

Cooperative Research Centre for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health: In-Kind Information and Procedures

Definition

Under the Cooperative Research Centres (CRC) program, in-kind activity represents any non-cash contributions by an Essential Participant organisation to a CRC. In-kind contributions are made through applying this non-cash component to the activities of the CRC.

Background

The Cooperative Research Centre for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health (CRCATSIH) is managed by the Lowitja Institute – Australia's National Institute for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Research. In-kind contributions are critical to the Lowitja Institute achieving its objectives for the CRCATSIH program.

Each partner organisation (known as an Essential Participant) in a CRC can make in-kind contributions as a non-cash component of their funding contribution to a CRC. Contributions in the form of an in-kind project activity are particularly significant as, in addition to assisting the CRCATSIH achieve its activity-based objectives, they provide important opportunities to add value to work undertaken by Essential Participant organisations. For example, contributions of in-kind research projects by partners in the CRC for Aboriginal Health (CRAH, 2003–09) enabled the CRAH to increase research quality and collaboration, and to support both local level uptake and use of results as well as the 'scaling up' of innovations at policy and systems levels.

In-kind contributions – calculated as an overall full-time equivalent (FTE) amount – may exceed, but should not be less than the original commitment component. If an Essential Participant organisation fails to meet their FTE in-kind contribution commitment, this must be reported to the Commonwealth Government. A shortfall in contributions may result in a reduction of Commonwealth funding for the CRCATSIH.

The total in-kind contributions committed for the CRCATSIH are set out in Table 1 of Schedule 4 of the Commonwealth Funding Agreement.

To monitor the 'giving' of in-kind contributions, intended contributions need to be clearly specified by Essential Participant organisations and formally endorsed by the Lowitja Institute. An outline of how activity can be specified and endorsed as an in-kind contribution is provided later in this document.

What types of activity can make up an in-kind contribution?

A range of activity can be endorsed as an in-kind contribution. This includes:

- discrete research project work;
- courses;
- time given to CRCATSIH activity;
- monies given in support of CRCATSIH activity (beyond Commonwealth Agreement commitments); and/or
- work that extends on CRCATSIH research work, including the implementation of Lowitja Institute research outcomes.

NOTE: As of 1 June 2011 'courses' and 'work that extends on CRCATSIH research work' are not able to be submitted for in-kind. However, these will be able to be collected from 1 January 2012 and be registered retrospectively.

Discrete research project work

Includes any form of research project work. Projects can be internally funded within the Essential Participant organisation or externally funded through such bodies as the National Health and Medical Research Council.

Courses

Spans Vocational Education and Training (VET) to higher degree level activity, and includes research training and development, workforce development and up-skilling programs.

Time given to CRCATSIH activity

Includes any time spent by employees or students from Essential Participant organisations on activity that relates to the work of the CRCATSIH: for example, time associated with attending a Lowitja Institute roundtable or quality assurance meeting.

Monies given in support of CRCATSIH activity

Includes any non-cash contributions an Essential Participant organisation contributes to activities relevant to the CRCATSIH: for example, paying for travel and accommodation for a Link Person to attend Lowitja Institute meeting

Work that extends on CRCATSIH research work

Includes assistance provided by an Essential Participant organisation that extends on the CRCATSIH's existing research work: for example, supporting the development of a training package that assists with the application of research results into an alternative setting. This also includes implementing research outcomes from the Lowitja Institute.

What are the Lowitja Institute's roles and responsibilities?

The Lowitja Institute aims to foster a vibrant in-kind contribution base for its CRCATSIH program, with a range of roles and responsibilities in relation to in-kind contributions. Within this context, the Lowitja Institute also recognises its responsibility to work collaboratively with Essential Participant organisations to optimise their aspirations in relation to outcomes associated with in-kind contributions to the CRCATSIH.

In particular the Lowitja Institute needs to ensure that:

1. all Essential Participant organisations' in-kind commitments are clearly defined and subsequently met
2. in-kind project and course contributions are formally endorsed as observing the Lowitja Institute's principles and are in keeping with the focus of research programs or objectives as outlined in the CRCATSIH's current Business Plan and
3. in-kind projects and courses achieve high-quality and meaningful outcomes and results with opportunities to progress uptake, and that the implementation of results from discrete research projects are supported.

What are Essential Participant organisations' roles and responsibilities?

Essential Participant organisations are responsible for monitoring, meeting and accurately reporting on their in-kind commitment levels. In relation to this, there is a major role in identifying potential in-kind contributions for endorsement, and in liaising with Lowitja Institute Program Managers and other staff (through their identified Link Person) to have activity endorsed as in-kind.

How can activity be endorsed as an in-kind contribution?

All activity provided as an in-kind contribution must be specified and formally endorsed by the Lowitja Institute before this activity can be counted as part of an Essential Participant organisation's in-kind commitment.

Essential Participant organisations must negotiate with the Lowitja Institute's Chief Executive (CE) an in-kind contribution statement specifying how they intend to meet the in-kind component of their financial contributions for each financial year. A final statement of intent, signed by the Essential Participant organisation's CRCATSIH Advisory Board member and an authorised officer of the organisation, must be provided to the Lowitja Institute's CE for endorsement by the Lowitja Institute Executive. Guidelines for developing the statement are available from the Lowitja Institute.

Where projects or courses form part of the in-kind contribution, these must be registered for endorsement as in-kind by completing an additional and separate application form for each program of activity. A research project or course can only be contributed if it covers **all four** of the following criteria:

1. Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander focus
2. health focus, as translated by the 3 research program areas of the CRCATSIH (Program 1: Healthy Start, Healthy Life; Program 2: Healthy Communities and Settings; Program 3: Enabling Policy and Systems) and the Knowledge Exchange Program

3. research and
4. have measurable outcomes (e.g. a health promotion campaign that measures the impact of an intervention or project providing data on the prevalence of a particular illness).

Lowitja Institute Program Managers and/or the Stakeholder Manager can provide further information about the process of completing relevant application forms. Applications are reviewed by a panel of Lowitja Institute staff based on the above criteria.

What is the process for collection of in-kind contributions?

At the end of each financial year the in-kind contribution from each Essential Participant organisation is retrospectively collected, collated and audited by the Lowitja Institute. The process is as follows:

- The Link Person within each Essential Participant organisation, supported by their organisation's CRCATSIH Advisory Board member, is responsible for the collection and timely submission of in-kind contributions.
- The Lowitja Institute is responsible for the collation of the in-kind hours and calculation of FTE.
- The Advisory Board member, supported by their organisational employees, is responsible for the sign-off process after the calculation of FTE.
- The Lowitja Institute reconciles FTE contributions against Essential Participant organisations' commitments (as documented in the Commonwealth Agreement).

Operational arrangements

Changes in an Essential Participant organisation's capacity to meet any of the specified activity must be flagged in writing to the Lowitja Institute's Chief Operating Officer as early as possible. Please note that there is a formal process with the Commonwealth Government for those Essential Participant organisations wishing to vary their original in-kind component commitment.

Link People based in Essential Participant organisations play a key role in monitoring contributions in line with the final statement of intent. They should do so by liaising with their organisation's CRCATSIH Advisory Board member in relation to any operational issues they are experiencing in the collection of in-kind. Further information about this role is available in the Link Role Statement.

For further information please contact the Lowitja Institute Stakeholder Manager on: 03 8341 5505.

This document is available online at
<<http://www.lowitja.org.au/kind-information-and-procedures>>