support through the RIIF Collaborative Equipment Grant scheme. If unsure whether your request could be eligible for ARC LIEF funding, please contact RIC Research Infrastructure prior to developing an application for support through the RIIF Collaborative Equipment Grant Scheme.

In Section 6.7, applicants are asked to indicate whether the equipment has ever been requested through the Faculty of Medicine, Dentistry and Health Sciences Large Equipment Grant Scheme. If the proposed equipment was the focus of an unsuccessful application, the same or similar equipment may be requested through the RIIF Collaborative Equipment Grant scheme, provided it complies with eligibility requirements of this scheme. If your answer is a “Yes” to this question, please provide details of the outcome.

Section 7 Collaborative Nature of Proposed Use
In this section, you elect to complete either Sections 7.1 and 7.1a (Equipment requested for inclusion in an existing Research Platform) or Section 7.1, 7.1a, 7.1b and 7.1c (Equipment requested to be located outside a Research Platform).

Section 7.1 If selecting Yes:
Choose the relevant Research Platform name from the drop-down list (refer to Appendix A). Proposed Equipment Location should indicate the building name and room number, as well as the name of the node if the Research Platform consists of multiple nodes (e.g., Biosciences node). When prompted, attach evidence of Research Platform leadership endorsement, which may be in the form of an email or a letter of support, as long as it indicates the proposed location and date of endorsement. Platform Managers must be contacted for approval at least two weeks prior to the closing date of applications.

If selecting ‘No’, the Host should include the name of the equipment custodian, the name of the research lab and the Faculty/School/Department/Centre. Follow the instructions above for the Proposed Equipment Location. When prompted, attach evidence of endorsement by the host, which may be in the form of an email or a letter of support, as long as it indicates the proposed location and date of endorsement.

Section 7.1a Please explain why the proposed location is suitable and how access will be managed.

Section 7.1b Expected Demand should outline the type of users (staff/student, Department/School/Faculty), the expected utilisation of the equipment over time, and any opportunities for use by industry or external collaborators. Supporting evidence will be considered favourably.

Section 7.1c Management Plan should include details of staffing, responsibility & governance, access procedures for internal & external users, the access system (web-bookings, etc.), fee schedule, and technical expertise for operation & maintenance of equipment, as appropriate.

Section 8 Operations
In the Operating Costs section, please list the operating expense and the associated costs in AUD. Indicate technical support, subsequent ongoing costs such as upgrades to software or software support costs, service maintenance and operational consumables that will be provided (in kind) for the equipment. Amounts and expense types are required here.

Section 8.1 should outline the source(s) of funding for the operating costs in the previous section.
**Section 9 Capital Works**
When completing this section, it is important to note that it is **not** necessary to obtain quotes for this work.

**Section 10 Letters of Support**
A maximum of three letters of support may be uploaded here to demonstrate the value and importance of the proposed equipment.
Appendix A

Definition of “Research Platform” – A Research Platform is an organised structure through which an end-user can access to equipment, facilities and services without the need for formal collaborations. It is a way for researchers to access a vast range of technology, expertise and support for research. Further details of Research Platforms are available via Research Gateway.

List of the Research Platforms
Biological Optical Microscopy Platform
BioSciences Microscopy Unit
Ian Holmes Imaging Center @ Bio21
Large Animal Research Facilities
Libraries and Collections
Mass Spectrometry and Proteomics Facility
Materials Characterisation and Fabrication Platform
Melbourne Bioinformatics
Melbourne Bioresources Platform
Melbourne Brain Centre Imaging Unit
Melbourne Cytometry Platform
Melbourne Data Analytics Platform
Melbourne Histology Platform
Melbourne Magnetic Resonance
Melbourne Protein Characterisation
Statistical Consulting Centre
Melbourne Trace Analysis for Chemical, Earth and Environmental Sciences
Metabolomics Australia
Methods and Implementation Support for Clinical and Health Research Hub
Phenomics Australia Histopathology and Slide Scanning Services
Plant Growth Facilities
Platform for Research Software Solutions
Research Computing Services
University Digitisation Centre
Victorian Centre for Functional Genomics