

The AustCyber Projects Fund is a \$15 million, three-year initiative designed to help the Australian cyber security industry grow and take ideas global. Over the last 12 months, AustCyber has provided \$6.5 million in funding across ten projects that are making a real contribution to growing Australia's cyber security ecosystem. In 2019, an additional \$8.5 million will be awarded to fund industry led projects that deliver on the goals of the Cyber Security Sector Competitiveness Plan.

This year, we have refined the application process to make it simpler for you to apply. We have also introduced two project categories:

- Proposed projects should address one or more specific 'sector challenges' that provide core infrastructure for the sustained growth of Australia's cyber security sector.
- Proposed projects do not have to address one or more specific 'sector challenges' (as per previous funding rounds).

All proposed projects must provide matched industry funding.

The Projects Fund has been established to provide matched funding to industry-led projects which address the merit criteria set out in the Additional Information page. Projects may also address a specific problem statement (detailed in the Additional Information page), that seek to provide core infrastructure for the sustained growth of Australia's cyber security sector.

Project expressions of interest (EOI) are assessed by AustCyber against specific merit criteria. Shortlisted EOIs will be invited to pitch their project proposal to a panel of experts. Project proposals endorsed by the panel will be invited to submit a full project application.

An EOI can be submitted by a consortium or a single entity.

The key requirements for a 'Consortium' are:

1. Involvement of no less than two independent businesses (drawn from any combination of small to large service, education, or research providers, or simply business partners for the purposes of the solution)
2. All consortium members must operate business in Australia, or principally in Australia, with a valid Australian Business Number (ABN)
3. All consortium members should be committed in writing to the project prior to the submission of the EOI
4. The consortium can describe, in detail, what each member anticipates the measurable outcome of their contribution to the project will be, together with a statement of anticipated project outcomes and how they will be measured
5. All consortium members are willing to make outcomes of the project accessible to the wider cyber security sector
6. A consortium lead is identified and is willing to sign a funding contract with AustCyber and separately with their consortium members.

The key requirements for a 'Single Entity' are:

1. the entity must operate business in Australia, or principally in Australia, with a valid Australian Business Number (ABN)
2. the entity should be committed in writing to the project prior to the submission of the EOI
3. the entity can describe, in detail, what the anticipated outcomes of the project are and how they will be measured
4. the entity is willing to make outcomes of the project accessible to the wider cyber security sector
5. the entity is willing to sign a funding contract with AustCyber.

Project duration: Projects must be completed in 12 months unless otherwise agreed with AustCyber.

Funds available

The maximum amount of Projects Fund to be awarded through this process is AUD\$8,500,000 for this round. Match funding for projects can be between AUD\$100,000 and AUD\$3,000,000. The funding amount for each project will be up to 50% of eligible project costs. The amount awarded will be relative to the project size and complexity, and the extent that it meets the merit criteria.

Any funds not allocated during this round may be allocated in future rounds.

Process

An overview of the sequential selection process and time frame for assessment, decision making, and disbursement of funds is included below.

AustCyber will seek Expressions of Interest (EOI) for projects. AustCyber will assess the EOIs against the merit criteria and appropriate project proposals will be shortlisted to 'pitch' their proposal to a panel of experts which include independent industry representatives and technical experts. Those shortlisted through the pitch process will be invited to prepare and submit a full application.

The AustCyber Projects Fund is a competitive, closed process under which applications must be submitted by due dates. Applications received after the due dates will not be considered. All EOIs submitted are assessed individually against the merit criteria. Funding decisions in relation to each application will be determined with consideration for the comparative merits of other applications.



Expressions of Interest open

The EOI is a short description of the project and anticipated outcomes. AustCyber will evaluate all project proposals and provide applicants with feedback on whether the proposal has satisfied the eligibility and minimum requirements of the merit criteria.

Project proposals that are not selected to proceed to the next stage will be advised via email but not given specific feedback on their EOI.

Complete review process and inform panel of short listed candidates.



Pitch to Industry Advisory Panel

Proposals that satisfy the criteria at Stage 1 will be invited to 'pitch' their project proposal to a panel of experts that will include AustCyber and independent industry representatives and technical experts.

AustCyber will ensure that independent panel members make appropriate non-disclosure undertakings to protect confidential and trade-sensitive information that applicants share with the panel as part of their pitch and, subsequent to progression, full application (see step 3).

Pitches may be made via video conference or in person (at AustCyber's Canberra office). Project proponents invited to travel from interstate will do so at their own cost. Time slots will be allocated based on the availability of the panel.

Pitches must be no longer than 7 mins with an additional 5 mins to answer questions from the panel. All panel members will have pre-read the EOI relevant to the project proposal being pitched. The panel will deliberate on all pitches and decide which project proposals to select to proceed to the next stage.

Project proposals selected to proceed to the next stage will be advised via email. Project proposals that were not successful in their pitch will also be advised via email.

Timing

The pitches will occur over a two week time period. This time frame is subject to and/or dependent on the availability of the panel members relevant to specific project applications, as well as the volume of project proposals invited to 'pitch' to panel.



Full project application

Third stage applicants are invited to submit a full project application.

A formal project evaluation will be completed by AustCyber at this stage. AustCyber will undertake due diligence checks and examine appropriate assurance documentation including conflict of interest procedures and risk management. AustCyber will confer with technical panel members from Stage 2 to verify any technical aspects of the project, as relevant.



Project shortlisting

Recommended project applications and evaluation submitted for Board approval

The AustCyber Board will consider recommended Project Applications for endorsement. The AustCyber Board may re-evaluate scores against the merit criteria at this stage. AustCyber's Projects Fund is delivered in accordance with the Commonwealth's Industry Growth Centres Programme Guidelines.

Funding decision

AustCyber will provide written confirmation of the outcome to successful project proponents. AustCyber will provide applicants that were unsuccessful with feedback against the merit criteria.

Project contract/agreement completed

Successful Projects will be subject to an AustCyber Project Contract/Agreement, which is a legal contract between AustCyber and the lead project participant.

Should the project be with a consortia, then the lead project participant will be required to enter into separate legal agreements with consortia members.

The Project Agreement sets out expectations and deliverables for the Project, including Project contributions and funds, reporting obligations, confidentiality, IP, Audits, GST, dispute resolution and termination.



Announcement of successful projects

Public announcement

AustCyber will work with the project lead and the Department of Industry, Innovation and Science to coordinate a public announcement/media release of the awarding of project funding.

AustCyber will promote the successfully awarded projects through traditional media via media releases, social media channels, AustCyber website, other Growth Centres, mainstream media, and an existing database of network contacts and partner networks.

Project commences

AustCyber Project Governance requires participants to provide project updates for tracking actual project delivery outcomes on a milestone by milestone basis. Templates will be provided to the project lead.

Project management

AustCyber will review milestones for each project in accordance with the Project Contract/Agreement and make payments subject to AustCyber's satisfaction of agreed milestone results. Marketing and communication of projects will occur on an ongoing basis as per the agreed Project Communication Plan.

If you have any questions, please email projectsfund@austcyber.com.