



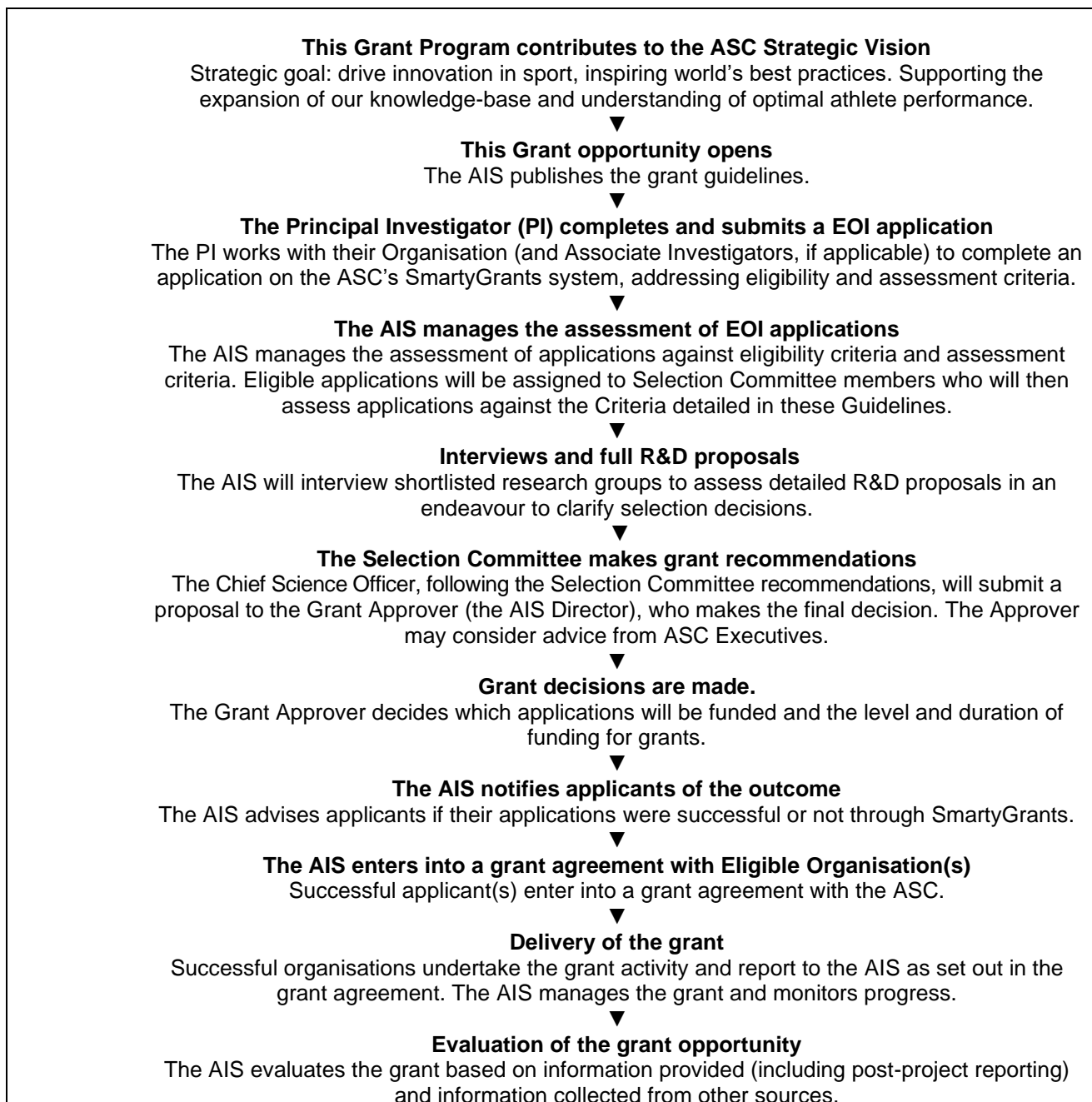
**AIS**

**AIS Research and Development Grant  
Program Guidelines 2024**



2024 AIS R&D Grants Program	Timeframe
Guidelines Release	18 <sup>th</sup> September 2023
Applications Open	25 <sup>th</sup> September 2023
Applications Close (EOI applications)	10 <sup>th</sup> November 2023, 12pm AEDT
Notification of Shortlisted Applicants	Late November 2023
Interviews of Shortlisted Applicants (full R&D proposal)	Nov 2023 – Jan 2024
Notification of Successful Applicant(s)	February 2024

## 1. Application process



## 2. About the program

### Background

Led by the Australian Sports Commission (ASC), the National Sport Research Agenda includes a high-performance focus, described in the National High Performance Sport Research Agenda (NHPSRA, see Appendix 1), which was developed by the Australian Institute of Sport (AIS) in partnership with the National Institutes Network (NIN). The aim of the NHPSRA is to prioritise resources and promote research in areas of critical importance to Australia's high performance sport system. The identified research priorities are: *successful athlete, coaching science, sports performance optimisation, and practice enhancement*.

Equity, diversity, and inclusion principles are fundamental to ensuring that all athletes are supported, contributing to increased chances of achieving sporting goals on all fronts.

### Purpose

Aligned to *the Successful Athlete* priority of the NHPSRA, the purpose of the 2024 AIS Research and Development (R&D) Grant Program is to support the undertaking of quality R&D project(s) that will **lead to better decision-making in the context of return to play and sport performance; supporting safe and efficient, state of the art management of injuries and/or illnesses**.

## 3. Grant amount and period

The total budget for the 2024 AIS R&D Grants program is \$400,000 (exclusive of GST).

The AIS will determine the final grant amount as part of the assessment process.

It is intended that the project(s) will commence in 2024 and be completed in two calendar years from the commencement date, however the time frame may vary subject to written agreement with the AIS.

## 4. Eligibility Criteria

The AIS will only accept applications from Eligible Organisations.

- The Eligible Organisation submitting the application will be the 'Administering Organisation' (which is the Organisation linked with the Principal Investigator).
- Eligible Organisation linked with Associate Investigator(s) listed on the application will be an 'Other Eligible Organisation'.
- Eligible Organisation supporting the application without the direct involvement of an Investigator from their organization (e.g. endorsing the project, or providing cash and/or in kind support only) will be 'Partner Organisations'.

An investigator may only be named Principal Investigator on one application. There is no limit to the number of applications on which an investigator may be named as an Associate Investigator. ASC staff and/or ASC affiliates are ineligible to apply as Principal Investigator.

The AIS encourages collaboration between 'value add' partners including National Sporting Organisations (NSOs) and / or National Sporting Organisations for people with a disability (NSODs) as recognised by the Australian Sports Commission, as well as Paralympics Australia, the Australian Olympic Committee, and the Australian Commonwealth Games Association, State Institutes and Academies of Sport, other research organisations and other industry partners.

The AIS is focused on world best outcomes, so any Eligible Organisation that can deliver on the Grant's objectives are encouraged to apply.

The AIS will only accept applications from Eligible Organisations as identified below.

## Eligible Organisations

To be eligible, Organisations, must:

- Not be an organisation named by the National Redress Scheme for Institutional Child Sexual Abuse ([www.nationalredress.gov.au](http://www.nationalredress.gov.au)) on its list of "Institutions that have not joined or signified their intent to join the Scheme".

Additionally, the Administering Organisation must:

- Have an Australian Business Number; and

additionally, the Administering Organisation and Other Eligible Organisation(s) must:

- Have demonstrated capabilities to undertake quality R&D projects to deliver outcomes aligned to the NHPSRA.

## 5. What the grant money can be used for

### Eligible grant activities

All items for which grant money is sought must be justified in the application to the AIS's satisfaction.

Grant funds are for the explicit use of supporting the research proposal that has been submitted. The AIS encourages the use of part of the funds to engage a statistician and/or expert(s) in research methodology (e.g. trialist and/or epidemiologist with accreditation, formal education or documented experience).

### Ineligible grant activities

Funds are not to be used for the purchase of capital expenditure of any kind including computer hardware, office furniture or clinical machinery unless approved in writing by the AIS. Funds are not to be used for the purposes of covering organizational overhead costs, unless approved in writing by the AIS. Funds are not to be used for costs not directly related to the project, including but not limited to, professional membership fees, fees for patent application and maintenance.

The AIS may, at its absolute discretion, determine whether any project costs involve items not permitted. If such a determination is made, then the AIS may decide to not support part or all the application for funding.

## 6. How to Apply

Applications must be submitted online during the application period.

To apply, you must:

- Complete and submit your application form online on the Australian Sports Commission website ([link](#)),
- Provide all the information requested on the application form.

Please ensure your application is complete and accurate. Giving false or misleading information is a serious offence under the Criminal Code 1995 (Cth). We will investigate false or misleading information and may not consider your application for the grant.

If you find an error in your application after submitting it, you should notify us immediately at [funding@ausport.gov.au](mailto:funding@ausport.gov.au). You cannot change your application after the closing date and time, unless invited to by the AIS.

The AIS will not accept applications submitted after the published deadline, unless it is satisfactorily proven that a technical issue has prevented the applicant from submitting their application in time.

If you have any questions regarding the 2024 AIS R&D Grants Program, please contact the AIS Research Office via [aisresearch@ausport.gov.au](mailto:aisresearch@ausport.gov.au)

## 7. The grant selection process

The AIS adopts the ARC's Research Opportunity and Performance Evidence (ROPE) Statement, supporting equitable access to research funding. The AIS is seeking to increase equity in grant programs through improved advertising mechanisms and changes to the application and selection processes.

The AIS will appoint a Selection Committee to:

- Assess and shortlist EOI applications; and
- Assess full applications (interview process); and
- Make a recommendation related to the successful applicants.

The Selection Committee comprises of:

- AIS Chief Science Officer
- A member of the AIS Intensive Rehabilitation Program
- An expert in research design, epidemiology and/or statistics
- A current or former elite athlete
- A representative of the AIS National Network Leads
- An independent representative from the Australian Sport Sector

During the assessment, the AIS may request additional information, which does not change the nature of the application. Applications will undergo a preliminary review by AIS R&D Administration to determine eligibility, prior to being scored and ranked by the Selection Committee.

After shortlisting, the AIS will interview shortlisted applicants to clarify details of the proposed R&D application. Final determination of grant allocation will be decided by the Grant Approver.

In agreement with the Australian Research Council's suggestion, the AIS recommends all assessors undergo a process to identify and raise awareness of personal biases, question the basis for thoughts and feelings, build skills in cultural diversity and reflect on the strength of a culture that embraces differences.

### Assessment Considerations

All applications will be considered through a competitive process, based on how well they meet the assessment considerations and how they are ranked against each other.

Below is a list of considerations that will guide decision-making for the assessment of brief applications.

#### Criterion 1 – Investigators – 60%

*Assessment against the 'investigators' criterion should include consideration of the opportunities the*

applicants have had to build their profiles.\*

- Demonstrable expertise and capability to address the 'return to play / athlete rehabilitation' priority, including assessment of publications and/or R&D impact.
- Access to resources needed to complete the project (including but not limited to, for example: labs, equipment, peers support, statistician, etc)

#### Criterion 2 – Project – 40%

- High-quality R&D project, with a clear research question/s (needs-driven) and information related to the appropriate design, feasibility, data management procedures, data analysis, and reporting.
- Reach (potential beneficiaries of the proposed activity; inclusive design)
- Impact (output with measurable positive impact on HP sport; either short- and/or long-term impact)
- Commitment to conducting the research activity according to the [Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research 2018](#) and, when applicable, in line with the ["Recommendations for conducting AIS-supported research in high performance sport"](#).

\* For example, researchers who are early in their research career or have had an interrupted research career, including employment outside academia, unemployment, child birth, carers' responsibilities and other personal circumstances, will have this taken into account. This provides assessors with information to determine whether a Principal Investigator (PI) has had extensive opportunity for research compared to a PI who may have had more limited time for research. In this way, the quality and benefit of achievements are given more weight than the quantity or rate of particular achievements enabling excellent researchers to be competitive regardless of their career path. (from: <https://www.arc.gov.au/funding-research/peer-review/assessment-process>)

# For example, assessment of the publications track record will not include a list of all publications, and will instead focus on up to 10 of the Research Group's nominated best publications from the past 10 years (taking into consideration career disruptions). This will help to ensure that assessment of publication track record focuses on the quality and contribution to science rather than the quantity of publications. (adapted from: <https://www.nhmrc.gov.au/funding/peer-review-system/publication-assessment-track-record>)

### Approval of Grant

The Chief Science Officer, following the Selection Committee recommendations, will submit a proposal to the Grant Approver (the AIS Director), who makes the final decision including:

- The grant amount to be awarded;
- The duration of the grant, and
- The terms and conditions of the grant.

### Non preferred assessor process

Applicants may name up to two persons whom they do not wish to assess an application by submitting a 'Request Not to Assess' letter to [AISResearch@ausport.gov.au](mailto:AISResearch@ausport.gov.au). This letter must be received by the AIS at least two weeks prior to the grant opportunity closing date. Only one request containing the names of up to two individual assessors may be submitted per application. There is discretion about whether the 'Request Not to Assess' is accepted or refused. The AIS will not notify applicants of the outcome.

## 8. Successful grant application

### Notification and Agreement

All applicants will be notified by email of the outcome of their application including:

- Any funding amount to be awarded;
- The duration of the grant, if awarded; and



- The specific terms and conditions of any funding.

Successful applicants will be required to enter a 'Collaborative Research Agreement' (CRA) with the AIS, as the preferred partner to address a priority of the NHPSSRA. The Agreement will set out the general terms of the relationship, with details of specific research projects to be set out in the 'Project Schedules' of the Agreement. Funding will be granted upon signing the Agreement, but specific project funding will be allocated by mutual agreement in accordance with the relevant provisions in the Agreement.

The AIS has a strategic mandate to generate knowledge for the benefit of the National High Performance Sport System (NHPSS) through its research funding. Therefore, the research funding agreement for successful applicants, seeks a licence for the AIS to share the results of research with the NHPSS. More broadly, research applicants are expected to be compliant with the [National Principles of Intellectual Property Management for Publicly Funded Research](#).

Applicants should also be aware that breaches of the CRA funding agreement or failure to comply with agreed obligations may effect the eligibility of future grant applications.

At its absolute discretion, the AIS may contact unsuccessful applicants to discuss elements of their application, unless otherwise indicated in the application process.

## Grant Recipient Responsibilities

Grant recipients are required to:

- Accept the CRA and abide by the Terms and Conditions of the agreement;
- Undertake the R&D activity as set out in the CRA;
- Undertake the research activity according to the [Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research 2018](#) and, when applicable, in line with the "[Recommendations for conducting AIS-supported research in high performance sport](#)";
- Work with the ASC Research and Innovation Manager for monitoring progress of the R&D activity;
- Provide project reports and acquittals as specified in the grant agreement; and
- Promptly notify and seek approval from the AIS if the grant activity has been delayed/postponed due to circumstances, and/or there has been a change of grant activity.
- Seek written approval from the AIS in case of any changes to the project.

## 9. Probity

### Conflict of Interest

Any conflicts of interest could affect the performance of the grant opportunity or Program. There may be a conflict of interest, or perceived conflict of interest, if AIS staff, any member of the Assessment Panel, a committee or advisor, and/or you or any of your personnel, for example:

- has a professional, commercial or personal relationship with a party who is able to influence the application selection process, such as an AIS officer, or a member of an external panel;
- has a relationship with, or interest in, an organisation which is likely to interfere with or restrict the applicants from carrying out the proposed activities fairly and independently; or
- has a relationship with, or interest in, an organisation from which they will receive personal gain because the organisation receives a grant under the grant Program.

Applicants will be asked to declare, as part of your application, any perceived or existing conflicts of

interests or that, to the best of your knowledge, there is no conflict of interest. If you later identify an actual, apparent, or potential conflict of interest, the AIS must be informed in writing immediately. Conflicts of interest for AIS staff will be handled in accordance with AIS's Conflict of Interest Policy. Selection Committee members will also be required to declare any conflicts of interest.

### **Disclosure of Information**

The AIS will treat any personal information in accordance with the *Privacy ACT 1988* and the Australian Privacy Principles.

Personal information can only be disclosed to someone for the primary purpose for which it is collected unless an exemption applies.

Personal information submitted via the online application is collected by the AIS for the purpose of considering applications for and administering the Program.

The personal details of successful applicants (including name, home state, sport, the value of the grant awarded and a brief description of the purpose for the program) may be released by the AIS to the public and the media for the use of promotional and educational purposes.

To view the AIS Privacy Policy visit: [https://www.sportaus.gov.au/legal\\_information/privacy\\_policy](https://www.sportaus.gov.au/legal_information/privacy_policy)

### **Enquiries and Feedback**

If you have any questions regarding the 2024 AIS R&D Grants Program, please contact the AIS Research Office via [aisresearch@ausport.gov.au](mailto:aisresearch@ausport.gov.au)

If you wish to lodge a complaint regarding the program, this can be done using the AIS complaints form.  
- [https://www.sportaus.gov.au/contacts/australian\\_sports\\_commission\\_complaint\\_form](https://www.sportaus.gov.au/contacts/australian_sports_commission_complaint_form)





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@theAIS #theAIS

Leverrier Street Bruce ACT 2617  
PO Box 176 Belconnen ACT 2616  
+61 2 6214 1111