



SKAO Regional Centre **Australia**

AusSRC Science Enabling Projects (ASEP) – Detailed Scoring

Scoring Overview

An external Time Allocation Committee (TAC) will follow strict guidelines to assess each proposal based on a TAC Guidelines and Policies document. Proposers can request a copy of the document by writing to the TAC Secretary, Chandra Murugesan (Chandra.Murugesan@uwa.edu.au). Each proposal is assigned an overall score between **1 and 10**, guided by three primary assessment criteria. AusSRC will assess proposals holistically, recognising that a strong proposal will demonstrate a balance of strategic relevance, scientific or technical merit, and feasibility.

Criterion 1: Path to SKA Science / Program Fit

This criterion evaluates how well the proposed work aligns with the mission and strategic objectives of AusSRC, and contributes to the broader pathway toward SKA science. Proposals should demonstrate a clear connection between the proposed work and one or more of AusSRC's strategic priorities.

When assessing this criterion, AusSRC will consider whether the proposal:

- enables SKA science or builds towards it with SKA precursor telescopes;
- addresses challenges in analysing or exploiting radio astronomy data;

- develops community tools, workflows, software or services;
- improves access to or usability of advanced data products;
- strengthens Australian capability in radio astronomy;
- contributes to capabilities relevant for the global SRCNet ecosystem.

Strong proposals will identify a clear community need, demonstrate benefits beyond the immediate project team, and articulate how the proposed outcomes contribute to AusSRC's mission. Although previous AusSRC support will not automatically advantage or disadvantage a proposal, AusSRC may also consider whether the project complements existing AusSRC-supported activities or contributes to shared community infrastructure.

Score considerations:

- Alignment with AusSRC mission
- Contribution to SKA-readiness
- SRCNet alignment
- Community benefit
- Sustainability

Criterion 2: Scientific & Technical Merit

This criterion evaluates the quality, significance and expected impact of the proposed work. Proposals should clearly articulate the scientific or technical problem being addressed, explain why it is important, and demonstrate how the proposed work will advance scientific understanding, develop new capabilities, or address an important community need.

For science-led proposals, AusSRC will consider the significance of the scientific question and the potential impact of the proposed research. For technically-focused proposals, the emphasis should be on the value, innovation and broader applicability of the proposed software, workflows, services or infrastructure.

When assessing this criterion, AusSRC will consider whether the proposal demonstrates:

- a clearly defined scientific or technical objective;
- a compelling case for why the work is important;
- realistic and meaningful outcomes; and
- identifiable benefits to the Australian SKA community.

Score considerations:

- Scientific impact
- Novelty or innovation
- Strategic importance
- Broader impact beyond single project

Criterion 3: Feasibility

This criterion evaluates whether the proposed work can be realistically delivered within the requested level of support and the expected duration of an ASEP.

Proposals should present a well-defined and achievable project plan. When assessing proposals on this criterion, AusSRC will consider whether:

- the project scope is clearly defined and appropriately prioritised;
- a **Minimum Viable Product (MVP)** is clearly identified, representing the core deliverable(s) required for project success;
- major tasks, milestones and expected outcomes are realistic and achievable;
- the requested level and type of AusSRC support are appropriate for the proposed work; and
- key dependencies, assumptions and project risks have been identified and, where appropriate, mitigation strategies have been considered.

Additional objectives may be identified as **stretch goals**, but these should be clearly distinguished from the MVP and should not compromise the feasibility of delivering the project's core outcomes.

Score considerations:

- Realistic scope
 - Appropriate timeline
 - Resource alignment
 - Risk mitigation plan
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Grading Bands

8–10: Definitely Support

5–7: Support if Possible

2–4: Support after Revision

1: Cannot Evaluate

Additional Advisory Flags (Non-scored)

The following considerations are intended to inform AusSRC discussions and provide additional context during deliberations. While they will not directly influence the proposal score, they may

assist AusSRC management when considering the overall balance and strategic value of the ASEP portfolio.

- **Student Training and Workforce Development:** Does the project provide opportunities to develop Higher Degree Research students, early-career researchers, software engineers, or broader community capability?
- **Translation Beyond Astronomy:** Does the project have potential applications beyond astronomy, including transferable software, workflows, methods or collaborations with industry or other research domains?
- **Cross-SKA Regional Centre (SRC) and National Collaboration:** Does the project strengthen collaboration across the international SKA ecosystem, including other SRCs, AusSRC joint venture partner organisations or other international collaborations (e.g. Data Central, the Inter-University Institute for Data Intensive Astronomy, DUG, CARTA)?
- **Operational Sustainability:** Where ongoing operational support, hosting or maintenance is requested, is the duration and level of commitment sustainable for AusSRC given its evolving SRCNet responsibilities and available resources? Long-term commitments (e.g. 5+ years of operational support) may be difficult to accommodate.
- **Prior AusSRC Support:** Where applicable, does the proposal build effectively on previous AusSRC-supported work and demonstrate appropriate progression from earlier outcomes?

AusSRC will provide written comments for each proposal and an overall recommendation.