



EME Program Research Framework

ARPANSA-FRM-1946

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1. Introduction

The Australian Radiation Protection and Nuclear Safety Agency (ARPANSA) is the Australian Government's primary authority on radiation protection and nuclear safety. We protect the Australian people and the environment from the harmful effects of radiation, through understanding risks, best practice regulation, research, policy, services, partnerships and engaging with the community.

As part of the Government's Electromagnetic Energy (EME) Program, ARPANSA will promote, co-ordinate, fund, and lead EME research. This EME Program Research Framework¹ sets out the research priorities and details how research projects will be funded under this program.

2. Purpose

The purpose of the research component of the EME Program is to continue research into EME and health to ensure that health policies and regulation are based on the most up-to-date information. This includes a focus on key research needs that form the basis for safety standards, as well as addressing areas of public concern that may benefit from additional evidence. The scope of the research is open to proposals that address EME exposure and health (excluding research regarding potential medical benefits of EME exposure). Research priorities that will be considered under this framework include:

- Proposals that address gaps in knowledge that require further research as outlined in the [ARPANSA EME Research Agenda \(2017\)](#)
- Additional gaps in knowledge derived from the [ICNIRP RF EMF Guidelines \(2020\)](#) and [ARPANSA RPS S-1 \(2021\)](#)
- Additional gaps in knowledge derived from other international reports and reviews (e.g. the World Health Organization) and peer-reviewed published reviews, and other priorities that ARPANSA identifies, allowing for research into emerging issues

3. Scope

A targeted call for research will be made annually to address a high priority research area. This high priority research area will be derived through stakeholder engagement with ARPANSA. Further calls for research may occur in response to emerging research needs or where available funding has not been allocated.

¹ The EME Program Research Framework will be revised and updated as required

4. Roles and responsibilities

Role	Responsibility
EME Program Manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ultimate responsibility for overseeing activities and ensuring they are consistent with the requirements as outlined in the EME Program Research Framework • Coordinating stakeholder engagement to identify high priority research areas • Coordination of the internal and external review processes • Review the performance of the EME Program Research Framework
EME Program Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support the EME Program Manager, and where relevant, participate in activities related to the implementation of the EME Program Research Framework
ARPANSA Expert Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that the proposal meets the requirements as set out in this Research Framework
External Expert Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review, assess, and rank research proposals that meet the requirements of the EME Program Research Framework

5. Research funding opportunities

The current framework will provide funding² to support both major research projects and small/seed research projects. To be eligible, applicants must be affiliated with a university, hospital or medical research institute that meets research governance requirements. All applications, including those in collaboration with ARPANSA, will be subject to the same application and evaluation criteria as detailed below³:

5.1 Major research projects (\$30,000 - \$300,000⁴)

Projects must address the research priority identified in the call for research. Applicable and relevant research must be proposed to ARPANSA during calls for research, which will occur at least once per year via the ARPANSA website. Proposals will be considered under the following criteria:

- Proposals must clearly address the research priority identified in the call for research
- Proposals should clearly state the research question(s) being addressed, how the research addresses uncertainty and gaps in knowledge, and how the research outputs are relevant for public health policies
- All proposals will be assessed initially by an expert committee comprised of representatives from ARPANSA to ensure that the proposal meets the requirements as set out in this Research Framework. Proposals that meet the Research Framework requirements will then be assessed by a group of external experts⁵ in the EME field to ensure research quality and integrity, and to assess any potential or perceived conflicts of interest (preference will be given to Australian-based research and research proposals that include at least one Australian-based researcher or collaborator)

² As detailed in the ARPANSA Act, one of the functions of ARPANSA is to undertake research in relation to radiation protection, nuclear safety and medical exposures to radiation. This research framework allows for ARPANSA to promote, co-ordinate, fund, and lead EME research

³ This Research Framework excludes research specifically undertaken solely by ARPANSA as part of the wider EME Program

⁴ Applications requiring funding >\$300,000 will also be considered by ARPANSA depending on resource availability, but prior to submitting a full application, prospective applicants should contact ARPANSA with a notification of intent at eme@arpansa.gov.au

⁵ If an external expert has a conflict of interest with a proposal they will be excluded from the assessment panel

- Applicants will be notified of the outcome of research proposals within 90 days from the application closing date
- Research briefs of successful applications will be provided on the EME Program website
- All successful applications will be required to provide regular research reports and are expected to result in at least one peer-reviewed publication

5.1.1 Proposal requirements

All research proposals must include the following to be eligible for consideration:

- Project title
- Names and affiliations of researchers
- Declaration of relevant interests from all researchers
- Project summary (300 words maximum)
- Project plan (including research methods, timelines, resources/funding required, dissemination; 3000 words maximum)
- Short CV for each researcher (1 page per researcher)

5.2 Small/seed research projects (<\$30,000)

Small/seed projects can be proposed to ARPANSA at any time. They must fall under the scope of the research priorities identified in this framework, and will be considered under the following criteria:

- Projects must address the research priority identified in the call for research or fall under the scope of the research priorities identified in this framework. Proposals should clearly state the research question(s) being addressed, how the research addresses uncertainty and gaps in knowledge, and how the research outputs are relevant for public health policies
- All proposals will be assessed initially by an expert committee comprised of representatives from ARPANSA to ensure that the proposal meets the requirements as set out in this Research Framework. Proposals that meet the Research Framework requirements will then be assessed by a group of external experts⁶ in the EME field to ensure research quality and integrity, and to assess any potential or perceived conflicts of interest (preference will be given to Australian-based research and research proposals that include at least one Australian-based researcher or collaborator)
- Applicants will be notified of the outcome of research proposals within 90 days from acknowledgment of receipt of application
- Where applicable, successful applications will be required to provide regular research reports and result in at least one peer-reviewed publication

5.2.1 Proposal requirements

All small/seed research proposals must include the following to be eligible for consideration:

- Project title
- Names and affiliations of researchers
- Declaration of relevant interests from all researchers
- Project summary (300 words maximum)

⁶ If an external expert has a conflict of interest with a proposal they will be excluded from the assessment panel

- Project plan (including research methods, timelines, resources/funding required, dissemination; 2000 words maximum)
- Short CV for each researcher (1 page per researcher)

6. Additional Information

All proposals should be completed using the proposal templates and submitted to eme@arpansa.gov.au. For major research projects, applications must be submitted during the call for proposals (applications not submitted by the due date will not be considered for funding). Proposals must also comply with the specified word limits to be considered for funding. All successful external applicants will be required to sign a research agreement with ARPANSA, and where applicable, provide documentation of approval by an ethics committee. Furthermore, ARPANSA has responsibility for the oversight of the research, and research plans may be adapted with consideration to resource availability, timelines, and relevant policy where required.

7. Terms and definitions

Term	Definition
ARPANSA	Australian Radiation Protection and Nuclear Safety Agency
EME	Electromagnetic energy
ICNIRP	International Commission on Non-Ionizing Radiation Protection
RPS S-1	The ARPANSA Standard for limiting exposure to radiofrequency fields (100 kHz to 300 GHz)

8. Reference

Ref	Abbreviation	Title	Issue date
1	ARPANSA EME Research Agenda	Radiofrequency Electromagnetic Energy and Health: Research Needs	June 2017
2	ICNIRP RF EMF Guidelines	ICNIRP Guidelines for Limiting Exposure to Electromagnetic Fields (100 kHz to 300 GHz)	March 2020
3	ARPANSA RPS S-1	Radiation Protection Series S-1 (Rev.1) – Standard for Limiting Exposure to Radiofrequency Fields – 100 kHz to 300 GHz	February 2021
4	ARPANS Act	Australian Radiation Protection and Nuclear Safety Act 1998	October 2016

9. Revision history

Version	Author	Description of changes	Release date
1.0	S. Loughran	New Issue	August 2021