

NATIONAL IMAGING FACILITY INVESTMENT FRAMEWORK

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1 INTRODUCTION

The National Imaging Facility (NIF) is an unincorporated joint venture that was established in 2007. It has received substantial funding through the Australian Government's National Collaborative Research Infrastructure Strategy (NCRIS), administered by the Department of Education, Skills, and Employment (DESE), with co-funding from Australian and state government agencies and partners to the UJV to provide state-of-the-art imaging capabilities for the imaging of humans, animals, plants, and materials.

The NIF Investment Framework (the Framework) sets out the key principles for all investments and has been developed to support the partnering organisations in ensuring realisation of the benefit of these investments for Australian research communities and their impact on Australian economy, society, and environment.

1.1 NIF Vision

To provide a national research infrastructure capability in advanced imaging that enables discovery and innovation

1.2 NIF Mission

- Identify iconic investments in nationally and globally significant areas
- Provide Australian researchers with reliable and state-of-the-art technology, highly specialised expertise, and a world-leading capacity for creating and accessing high quality, reproducible data
- Ensure that Australia remains at the forefront of international developments and is able to contribute solutions to global challenges

2 FRAMEWORK OBJECTIVES

The key objectives of the Framework are to:

- clearly set out the expectations and priorities of the NIF capability;
- assist partner organisations to develop clearly defined investment goals;
- support investments that demonstrate achievement of the desired goals; and
- provide confidence to all stakeholders that appropriate disciplines are being applied to the national investment portfolio.

3 SCOPE

The Framework applies to all financial and non-financial investments.

The Framework does not diminish NIF Board responsibility for its investment decisions and the national capability's performance.

4 OTHER RELEVANT GUIDELINES

The Framework needs to be read in conjunction with [current NCRIS Guidelines](#).

5 GOVERNANCE

The Framework is governed by the NIF Board. The Board will review and update the Framework, as necessary.

Any changes to the Framework should be approved unanimously by the Board.

The Investment Framework is accessible by the Public.

6 INVESTMENT PRINCIPLES

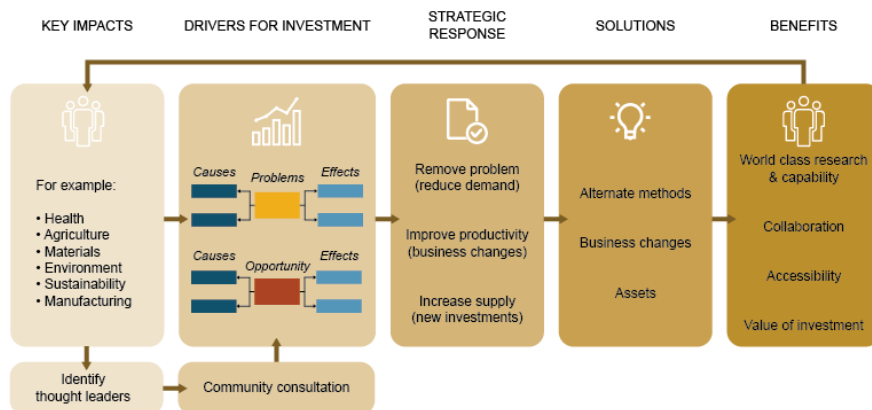
1. Investments can only be hosted by institutions that commit to NCRIS principles and its ongoing activities.

2. Investments can only be hosted by institutions that commit to the NIF joint venture and its participants.
3. Investments are in response to an identified national need or opportunity.
4. Infrastructure resources are focussed in areas where Australia is, or has the potential to be, world-class (in both discovery and application driven research) and provide international leadership.
5. Infrastructure investments are assessed against the following criteria:
 - a. address a gap:
 - i. World leading; or
 - ii. Nationally distinctive; or
 - iii. Locally unique
 - b. demonstrate strong use case:
 - i. Evidence of strong track record of users; and
 - ii. Visionary use case with anticipated high impact
 - c. demonstrate appropriate resourcing and local expertise
 - i. Technological competitiveness (section 11.2) and technical expertise capability; and
 - ii. Highly supported by proposing institution and partners
 - d. demonstrate high user interest and strong collaboration, both scientifically and financially
 - i. High multi-institutional collaborative utilisation; and
 - ii. Connection to national and/or international initiatives and programs, such as clinical trials
6. Infrastructure investments are expected to facilitate F.A.I.R. data management capability for users.
7. Operational support for NIF-funded infrastructure, including no. of fellow(s) per infrastructure platform, are decided based on need analysis and assessed through business cases.
8. Requests for contribution of existing infrastructure are considered by the Board on a case-by-case basis.
 - a. All contributed infrastructure must address a gap and have demonstrated sustainability.
 - b. No operational support, including funding a fellow, neither at the time of approval nor in future, is guaranteed for contributed infrastructure.
 - c. No capital support for future upgrade or replacement of contributed infrastructure is guaranteed.
 - d. Operational or capital support for (existing or new) contributed infrastructure are only considered if it responds to an identified national need or opportunity.

7 INVESTMENT LOGIC

The following investment logic applies to NIF investments.

1. NIF runs community consultations in the key impact areas, as needed, to identify the drivers (needs or opportunities) for investment.
2. The Operations Committee considers the drivers and provides advice on Strategic Response to the Board.
3. The Board considers the investment drivers and advice from the Operations Committee and decides the Strategic Response.
4. An open call for Expression of Interest (EoI) is released for ideas and solutions that support Board's Strategic Response.
5. The Board may seek advice from NIF's Panel of International Scientific Reviewers (PISR) and NIF Operations Committee on the EoIs.
6. The EoIs are assessed by the Board, against the selection criteria outlined in Investment Principle 5, with consideration of advice from NIF's PISR and Operations Committee (if requested).
7. Shortlisted EoIs are invited to submit a full business case.
8. NIF's PISR reviews the business cases, against the selection criteria outlined in Investment Principle 5, and provides advice to the Board.
9. Business cases are evaluated by the Board, against the selection criteria outlined in Investment Principle 5, with consideration of advice received from the NIF's PISR.
 - a. Investments with NIF contribution of more than \$2m are to be presented to the Board by the proposing organisation.
10. Successful case(s) are announced.



8 PRINCIPLES FOR REMOVING INFRASTRUCTURE FROM THE NIF PROFILE

NIF Inventory is reviewed against the criteria, outlined in Principle 5, twelve months prior to the end of each capital funding period. Infrastructure that is approved for removal will revert to the host institutions profile, upon completion of the funding period. The first review will be initiated in 2022.

9 PROCEDURE FOR REMOVING INFRASTRUCTURE FROM THE NIF PROFILE

1. Twelve months prior to the end of each capital funding period, the NIF Central office generates a report on the performance of NIF infrastructure portfolio using the criteria, outlined in Investment Principle 5, and the reported data by the host nodes.
2. The infrastructure that do not meet any of the criteria are nominated for removal from the NIF profile.
3. The host nodes of nominated infrastructure are invited to submit a business case, demonstrating performance against the criteria, outlined in Investment Principle 5.
4. The Operations Committee considers the business cases and provides advice to the Board.
5. External expert advice from the PISR may be requested by the Board.
6. The Board considers the business cases and advice from the Operations Committee (and PISR if requested) and decides the infrastructure that should be moved from the NIF to the host institutions profile.
7. If the Board decides to remove a
 - a. Contributed infrastructure, the infrastructure is removed from the NIF profile, access policy and other relevant documents, upon completion of the funding period.
 - b. NIF-supported infrastructure, the associated operational support ceases and the infrastructure is removed from the NIF profile, access policy and other relevant documents, upon completion of the funding period.
 - c. NIF-funded infrastructure, the removal follows any applicable Commonwealth guidelines at the time of Board resolution. Following approval by Commonwealth, the associated operational support ceases and the infrastructure is removed from the NIF profile, access policy and other relevant documents, upon completion of the funding period.

10 CONFLICT OF INTEREST

Members of all committees, involved in the evaluation of investment EoIs or business cases and evaluation of business cases for removal of infrastructure from the NIF profile, should declare any potential conflict of interest according to the strict standards employed for independent experts by the European Research Council (see [Conflict of Interest](#) and [Code of Conduct](#)).

11 APPENDIX

11.1 Glossary

Infrastructure Any personal property, real property and incorporeal property.

Infrastructure An Infrastructure Platform is a class of Infrastructure in broad groupings. It refers to

<u>Platform</u>	functional technology platforms and sub-capabilities.
<u>NIF-funded Infrastructure</u>	Any infrastructure that has received NIF contribution towards its capital expenditure.
<u>NIF-supported Infrastructure</u>	Any Infrastructure that is not NIF-funded but receives NIF contribution towards its operational expenditure.
<u>Contributed Infrastructure</u>	Any Infrastructure that has been contributed to NIF profile and has not received any capital or operational support from NIF.

11.2 Technological Competitiveness

<i>Technological position</i>	<i>Generic description</i>
World-leading, in integrated international network	Technically the best infrastructure, not offered elsewhere, offers access to complementary infrastructure through integration into international network
World-leading	Technically the best infrastructure, not offered elsewhere, operated as stand alone
World-class, international standard	World-class infrastructure being taken up internationally as part of a standardised international approach
World-class	Same generation infrastructure as the best that is generally available internationally.
Australia's best	Technically the most recent generation of infrastructure adopted in Australia, but not provided elsewhere in Australia. Includes circumstances where, because of (physical or virtual) time, transport, etc., constraints the only infrastructure that can be used
Necessary	For whatever reason, plays an essential role in a research field,
Better than standard	Same, or slightly improved, generation as that generally used within research institutions, but offers some national benefit, for example, is open access, offers expert support for users, offers some time or cost efficiency, and/or other advantage
Standard	Generally and easily available within institutions – perhaps even expected - given equipment cost, expertise required to operate and level of demand