



AFII Strategic Investment Program

Program Guidelines

Introduction

The Agrifood Innovation Institute (AFII) aims to accelerate transformative innovation to future-proof the Australian agrifood system by connecting ANU with industry, government and other university partners.

AFII's Mission

To improve the profitability, sustainability and equitability of agrifood systems, aiming for transformative solutions to national and global challenges.

AFII delivers on its mission through three program areas, one of which is the **Research Translation Initiative (RTI)**. A key goal of the Initiative is to develop a proactive culture to facilitate research translation, so the University's:

- (1) research findings are more effectively translated into agricultural practice, policy or impact
- (2) research capabilities are used to address challenges facing the agrifood sector.

Purpose

The **AFII Strategic Investment Program (SIP)** provides tailored support to proposals aligned with the goals of RTI.

The aims of the SIP are to:

- increase the number of ANU researchers engaging in projects of relevance to the agrifood sector
- facilitate the establishment of new collaborations between ANU researchers and industry
- promote interdisciplinary and co-innovation approaches to solving agrifood challenges
- support ANU researchers to prepare highly competitive grant applications and tender responses that align with agri-sector industry needs

- invest in projects that have the potential to result in high impact, meaningful outcomes and/or increase financial returns to ANU in the future.

Categories of support

- [Scoping](#) – up to \$5,000 (maximum duration three months)
- [Engagement](#) – up to \$20,000 (maximum duration six months)
- [Collaboration](#) – up to \$50,000 (duration negotiable)

Criteria for support

- The SIP is open to all ANU researchers and research students.
- Proposals under the SIP will first be considered for alignment with the goals of AFII's RTI, and then for quality of the application against the relevant category guidelines.

How to apply

- Expression of Interest are available [here](#).
- Complete and return an EOI form to agrifood@anu.edu.au with **AFII Strategic Investment Program – EOI** in the subject line.
- A member of the AFII RTI team will meet with you to discuss the project concept, appropriate category of support, and suitability of the project for the development of an application.
- Suitably developed ideas from the EOI process will be invited to complete an application for the appropriate category of support.

Reports

- On completion of the project, the applicant will be required to produce a short report within 30 days of program completion, outlining the outcomes of the project and potential next steps in progressing the project, likely benefits and potential impact.

Contact

- Questions regarding the Strategic Investment Program may be directed to AFII's RTI Lead, Martin Amidy at agrifood@anu.edu.au.

Scoping Projects

Scoping Project funding aims to support ANU researchers to undertake preliminary investigations into industry need/demand for an idea or solution they would like to develop, and translate their research expertise into impact.

Up to \$5,000 may be requested per application, with a maximum project duration of three months.

On completion of the project, the applicant will be required to produce a short report outlining the outcomes of the project and potential next steps in progressing the project.

What the funding can be used for

Funding for scoping projects can be used to pay for services undertaken by an external party with subject matter expertise (hereon termed '**Advisor**'), or other support services including:

- industry-aligned desktop research/scoping/interviews
- testing the feasibility of a research idea with industry partners or end-users
- advice on the size of the potential market for the solution and its likely impact
- providing introductions, organising and/or facilitating structured meetings between researcher and external stakeholders
- identifying new sources of funding aligned with the skills and resources of ANU researchers
- advice or feedback on the alignment of proposals with potential sources of funding
- advice on a balance between the needs of end users and the expectations of funders/investors.

An Advisor may be nominated by the applicant or recommended by AFII. The Advisor is expected to:

- be an industry expert with extensive experience and knowledge of the relevant field to help drive new and emerging problem definitions, and understand industry need
- have extensive networks that can be accessed to form new links/partnerships with collaborators to align research capability with identified industry needs.

Note: In a limited number of cases, Scoping Project funding may be approved to fund activities that require support services that do not require an Advisor, but which still address the selection criteria listed below.

Selection criteria

(i) Strategic alignment with AFII's mission

The proposal increases the engagement of ANU researcher(s) with industry or end-users and addresses a challenge of relevance to the agrifood sector.

(ii) Identified need for Advisor or support services

The proposal identifies a particular individual to act as the Advisor or defines the skills required of an un-named Advisor or the support service required.

The proposal outlines the value of engaging an advisor or support service.

(iii) Quality of project plan

The proposal outlines the scope of work to be undertaken by the Advisor (or support service), in consultation with the researcher(s), to identify industry needs and potential external funding opportunities to progress the project following completion of the Scoping work.

The proposal includes a reasonable timetable and activity budget for project activities. Final details associated with the timetable and activity budget will be negotiated with Advisors of awarded projects.

The proposal is well conceived and demonstrates the experience and knowledge of the project lead/team.

The proposal has a likelihood of achieving clearly defined outcomes in a realistic timeframe.

Engagement Projects

Engagement Project funding aims to support ANU researchers to undertake workshop, co-design and/or prototyping activities with industry partners to refine ideas and solutions they seek to develop to address agrifood sector needs, and translate their research expertise into impact.

Up to \$20,000 may be requested per application (with a maximum project duration of six months). Applications are considered and awarded during each advertised round by the AFII Grant Committee. A case can be made for out-of-session consideration if leveraged funding opportunities arise. Applications will be assessed on how well they address the criteria (see below).

On completion of the project, the applicant will be required to produce a short report outlining the outcomes of the project and potential next step in progressing the project.

What the funding can be used for

Funding for Engagement Projects can be used for a number of purposes including (but not limited to):

- developing a prototype to provide proof of concept for a research/commercialisation idea that will meet an industry-identified need
- the provision of external services to organise and facilitate industry engagement workshops to co-design and refine a solution to an identified industry challenge

- development of a prospectus document (in consultation with industry stakeholders/partners) to secure external funding for the project/product development.

Selection criteria

(i) Strategic alignment with AFII's mission

The proposal increases the engagement of ANU researcher(s) with industry or end-users and addresses a high-impact challenge of relevance to the agricultural sector.

(ii) Evidence of prior stakeholder feedback and case for additional engagement

The proposal outlines existing stakeholder engagement activities that have been conducted to identify industry need, and how this has informed the next stage of research and development.

The proposal provides evidence of the size of the potential market.

The proposal outlines the additional value that would be provided to the project by the proposed activities (what barrier to progress is it addressing), and the broader benefit to ANU.

(iii) Quality of project plan

The proposal outlines the scope of work to be undertaken by the project team, to produce a highly competitive funding application or well-aligned research consultancy/tender proposal for external funding.

The proposal includes a reasonable time and activity budget for project activities. Final costing of the time, activity and materials budget may be negotiated with project applicants.

The proposal is well conceived and demonstrates experience and knowledge of the project lead/team.

The proposal has a likelihood of achieving clearly defined outcomes in a realistic timeframe.

(iv) Funding co-contribution

Funding co-contribution from ANU business units (school/college) and industry partners is encouraged. Competitive applications will demonstrate a clear path to future funding sources.

Collaboration Projects

Collaboration Project funding aims to provide seed funding to support ANU researchers working in interdisciplinary teams to leverage external funds, with the combined funds being used for projects that develop solutions that address an industry-identified challenge in the agrifood sector, and which enable ANU to translate its research expertise into impact.

Up to \$50,000 may be requested per application, with submissions being considered during each advertised Round. Grant applications are considered and awarded by AFII's Grant Committee. A case can be made for out-of-session consideration if leveraged funding opportunities arise. Applications will be assessed on how well they address the Criteria (see below).

On completion of the project, the applicant will be required to produce a short report outlining the outcomes of the project and the projected longer-term impact it will influence (e.g. for industry, society and/or ANU).

What the funding can be used for

Funding for Collaboration Projects can be used to leverage a combination of local area ANU funds and external funding to address an industry-identified challenge in the agrifood sector with an identified pathway to impact.

Collaboration Project funding **must** be matched with funding from one or more ANU business units, with a target minimum of 1 (AFII): 1 (other business unit).

The project team must be interdisciplinary and include researchers from at least two ANU Schools or Centres.

Selection criteria

(i) Strategic alignment with AFII's mission

The proposal increases productive engagement of ANU researcher(s) with industry or end-users, and addresses a high impact challenge of relevance to the agrifood sector.

(ii) Evidence of prior stakeholder feedback and case for additional engagement

The proposal outlines existing stakeholder engagement activities that have been conducted to identify industry need.

The proposal provides evidence of the size of the potential market.

The proposal outlines why AFII funding is required (how would access to the funding program address a barrier to progress that would not be addressed through business-as-usual approaches).

(iii) Quality of project plan

The proposal outlines the scope of work to be undertaken by the project team, with the aim of producing a highly competitive funding application or well aligned research consultancy/tender proposal for external funding.

The proposal includes a reasonable time and activity budget for project activities.

The proposal is well conceived, and demonstrates experience and knowledge of the project lead/team.

The proposal has a likelihood of achieving clearly defined outcomes in a realistic timeframe.

(iv) Funding co-contribution

The project must have matched funding co-contribution from (internal) ANU business units (school/college) and (external) industry partners with a target ratio of 1 (AFII): 1 (other ANU business unit): to 6 (external entity). Cases with a different ratio mix will be considered, noting that applications with a higher level of co-investment will be ranked more highly than applications with a lower level of co-investment.