



Australian Government

Department of Health,
Disability and Ageing

Medical Research
Future Fund



Medical Research Future Fund

Guidance for grantees on progress reports

Best Practices

Reporting on progress against objectives or achievement of outcomes is a requirement of receiving a Medical Research Future Fund (MRFF) grant, as outlined in the grant opportunity guidelines and grant agreement. Reporting allows the Department of Health, Disability and Ageing (the department) to ensure projects meet intended objectives, to determine if additional support is needed for issues and risks, to support ongoing monitoring and evaluation on the performance of the MRFF, and to identify features of successful projects and challenges faced by grantees to improve future grant design.

Below are some points to keep in mind while completing progress reports for MRFF grants. Exceptions related to the administering grant hubs, either Business Grants Hub (BGH) or National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC), are noted.

This guidance is intended to assist the grantee in completing the report and to support Research Administration Officers (RAOs) to review the report and advise on requirements before submission to the administering grant hub.

Content and language

- **[BGH-administered grants only] Use the current templates for submitting project reports on MRFF grants.** The department publishes separate MRFF progress report and final report templates on the [MRFF website](#), and the websites of the respective grant hubs. The templates are updated periodically, so please download the current template before drafting and submitting each report.
- **Do not delete any tables from the template.** Complete all white sections as prompted.
- **[NHMRC-administered grants only] Use the current reporting templates available within the NHMRC grants management system and only complete and submit them online.**
- **Reporting templates must be completed in full prior to submission.** Information provided in the report should address all the questions directly and state the facts about progress of the project. Insufficient responses may result in additional requests for information and delays in report review.

- **[NHMRC-administered grants only] Progress reports with a short reporting period (less than 3 months) must still be completed in full.** Where you have undertaken limited activity towards the project, concise responses to each question are sufficient.
- **Responses do not need be too detailed or scientific, nor over-simplified – write for a general scientific audience.** There should be sufficient information in the report for the department to be able to assess progress against the milestones and understand the nature of any risks and/or issues, and steps taken to mitigate them.
- **Responses can be brief where the project is progressing as anticipated and should be lengthier where the project is experiencing issues.** Briefly confirm positive progress and explain in greater detail any challenges (minor, emerging and critical) and how they have been or are being addressed.
- **The character limits provided for each question are a guideline.** These are indicative of the amount of detail expected for each section.
- **Do not request a variation through a progress report.** Any deviations from the grant schedule/application package or grant agreement/variation contract that requires approval **must have been previously approved in a variation request.** All changes covered under the MRFF Grant Variation Policy must be submitted separately as a variation request. Please refer to the [MRFF Grant Variation Policy and relevant appendix](#) for additional information on variation requests.

Submission and certification process

- **Reports should be reviewed and certified by research administration officers prior to submission to the administering grant hub.** The RAO within the eligible/administering organisation should check for accuracy, compliance and completeness. Incomplete or missing information in the report may result in additional requests for information and delays in report review. The RAOs should check progress and advise whether delays may require a variation request.
- **Project expenditure within the reports should be completed with support from finance officers** within the eligible/administering organisation for accuracy, compliance and completeness.
- Instructions for the report submission process of the administering grant hub can be found in the respective reporting templates, the grant agreement, schedule and/or grant hub's website. Reports for NHMRC-administered grants must be submitted via the NHMRC grants management system.

Unforeseen circumstances

- The department recognises that unforeseen circumstances may adversely impact the progress towards completion of grant activities. The report should explain the impact of the unforeseen circumstances on the progress of the grant activity, specific time

periods and steps taken to address the impacts of the unforeseen circumstances to ensure the project is on track.

- Inadequate explanation of any unforeseen circumstances may result in additional requests for information from the department via the grant hub, and delays in report review.

Instructions to Grantees

This section provides guidance on completing each component of the MRFF progress report template.

Project Information

- **Refer to the grant agreement, grant schedule and/or hub-specific grant management system for accurate information to enter in this section**, including the Grant ID, Grant Opportunity Name, Eligible/Administering Organisation, Chief Investigator A/Project Lead, Grant Title, Grant Agreement/Research Activity Start and End Dates, Activity Start and End Dates and other fields requested in the template or online form.
- **The 'Reporting Period' is specific to the report being submitted.**
 - **[BGH-administered grants only]** The reporting periods and report due dates are published in the agreement/variation contract.
 - **[NHMRC-administered grants only]** NHMRC annual reports are due 30 September and will report on the previous financial year. Biannual reports are due 31 March and 30 September. The standardised progress reporting periods are:
 - Annual reports due on 30/09/202Y report on the period 01/07/202X to 30/06/202Y.
 - Annual reports due 30/09/ September 202Y would report on the period 01/07/ July 202X to 30/06/ June 202Y. Biannual reports due 31/03/202Y would report on the period 01/07/202X to 31/12/202X. Biannual reports due 30/09/202Y would report on the period 01/01/202Y to 30/06/202Y.
- Information on the **Australia New Zealand Clinical Trials Registry Trial ID or similar (where relevant)** and **Commonwealth Commercialisation Clauses** should not be left blank. Please enter/select N/A where applicable.

Project Progress

- **Milestones and Objectives**
 - **[BGH-administered grants only]** Enter all Milestones/Objectives and Agreed End Dates as per the grant agreement/variation contract. Information reported should be for the current reporting period.
 - **[NHMRC-administered grants only]** Enter all Milestones/Objectives and Agreed End Dates as per the grant schedule and application. If the grant has

an approved extension variation/s and milestones/objectives end dates are affected, keep the original end dates as per the grant schedule/application. Then include a note in the Comments box to advise the dates have been affected by an approved extension variation/s. Information reported should be for the current reporting period.

- **Include Milestones/Objectives completed in a previous reporting period for transparency and easy review of overall progress.** Note 'As previously reported' in the Comments field for the respective milestone.
- **Indicate an Actual/Anticipated End Date if progress towards completion is on track or delayed.** If progress towards completion is not on track, indicate the anticipated end date and explain any changes or delays to the milestones/objectives. This should include a description of any strategies that have been or will be put into place to rectify the delays.
- **Current % Complete should align with agreed start and end dates.** If an activity is progressing quicker or slower than expected, include details in the Comments field for the respective milestone.
- **Additional grant activities**
 - Any additional activities outlined in a progress report should contribute towards the successful implementation of the project. Explain how the activities relate to the objectives and intended outcomes of the grant opportunity.
- **Variation requests**
 - Enter in the table all variation requests that have been approved, submitted to the grant hub, and are in draft.
 - Outlining **draft variations** in the progress report **does not constitute submission of a variation request.**
 - Variation requests should be submitted following identification of a delay or issue that cannot be managed through other means.
 - Variations must be submitted at least one month in advance of the proposed date of effect and/or at least one month before the grant end date.
- **Risks to completion**
 - Describe risks and provide explanation on how they are being managed, in terms of their impact on and likelihood to jeopardise the successful completion of the project.
 - Refer to the risk management plan as originally awarded or previously approved when discussing how any highlighted risks are being or will be managed.
 - If the current risk management plan does not cover mitigation of new risks or significant impacts to the project, a revised risk management plan should be submitted with the report.
- **Overall progress**

- Provide a high-level summary of progress towards completion of the project and whether it is on track for completion by the activity end date. Information provided here should not be specific to individual milestones/objectives.
- Should progress towards completion not be on track, describe the barriers that have been faced and the extent of the overall delay. Refer to the MRFF Grant Variation Policy to consider if a variation request may be prudent.
- If this report is the last progress report before the end of the grant period and some milestones/objectives are unlikely to be completed by the end date, we strongly suggest considering submission of a variation request, as final reports should not be submitted with significant incomplete milestones/objectives.
- **Research implementation and translation**
 - This section specifically focuses on the implementation of the research findings during the grant period towards translation into improved health outcomes. The description of implementation could range from a planned approach if your research is at an early stage, to an account of steps taken if translation has been implemented.
 - Provide a description of key enablers and barriers faced during implementation of this project. The department may use the information you provide to inform strategies that could support future MRFF grantees and to inform the design of future MRFF grant opportunities. You are encouraged to include a description of the strategies that you have adopted to overcome any barriers.
- **[BGH-administered grants only] Supporting projects led by Partner Organisations or Subcontractor/Awardee**
 - **This section is only applicable to Program Management Organisation grantees that are responsible for managing large MRFF-funded grant programs supporting research projects led by other organisations.** This includes grantees who establish a subcontractor/awardee relationship with the organisations leading the research projects, such as under the BioMedTech Horizons Program, Early-Stage Translation and Commercialisation Support and Targeted Translation Research Accelerator.
 - Grantees that work with partner organisations, but where those partners are not undertaking their own research projects under the grant, should select 'No' to the question regarding partnerships with selected organisations. Instead, any contributions from partner organisations that are specified in the grant agreement, application package, or supporting documentation (including letters of support) should be reported in the final question under the *Project Expenditure* section.

Project Expenditure

- **Expenditure reporting**

- Any changes that have been made to the expenditure items and are allowable without Delegate approval, should be reflected in your response indicating the changes. Refer to the following documents for guidance:
 - **[BGH-administered grants only]** grant opportunity guidelines, grant agreement and/or MRFF grant variation policy.
 - **[NHMRC-administered grants only]** grant opportunity guidelines, grant schedule and/or MRFF grant variation policy.
- Where budget has been moved between categories to cover increased expenditure for one approved item from an underspend for another approved item, update the budget and include in your response.
- Any changes allowable under the grant opportunity guidelines, grant agreement and/or schedule indicated as requiring Delegate approval must be requested as a variation in accordance with the MRFF Grant Variation Policy.
- **Expenditure eligibility**
 - Where ineligible expenditure has been indicated, answer this question with a statement detailing the ineligible costs and why they were incurred.
 - Refer to the grant opportunity guidelines and grant agreement to determine the eligible expenditure allowed under the grant opportunity.
 - **[NHMRC-administered grants only]** In addition, refer to the [NHMRC Direct Research Cost Guidelines](#) to determine allowable expenditure noting that any differences outlined in the grant opportunity guidelines take precedence.
- **Partner Contributions**
 - Report on contributions (cash or in-kind) which have been outlined in the application package (including letters of support) and/or grant agreement. If contributions have not been made as expected, describe the impact of delays or changes to the delivery of the Research Activity in the comments field.

Project Evaluation

- **MRFF Measures of Success**
 - Refer to the grant opportunity guidelines and your submitted application to confirm if a Measures of Success statement was required as part of the application. If the Measures of Success statement was not required with the application, select 'No' and in the table below select 'N/A.'
 - Complete the table in alignment with the Measures of Success statement provided with the submitted application. Comments should be provided on progress toward achieving each outcome/result and whether these are on track. Provide a brief summary of the activities that led to successful completion of the Measures of Success, as applicable.

- Indicate the level of achievement ('Fully achieved', 'Partially achieved', 'Not achieved'). Achievement/completion of the Measures of Success are expected by the end of the project. Provide justification or description of any deviations from the approved Measures of Success if progress is not on track or not achieved.

Attachments

- **Attach any documents that were requested in the template or at the direction of the administering grant hub, or indicated as required in the grant opportunity guidelines, grant agreement and/or schedule.**
- Incomplete or missing attachments may result in additional correspondence and delays in report review.
- Ensure all attachments have clear descriptive filenames, including the relevant Grant ID.

Figures and Tables

- Include clearly numbered figures and tables in this section of the report only and reference figure and table numbers within the report responses.

Queries and contact

- **Direct any questions about completing and submitting reports to the RAOs who may contact the administering grant hub if further is needed.** The contact information of the administering grant hub specific to each grant can be found in the [grant agreement and/or schedule](#).
- Please inform the administering grant hub of any issues with the grant administration system, including any inaccurate information on the grant or milestones.
 - Email [BGH](#) for matters related to using the Business.gov.au grants portal.
 - Email [NHMRC](#) for matters related to using the NHMRC grants management system.
- **Should you have any difficulties meeting the milestones outlined in your grant agreement and/or schedule, please inform the administering grant hub as soon as possible.** You may need to submit a variation request as outlined in the MRFF Grant Variation Policy and relevant appendix.