

NIF 2026 Review Terms of Reference

The National Imaging Facility (NIF) will undertake an independent review in 2026 to inform its future strategic direction, funding priorities, and capability development.

The review is intended to support NIF's continued evolution as a national research infrastructure and identify opportunities to strengthen collective national impact.

The review is intended to support the NIF Board and Executive to:

1. Understand how current activities and investments contribute to delivery of the NIF Strategy
2. Inform future submissions to Government and the development of the NIF Strategy 2028+
3. Understand partner and stakeholder perspectives on NIF's role, impact, and opportunities
4. Inform NIF's future scope, priorities, and capability planning under a range of potential funding scenarios
5. Support effective stewardship of public funding and maximise national benefit and impact.

An experienced independent advisor will be appointed by the NIF Board to lead the review, supported by CEO and operational support. The advisor will:

- Report to and engage regularly with the NIF Board
- Provide independent, evidence-based insights
- Engage constructively and transparently with NIF partners and stakeholders.

1 Scope

The review will consider NIF's strategy and implementation, with reference to:

- Relevant Australian Government policy, or Government commissioned reports, including:
 - 2021 National Research Infrastructure Roadmap
 - Australian Health and Medical Research Strategy (Draft)
 - Ambitious Australia / Strategic Examination of Research and Development
 - Other relevant policy and documents
- NIF's role and scope as defined in its Funding Agreement
- NIF Strategy 2024–2028 and its implementation
- The contributions and perspectives of NIF Partners
- The balance and contribution of current activities, including:
 - Discovery and translational research support
 - Network-wide and local/institutional activities
 - Capital infrastructure and capability/expertise support
 - The growing role of digital, data, and AI-enabled capabilities

The review will also identify opportunities to enhance the value, impact, and national benefit of NIF.

2 Stakeholder Engagement

The advisor will undertake targeted consultation, including with:

- Partners
- NIF Translation Networks
- NIF funders, including Government
- User communities and key facility users
- Other National Research Infrastructures
- Relevant national stakeholders
- Selected international peers

3 Deliverables

The advisor will provide:

- Periodic updates to the NIF Board and NIF Executive
- A report including:
 - Strategic insights to inform future investment and positioning (including NCRIS 2028 and beyond),
 - Observations on current activities and outcomes, and
 - Options and recommendations to support future prioritisation and balance of investment.

4 Process and Timeline

- Terms of Reference finalised: June 2026
- Advisor appointed: July 2026
- Background materials provided: August-September 2026
- Open and Partner written submissions: August 2026
- Partner visits and stakeholder consultations: September-October 2026
- Drafting of report: November 2026
- Report provided to Board: November-December 2026
- Summary shared with stakeholders, including Partners and Department: December-January 2026