



TRY, TEST AND LEARN FUND TRANCHE 2 INFORMATION SESSIONS QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

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Information Session Meetings

Sydney - 8 December 2017
Hobart - 31 January 2018
Launceston - 1 February 2018
Adelaide - 8 February 2018
Brisbane - 19 February 2018
Townsville - 20 February 2018
Alice Springs - 6 March 2018
Darwin - 7 March 2018
Cairns - 8 March 2018

Melbourne - 21 March 2018
Bendigo - 22 March 2018
Perth - 11 April 2018
Canberra - 19 April 2018
Western Sydney - 16 May 2018
Dubbo - 6 June 2018
Coffs Harbour - 7 June 2018
Wagga Wagga - 20 June 2018

Document control

Date	Version number	Comments
27/8/18	11	New Question and Answer added 27 August 2018.
21/6/18	10	Added questions from Wagga Wagga information session
15/06/2018	9	Added questions from Western Sydney, Dubbo and Coffs Harbour information session
7/05/2018	8	Added questions from the Canberra information session.
20/04/2018	7	Re-ordered questions and answers thematically, rather than by event. Amended response on length of timing of awarding of successful grants and some questions relating to evaluation. Added questions received at Cairns, Darwin, Alice Springs, Melbourne, Bendigo, Perth information sessions. Also added four new questions received via email.
1/03/2018	6	Added questions and answers from the Adelaide, Brisbane and Townsville information sessions, held on 8, 19 and 20 February respectively
13/02/2018	5	Added questions and answers from the Hobart and Launceston information sessions, held on 31 January and 1 February 2018 respectively
31/01/2018	4	Added an additional question (see appropriate heading)
30/01/2018	3	Added 6 additional questions (see appropriate heading)
22/12/2017	2	Added questions and answers from the Sydney information session, held on 8 December 2017
14/12/2017	1	

Tranche 1

Q. Is tranche 1 now closed?

A. We are no longer accepting idea submissions for tranche 1. In tranche 2, you may submit an application for a project that targets tranche 1 priority groups.

Q. Can we obtain a complete list of all funded projects in tranche 1?

A. Yes, there are fact sheets for all tranche 1 projects on the DSS website.

Q. Will you fund organisations that you already supported in tranche 1?

A. Organisations who were successful in applying for funding in tranche 1 can apply for funding in tranche 2.

Q. What were the most common elements of those ideas that were rejected in tranche 1?

A. Noting that the tranche 1 selection process was different to that being conducted for tranche 2, almost 25% were considered ineligible because they lacked a focus on one of the three priority groups, or on supporting participants to improve their independence of welfare.

Q. Why have you changed the design of the fund from tranche 1 to tranche 2?

A. The Try, Test and Learn Fund is an opportunity for the Government to explore new ways of working with the community, as well as for funding innovative projects. We have kept successful elements of tranche 1, such as co-development and engagement with end users. We engaged an external consultant to conduct an internal review of tranche 1, and the lessons learned from this process has helped us to develop a refined approach for tranche 2.

Tranche 2 has been designed to be streamlined and flexible to stakeholders' needs and emerging policy priorities. For example, by allowing applicants to propose their own priority groups we can take full advantage of the knowledge and creativity of the sector in gathering evidence about 'what works' to help people in need.

Q. Can I just clarify the first round of 400 ideas, does that mean there were 400 proposals?

A. In tranche 1, we asked people to submit ideas and received around 400 separate ideas. We grouped some of the best ideas together and then worked with proponents to develop proposals.

Q. In tranche 1 there were 400 applications and 14 were funded. In tranche 2, are you expecting a similar success rate for projects?

A. Not necessarily. Tranche 1 was focused on ideas generation and therefore the proposals were not fully formed. In tranche 2, we expect there will be less proposals because the grant application process requires them to be more fully developed than was necessary previously.

Q. If people knew that there was only a 3.5% chance of being successful no one would apply.

A. It is worth noting that of the approximately 400 that ideas that were received in tranche one, almost 100 were not considered eligible because they not meet the criteria. Of the almost 300 that were eligible, approximately 40–50 ideas were in some way involved the co-development process that eventually evolved into the 14 funded projects.

Q. With regard to tranche 1, are you looking at what the life of the project is afterwards? For example, is there a commercialisation pathway or is there the opportunity for the private sector to deliver the project as a service? What is the trend?

A. It is still early days; this is one of the issues that we will need to confront moving forward, particularly with regard to intellectual property and commercialisation.

Q. I am part of tranche 1 with the young parents program. We are looking at doing some other work within the program to meet the needs of our community. Would I be excluded from submitting a tranche 2 application?

A. No, not at all

Q. Can an idea submitted in tranche 1 be re-submitted in tranche 2?

A. Yes, but as the selection criteria have changed, they would likely need to be reworked.

Q. I note that no projects were funded in regional areas in tranche 1. Is this because not many applications came from regional organisations?

A. It is true that the majority of applications in tranche 1 were from organisations based in metropolitan areas. Applicants from regionally-based organisations have expressed concern that they are comparatively smaller or likely to attract smaller numbers of participants than others in metropolitan areas. We encourage organisations to collaborate and partner with others across several sites in order to demonstrate effectiveness.

Also, DSS is endeavouring to publicise tranche 2 in the regions and encourage more regional organisations to apply.

Q. Did the full \$23 million for tranche 1 go into those fourteen projects?

A. Yes, approximately \$23 million in total has been approved for the 14 projects from tranche 1.

Q. Can you give us some examples of projects that got up in remote communities or Aboriginal communities?

A. At this point, there are none in tranche 1 and we see that as a gap that we are keen to address.

Q. Can you give us an example of a project everyone liked?

A. In tranche 1 there were a lot of ideas that came through. There were many that shared attributes or approaches, so we grouped them together to some extent. The tranche 1 co-design process involved elements from up to approximately 40 idea proposals in an attempt to ensure that we identified the best elements of each.

Q. Is there a young students' project in Ceduna? Statistically remote communities have few people but the issues may be very significant for those remote communities. How do you balance what may be not so significant dollars-wise for the whole of Australia but very significant for those living in remote communities?

A. We do not currently have a funded project in Ceduna, the map used in the presentation is a general representation only, so is not accurate to that scale. We do not do a mathematical equation to determine whether an intervention in a remote community or territory saves as much money as interventions elsewhere because it's targeting a smaller cohort. What is important is:

- sample size, there need to be sufficient participants to demonstrate that an intervention works or doesn't work. This may vary depending on the nature of the project and its location. There are no hard and fast rules around this.
- potential for an intervention to be scaled up or replicated elsewhere. So, it could be a remote-area strategy that can be rolled out in a number of remote communities across Australia, we would absolutely welcome that. We do need to have some sort of statistical confidence about it, so it may need to be trialled in a number of remote communities.

Q. In the first tranche, did the application process have an area where the application proponent could state how long the application process took?

A. The process for tranche 1 was somewhat different from that being used for tranche 2. In the first instance idea proponents were asked to simply suggest an idea, this did not involve an application for funding so was somewhat more straightforward, requiring a maximum of about 1000 words covering about 5-6 criteria. It was only once the ideas had been further developed, in collaboration with a broad range of idea proponents and others with relevant expertise and experience, that applications were invited for funding to deliver the resulting projects. So the two processes are not directly comparable.

Tranche 2 priority groups

Q. Do I have to justify the needs of the group that I want to support with my application? How do I do this?

A. In your application, you can specify whether you want to support a tranche 1 or 2 priority group, a subset of a priority group, or another group of your choosing. You will need to demonstrate that the people you propose to support have a need for your project. This includes showing that those people are at risk of long-term welfare dependence, and that your project would address a gap in existing services rather than duplicating what is already on offer.

The kind of evidence you use may include Australian Priority Investment Approach to Welfare data, such as that available through the [TableBuilder tool](#) found on the Australian Bureau of Statistics website. In addition, accredited researchers can access de-identified individuals' data derived from the Priority Investment Approach dataset, through a password protected online Remote Access Research Gateway hosted by the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, as well as a publicly accessible synthetic dataset hosted by the [Australian Data Archive Dataverse](#).

You may also use other research, government reports and evidence, or describe what you have learned from working with vulnerable people. We will review the evidence you put forward on a case-by-case basis to see how well it addresses the assessment criteria.

Q. If I put forward an application for a group that is not one of the identified four groups, what kind of evidence will you accept or not accept?

A. Your application will need to include evidence that the group that you propose to support is at risk of long-term welfare dependence. This requirement is particularly important where you propose a group outside the priority groups.

The kind of evidence you use may include Priority Investment Approach data, such as that available through the TableBuilder tool. Accredited researchers can access individuals' de-identified data derived from the Priority Investment Approach dataset, through a password protected online Remote Access Research Gateway hosted by the AIHW, as well as a publicly accessible synthetic dataset hosted by the [Australian Data Archive Dataverse](#).

You may also use other research, government reports and evidence, or describe what you've learned from working with vulnerable people. We will review evidence put forward to support a project for a priority group on a case-by-case basis to see how well it addresses the assessment criteria.

Q. Can I submit an application for a project that addresses barriers in more than one priority group?

A. Yes. In your application, you will need to describe the group of people that your project will support, demonstrate that this group has a need for your project, and explain how your project will work to address their needs. This will include demonstrating that the group is at risk of long-term welfare dependence, and showing how your project will help to address barriers to employment and, ultimately, improve workforce participation or capacity to work.

Q. Are you looking for one target group per project or is there the potential to include more than one target group?

A. Yes, there is the potential to do more than one priority group per project.

Q. Can I submit an application for a project to support a subset of a priority group?

A. Yes. Several of the priority groups are quite broad in scope, such as the group of at-risk young people, and we expect that applications may target subsets within those groups. For example, you may choose to direct your project towards young people facing homelessness in your local area. You will be able to describe the group that your project would support as part of your application.

Q. Are you looking to distinguish between the migrant and refugee groups?

A. No.

Q. Are young people at risk of being at risk eligible participants? That is, they are not on income support but are disadvantaged and at risk of going on income support.

A. The focus of the fund is on people who are also on income support. However, we would consider applications, accompanied by sufficient evidence, that aim to support people at risk of going on income support.

Q. Are applications limited to a single location?

A. No, multi-site projects will be considered.

Q. If I submit an application for a tranche 1 priority group, do I need to justify this selection through evidence?

A. Yes. All applications will need to demonstrate the needs of the group that you propose to support. One of the assessment criteria asks you to demonstrate that the people you propose to support have a need for your project. This includes showing that those people are at risk of long-term welfare dependence, and that your project would address a gap in existing services rather than duplicating what's already on offer.

Q. The Department of Jobs and Small Business has Youth Jobs PaTH and the Department of Education and Training has the Skilling Australians Fund, both which are targeting the some of the same priority groups, . Would you see some kind of project that tries to integrate those as being relevant?

A. It could be. We are working very closely with the Department of Jobs and Small Business, both at a bureaucratic level and at a ministerial level. We're very conscious there is potential for crossover, but there are also opportunities to build on and enhance existing programs. Our department provides a couple of billion dollars a year to programs for families, disability support, humanitarian entrants and settlement services, for example, and we want to look at how we do that better too.

Q. How will existing partners be placed in terms of new entrants, in terms of synergies that could be realised, and in terms of the possibility of expanding existing projects?

A. Applications for projects to assist tranche 1 priority groups will still be considered. We are also keen to get new people involved – this is one benefit of having the funding period open

for an extended period. There is nothing stopping us from expanding an existing project from tranche 1 or broadening the geographic scope of existing tranche 1 projects. Broadening the intensity of an intervention from tranche 1 is okay as well, to build on success: but the evidence would have to be compelling.

We need to be very clear that the nature of these funding grants are trials and funding is for a limited period. Any evidence they produce would be used to inform future policy decisions.

Q. Young people are often not able to chase their dreams (e.g. sport or music) due to the cost of being involved. Is the TTL flexible enough to allow a proposal for a young person to achieve their dream, perhaps in music or sport?

A. We would be open to an organisation that might work in this space but not for an individual to apply for funding directly in order to participate in a particular activity. Such a proposal could be about building social capital; this is important.

Q. When you talk about income support, what income support do you mean?

A. Any income support.

Q. Do you have to target people on income support payments?

A. People on income support should be the main target of projects.

Q. It is likely that most carers would receive more than Carer Payment. Are you interested in all working age carers or just those receiving Carer Payment?

A. We are driven by the priority investment data, which is derived from social security data. When we defined the tranche 1 groups, the initial criteria was whether an end user was on a particular payment or not. This has been broadened, for a number of reasons. For example, it is impossible for a provider to know if a young person is on youth allowance or not.

Q. Regarding the young people at risk target group, are you specifically looking at the income support payments that you mentioned?

A. We have taken a broad understanding of what payments this priority group may be on.

Q. We know that there are many young people not receiving payments now, are we able to target these people through this funding?

A. They may be a group that we would look at. That is assuming you could identify that they are a group who could potentially be on income support in the future, but are currently not in the system.

Q. I believe that it is the business sector and the government that need to open their doors to migrants and refugees looking for employment, how do you get them to do that?

A. We are trying to work with some of the peak bodies in the business sector; they have been quite interested in helping spread the word. We are trying to work with them, to understand that challenge better.

Q. Are refugees on safe haven visas eligible participants

A. No, temporary visa holders are not considered to be at risk of being long-term Australian welfare recipients. (Note – this question was taken on notice)

Q. You stated that there were around 250,000 Newstart Allowance recipients and around 299,000 migrants and refugees receiving income support, is that the same group?

A. There may be overlap between the two groups. The Newstart statistics outline those who are aged 50 and over receiving income support in the form of Newstart Allowance. The migrants and refugees statistic outlines people in that group who receive any income support, which may include Newstart. TableBuilder will provide you with any specific information you are looking for.

Q. Does 'other' mean a subset of one of the seven priority groups listed?

A. No, it means an application for a cohort other than those listed may be considered, so long as evidence is available to support a contention that the cohort in question is at risk of long-term welfare dependence.

Q. For our community there might be only 500 people living there and the jobs just aren't there, particularly for young people. The jobs tend to go to the older people first.

A. How you define the trajectory is up to you, but it is important that you think about and show how you might evaluate or assess the impact of the project.

We don't have a magic number that is needed in terms of participants: you might have a small community, and you might need to run the trial in a several communities to show impact. You may want to bring in expertise from others, such as an academic, to help design the project and its approach to evaluation to show impact. There will also be an independent TTL evaluator to help with that process.

Q. We work in a community with about 60 people and we work with young women, what size cohort will help to show impact? For us the economies of scale in terms of the remoteness is interesting, and I hope that is taken into account.

A. We urge you to think creatively, outside the box. In some cases it might be worth considering whether or who you can partner with. We are keen to see new market entrants and new partnerships. We are keen to see applications for projects in remote communities.

Q. Do the target groups in Tranche 2 still include the target groups from Tranche 1?

A. Yes, you can submit an application for any of the priority groups from tranche 1 or tranche 2 or any other group you may identify.

Q. There is no priority group specifically for Indigenous people.

A. While there is no specific priority group comprising Indigenous people as such, applications can target Indigenous people specifically.

Q. Is there overlap between the priority groups and does this matter for applicants?

A. Yes, there will be some overlap between the groups. For example, there are many carers from a migrant or refugee background. This is one of the reasons that the Try, Test and Learn Fund is flexible in how applicants respond to the priority groups and we welcome applications that look to support cohorts that overlap between several groups. The priority groups we have put forward were drawn from Priority Investment Approach data and defined in certain ways. However, they are not meant to be treated rigidly but rather to stimulate thinking about how to address disadvantage and risk of long-term welfare dependence in these groups.

Collaboration and linkages

Q. I have an idea for the fund but I don't have the capacity to deliver it, so I can't apply to the current tranche 2 grant opportunity. Are there other ways for me to be involved?

A. The Try, Test and Learn Fund promotes collaboration as a means of inspiring innovation and developing strong new approaches to supporting people at risk of long-term welfare dependence. We encourage stakeholders to consider forming partnerships to put forward proposals to the fund, for example between universities and service providers.

Currently, we are welcoming applications from entities that are well placed to deliver their ideas for Try, Test and Learn Fund projects. You can stay informed about the TTL Fund and the other information sessions by subscribing to our newsletter on the [DSS website](#).

Q. You talk a lot about collective impact and collaboration with these projects. In terms of the way in which these projects are selected, are there any thoughts of how they interact with each other? How are we going about encouraging that?

A. Collaboration was one important element of tranche 1. Some of it occurred naturally, people naturally joined together, or it happened when we looked at projects, we joined idea proponents together to come up with a collaborative effort.

For tranche 2, you may come together as a consortium, as a number of people did for tranche 1. We certainly promote that approach in tranche 2. It could involve the private sector, NGOs, or a collaboration of NGOs with business: we are trying to stimulate that so it happens naturally. We might also see if there is a natural partnership that we could encourage during co-development.

Q. How is this fund tying into the New South Wales Office of Social Impact Investment? They are welcoming proposals that fit into the objectives outlined by the state's Premier, and some of those fit into this.

A. We are looking at working more closely with the state government on this tranche of the fund, but there is also work being undertaken in the Commonwealth Government on social impact investing; it is directly tied to working with the state governments. We are working through a range of areas to do with youth homelessness, and potentially young people at risk; I was really pleased we got that up as a priority group. This priority group in particular is really open to working with state government. We have been working with the NSW Government for some time on this issue.

There is no formal link between Try, Test and Learn and what the NSW Government is doing, but we do liaise with our state government colleagues. Focusing on specific projects like this will provide a great opportunity to see how we can actually work together better.

We are open to state governments applying for Try, Test and Learn funds, providing they are collaborating and working with service delivery organisations.

Q. Can you tell us a bit more about the relationship between state and Commonwealth government services? What we find in applications is that when you're trying to explain how you leverage off existing services, one level of government sees that as duplication and that tends to hinder the funding application. Yet from a service or

client level you can see a definite gap. Is it ok if people work with say (NSW Department of) Premier and Cabinet in regards to their application, before they submit?

A. Yes to last part, we are very open to partnerships between non-government organisations and state governments , however any such partnership would need to be led by a non-government organisation. In regards to the first part of your question, that will be part of the co-development process. We don't want to fund something that looks and smells like something else — we want new initiatives.

There is more information on the website and the Grant Opportunity Guidelines are very useful.

Q. Is collaboration looked upon favourably?

A. Absolutely, the Try, Test and Learn Fund promotes collaboration as a means of fostering innovation and developing strong new approaches to supporting people at risk of long-term welfare dependence. We encourage stakeholders to consider forming partnerships to put forward proposals to the fund, for example between universities and service providers.

Q. Is it possible to put in a collaborative approach with New Zealand?

A. An approach that has been tried in another country and proven successful potentially would make a good trial here.

Q. Has there been much involvement from the business sector?

A. We did have some involvement from the business sector in tranche 1, but not as much as we would have liked. Several tranche 1 projects have involved private sector stakeholders.

Q. If applicants collaborate with local or state government is there an expectation of co-funding?

A. There is no expectation of collaboration or co-funding, however, such elements could help support an application. Certainly, applications would be enhanced by the inclusion of collaborations that result in a creative mix of resources, skills and or experience and/or those that include funding from other sources.

Q. Are you interested in co-funding?

A. Yes, we encourage co-funding and are interested in exploring collaborations where, for example, the private sector works with an NGO to provide some capital or resourcing.

Q. Partnerships have been encouraged in the past, but it ended up that the partnership didn't get any money. What does partnership mean in terms of innovation? From your experience, what are some of the types of partnerships that have been agreed in tranche 1?

A. Partnerships in themselves are not usually the innovation. Some examples of partnerships from tranche 1 include:

- An organisation that is focused on lobbying partnered with a service delivery organisation and an academic.

- An organisation that is focused on training partnered with a recruitment organisation.

Q. In those partnerships, can you talk about how the money works, for example, through a consortium or a subcontract?

A. The organisations in a partnership would need to agree on which of them is the lead organisation; this lead would enter into the funding agreement with the department, and the lead would enter into subcontracting arrangements with its partner/s.

Q. Is it necessary to nominate partners or collaborators in the application or can applicants seek partners as part of the co-development process?

Ideally, any proposed partners would be identified in the application so we can best assess your application and the capacity and capability of the applicant and its partners (if any) to deliver the proposed intervention. If this is not possible, applicants would be well advised to be clear in the application that they are intending to engage partner(s), outlining the expertise and resources such partners would bring and the applicant's strategy for recruiting such partners.

Q. Is collaboration with state and territory governments acceptable?

Yes. Although we are not able to fund state or territory government agencies directly, an application from a non-government organisation that proposes to collaborate with a state government agency is acceptable.

Q. If we are funded can we expect collaboration from Centrelink, Housing NSW or other government bodies (such as to help with recruitment)?

We cannot speak for state and territory governments. A number of Australian Government departments are represented on the inter-departmental committee that is overseeing the development of TTL, and as such they are aware of TTL and our projects. They include the Departments of Jobs and Small Business, Finance and Education, among others. Different projects have employed different approaches to recruitment and it is something to consider in the co-development stage.

It is worth noting that as it is such a large, delivery-focused organisation, Centrelink has certain centralised standard processes, which can make it difficult for them to respond to individual programs.

Q. Will DSS be proactive in linking organisations that are applying for funding for similar approaches?

We did this in tranche 1 with mixed success. There is less scope to do so in tranche 2 due to changes in the process but we do encourage collaboration, for example through the collaboration register.

Q. Can grant applicants get service providers to assist with referrals if required?

A. Yes – collaboration with others could be a very good approach to recruiting participants to a program.

Q. If the Fund is meant to encourage whole of government, does that include state government? Can applicants collaborate with Departments of Human Services at a state level?

A. As state governments have responsibility for a number of key areas such as out of home care and juvenile justice, it may be appropriate for applicants to collaborate with state governments.

Project proposals

Q. What kinds of projects can be trialled in tranche 2?

A. Tranche 2 will support small-scale trials of projects to support people at risk of long-term welfare dependence to improve their workforce participation or capacity to work. Small scale means that the trials would generally run for up to two years with a budget of less than \$5 million.

The services and supports that might be offered through tranche 2 project trials include, but are not limited to:

- structured programs (such as training, counselling or advocacy)
- apps or other technological solutions
- employer-side programs to develop job opportunities
- use of behavioural insights to improve existing programs
- conditionality or mutual obligation requirements (that is, changes to the obligations that people need to meet to receive payments or Government services)
- other new or innovative approaches.

Q. What are the ingredients of a successful project?

A. A successful project is one that takes a novel approach and that produces robust evidence about approaches that support people, who would otherwise spend a substantial part of their life on welfare, to be independent. This could take any of numerous forms, for example one we had from tranche 1 approached the issue through a collaboration between a couple of large organisations using data analytics to work with the priority group, and then look at matching them to jobs that fit their capabilities. But, we are interested in trying a lot of different approaches, such as behavioural insights. It could be as simple as exploring how a service provider engages with individuals: is a text message better than a letter, or might the time of day affect efficacy? Are there simple changes that can be applied to service delivery that can have big impacts on results, some good, some not so good?

It is worth looking online at the DSS website at the fact sheets from the 14 projects from tranche 1.

Q. What is your feeling around a place-based approach that pretty much targets all of the priority groups? (more specifically a small suburb that is traditionally 100% public housing)

A. A project aimed broadly across priority groups at people living in a public housing suburb could be very interesting. There is no restriction on applications being limited to one or two priority groups.

A number of applications received for tranche 2 so far, have had a broad focus. The group targeted by the project does not necessarily have to be defined by which income support payment they are in receipt of. It may be that a project could be looking at averted people from going onto a welfare payment or looking at inter-generational welfare dependence issues.

Q. What is meant by 'innovative'?

A. DSS is seeking fresh ideas and aims to support projects that are not already in existence and will provide new evidence of what works. As stated elsewhere, TTL is designed to test new innovations. That means that while TTL funding is not available to top up funding for, or extend, existing programs, applications that take existing programs in new directions would be considered.

So, it is important for applicants to explain clearly what it is that makes their application innovative or different from other approaches and to be clear about the problem the project is attempting to address; what success would look like; and how the project's impact would be measured.

Q. I note that many tranche 1 projects involve wrap around, psychological type support. Will such support be rejected in tranche 2?

A. Inclusion of such supports would not rule out future proposals, but they would require some innovative element(s) to enhance their chance of success.

Q. Could the focus of a project be around measuring barriers experienced by a particular cohort, such as access to housing and mental health issues?

A. Yes, but the application would also need to mount an argument, preferably supported by evidence, that the barrier does influence capacity to be financially independent. It would also need to propose and test an intervention that aims to address the barriers identified.

Q. You were talking about projects being scalable, is there any kind of idea what size or what reach projects should have in the initial stages to be viable? How many people would need to participate for it to be measured?

A. The size of projects could vary; there needs to be a statistically robust number of participants that can tell us enough about the outcomes for those participants, which could be applied across the wider population. Project participant numbers in tranche 1 vary greatly and provide a good guide for tranche 2.

Q. Is there a minimum number of participants required to service through the grant?

Question received through Community Grants Hub, added 30 January 2018

A. There is no specific minimum number of participants that must be serviced through a Try, Test and Learn Fund grant. Due to the trial nature of projects financed through the fund, some may have quite a small number of participants. Applicants should propose the number of participants that they believe are appropriate for their projects, noting that they must meet the aims and objectives of the grant program, generate useful policy evidence, and represent value for money.

Q. Are you asking that we put in proposals that are fairly well developed or are you saying 'we've looked at the data and we've identified that this is a real issue in our region/community and we want funding to be able to explore, to do that further development'? From my perspective, I don't think when addressing an issue in an area that one really knows exactly what the real issue is so there is that resource-intensive assessment you want to get to before you start to say I want to roll out this program.

A. Our thinking is that we are seeking some pretty well-developed proposals to be submitted and assessed, and then they can be fleshed out. On one hand, we do not want people to have to invest substantial resources into something for which they might not get funding. One of the things we hope to be able to do is to run some sessions across the country that might target individual priority groups. These could be sessions where a number of ideas are canvassed and some thinking goes to developing some proposals to develop. We have not settled on this, but if it do go ahead, it would be done in a range of areas across the country.

Q. Are you willing to take applications that are from a national perspective?

A. Yes, taking into account value for money and feasibility. There are a number of projects with numerous locations already approved for funding in tranche 1. There are fact sheets on the [DSS website](#) on these projects that will give you an idea of what the Minister approved the first time around in tranche 1. All the [ideas from tranche 1](#) are publicly available too; however, tranche 2 is a grants round so applications will not be made public.

Q. Does TTL attempt to support innovative ideas for the creation of jobs?

A. That is a possibility. For instance, social enterprise is a potential model, but we are not bound by specific models.

Q. Can you clarify what you mean when you say the TTL is not to be used as a top-up for existing programs?

A. TTL is designed to test new innovations rather than to top up or extend existing programs. On the other hand, applications that take existing programs in new directions would be considered.

Q. Can we apply for the funding to expand a current project?

A. TTL is designed to test new innovations rather than to top up or extend existing programs. On the other hand, applications that take existing programs in new directions would be considered.

Q. Will projects that are designed to be self-sustaining at completion of the funding be assessed favourably?

A. Self-sustainability is a component that would add to the appeal of a project.

Q. Will TTL fund both new programs, or programs that have not received funding previously, and projects aimed at improving already existing programs through, for example, better analysis of data to more accurately measure outcomes, or more granularity in terms of targeting the specific eligibility?

A. TTL will not fund existing programs or programs that have been implemented previously unless they are proposed to be changed to produce significant new evidence regarding the effectiveness of the relevant approach. The focus of the fund is innovation and evidence about effectiveness.

Q. Are there any detailed examples on what sort of a training package is expected to be delivered?

Question received through hub, added 30 January 2018

A. It is up to applicants to determine whether and what kind of training packages are appropriate for their proposed projects. Projects should be designed to support participants to improve workforce participation or capacity to work. [Information on previous Try, Test and Learn Fund projects](#).

Q. To what extent should projects demonstrate the potential to be self-sustaining?

A. DSS would look favourably on applications that have addressed this issue, as this will be a factor in whether a project could be rolled out in the future.

Q. Are you interested in different funding models, for example, social impact investing? Would it be disadvantageous to put forward a proposal of that nature?

A. We are happy to receive an application of that nature, however it does raise some issues as social impact investing may take some time to see results. There are other funding opportunities that exist outside the TTL Fund that may be better suited to social impact investing. It is recognised that social impact investing may be the way of the future; we can have further discussions about that.

Q. What is innovative? Can you add anything else to what innovation actually is?

A. Good question. It may be easier to talk about innovation in terms of what it is not: it is not funding something that already exists that may be working really well, but needs more funding. Innovation is not about dreaming up something enormous and unrealistic. It could be something entirely new but it could also just be a change to an existing project. Innovation could be about funding new types of service delivery, rather than focusing on a particular subgroup. In the first tranche, we have a couple of projects that are focusing on technology, which may also be a reasonable example of innovation.

Q. Do tranche 2 projects need to be something new or are adjustments to existing programs acceptable?

A. We are looking for something new but that could include significant adjustments to an existing program. Applications that involve adjustments or modifications to existing programs would need to be able to identify and explain a significant point of difference and show potential to produce new evidence.

Q. Do the projects have to differ from projects already funded by the department or be different to other projects?

A. We are primarily looking for interventions or approaches that have not been tried previously to assisting the groups of interest, regardless of who has previously funded or delivered them. We are open to considering adjustments to existing projects if this will produce new evidence about what does or does not work. This fund is not available to top up funding or extend already funded projects.

Q. Are individual applicants advised if they are unsuccessful?

A. Yes, we will advise applicants as early as possible whether their application is successful, is being held over, or is found unsuitable.

Q. Will preference be given to projects that focus on getting participants into jobs or will other outcomes/targets including 'softer' outcomes be acceptable?

A. It will be a mix. The overarching agenda of the Try, Test and Learn Fund is to improve the capacity for the groups targeted to be financially independent, this generally would mean moving them onto a clear path to employment. So projects that result in direct employment outcomes would be highly valued. However, many in the target groups face significant barriers to employment and we understand the value of projects that address these barriers and that therefore might result in a change in the participants' employability or longer-term trajectory, rather than immediate employment.

This is where the evaluation framework is so important, as it provides the theory of change for the project. Ultimately, we are looking for evidence that people are moving towards employment.

Q. If an applicant wants to produce a financially sustainable project, should we mention this in the application?

A. Yes, any realistic potential for a project to become self-sustaining could well enhance an application.

Q. Do applications need to focus on technology or app-based approaches?

A. No, while we have funded a number of technology-based projects the majority of them are not.

Q. It appears that most projects to date are in metropolitan areas?

A. That is correct, and in most cases many members of the priority groups are located in metropolitan areas as well. This does not mean we should not help the minority who are elsewhere.

Q. What are the main sorts of organisations that have been successful?

A. It has been varied, but has included large private sector organisations with academic collaborators, some smaller non-government organisations and independent organisations with links to state government, among others.

Q. How many people do we need to have for a project? Is there a minimum number?

A. It is important to have enough participants to be able to get useful evidence. It can be hard to get big enough numbers in rural areas and, collaboration with others can be a way of increasing numbers. A. It is important to have enough participants to be able to get useful evidence. It can be hard to get big enough numbers in rural areas and, collaboration with others can be a way of increasing numbers.

Q. Could a TTL Fund project include participants on an NDIS package and what would happen if there were costs associated with participating in a TTL program that were not able to be met through the person's NDIS package?

A. Yes it is possible for participants to include people on an NDIS package. If the cost of participating in a TTL program could not be covered by the NDIS package, it could be covered funded under a the TTL project.

Co-development and delivery

Q. What will co-development involve?

A. Co-development will be part of the activities funded through tranche 2 grants. Co-development is a process of working with stakeholders, such as end users and policy experts, to refine and optimise the design of a project. In tranche 2, grant recipients will be funded to conduct collaborative activities to fine-tune their project designs to make them as efficient and effective as possible.

The activities involved in co-development will vary between grants. Depending on factors such as the type of project, the complexity of its design, and the stakeholders who will be affected by it. In some cases, such as for projects that are already well developed, the co-development activities may be as simple as short workshops with end users. In other cases, they may entail several meetings with groups such as community organisations, peak bodies, academics or government agencies.

Q. Will co-development be government led?

A. Not necessarily. It will be undertaken as a collaboration between DSS, the delivery organisation and potentially other stakeholders, including representatives of the population group that the project is designed to support.

Q. What is the role of DSS in co-development?

A. DSS will help facilitate the process, ensure there are appropriate levels of expertise involved and the project plan is tested with end users before it begins delivery.

Co-development will be approached as a collaboration between DSS, the delivery organisation and potentially other stakeholders, including representatives of the population group that the project is designed to support.

Q. What are the timeframes for co-development?

A. This will depend on the project. The resources, funding and time available for co-development will be determined on a project-by-project basis in consultation with successful grant applicants. The tranche 2 co-development process will be flexible to the needs of individual projects and may range from some short end-user workshops to more in-depth consultations. As part of the process of negotiating and planning the co-development process, DSS will work with successful grant applicants on reasonable timeframes, including providing notice to other stakeholders who we wish to involve.

Q. Would my project potentially be co-developed and another provider funded to deliver it?

A. No, if your organisation submits an application for a project, and is successful, your organisation would be funded to deliver it.

Q. Why is co-development part of the grant in tranche 2, when it was a separate process in tranche 1?

A. We have refined the design of tranche 2 based on lessons learned from tranche 1. This has included a review conducted by an external consultant that helped us to develop the

refined approach for tranche 2. We have kept successful elements of tranche 1 including co-development and engagement with end users.

Tranche 2 has been designed to be streamlined and flexible to stakeholders' needs and emerging policy priorities. Including co-development within the same grant as delivery is part of this effort to increase flexibility and reduce the burden on applicants.

Q. Is the co-design only going to happen with successful bids or is there a round of co-design prior to assessment? Is there a co-design process available prior to submission?

A. The process established for this second tranche involves co-design only for projects that have been approved for funding.

Q. Can we stop the program at any point in time and return unspent funds?

Question received through Community Grants Hub, added 30 January 2018

A. Successful applicants may negotiate changes to their grant agreements with their Grant Agreement Managers, including in appropriate circumstances reaching an agreement that the grant be ceased and unspent funds returned.

Q. What are the minimum performance reporting and financial acquittal requirements?

A. Performance reporting and financial acquittal requirements will depend on the nature of individual projects and will be detailed in grant agreements.

Reporting is likely to occur several times a year. At a minimum, financial acquittals are likely to require the information set out in the comprehensive grant agreement terms and conditions on the Community Grants Hub Website. Performance reporting requirements are likely to include at least:

- progress against agreed project milestones
- service delivery information
- client identity and demographic characteristics
- client outcomes.

Q. What are the minimum infrastructure requirements (accessibility, proximity to toilets with adult change facilities etc.)?

A. All Try, Test and Learn Fund projects must meet relevant infrastructure and building design codes. Please refer to the appropriate authorities (e.g. local councils) for further information.

Service providers require sufficient infrastructure to successfully deliver the program outlined in their grant application. For instance, adult change facilities would be required for a program involving clients changing clothing. A program targeted at people with disability may require specialised accessibility arrangements over and above local accessibility requirements to meet clients' needs.

Q. Can we hire someone to look after the paperwork using the funding?

A. Yes. We will be looking at applications that set out the realistic costs of running the project, which may include additional staffing.

Q. Will it be appropriate for the projects to generate income?

A. It is not a requirement that projects generate income, but it may well be appropriate in some circumstances.

Q. Are you taking into consideration logistical costs and specific geographic considerations, particularly in regards to service delivery in remote areas?

A. Yes. One size does not fit all.

Q. What about participants with mutual obligations, would they have to continue these for their Centrelink payments? We are going to have to take this into account, as most participants would have mutual obligations linked to their payments. How do we ensure the viability of projects?

A. This is a central issue for most of the projects and we are working with the Department of Jobs and Small Business to work out an approach. In order for interventions to have more chance of success by not overburdening participants, it is important that taking part in TTL projects be taken into account in meeting mutual obligations.

Q. What is the intersection between Try, Test and Learn and the Work for the Dole program?

A. Depending on the specific project, we anticipate that for most projects, participants with mutual obligation requirements would have their participation recognised as an eligible activity by their jobactive provider.

Q. Two years is a short time to conduct projects of this scale, particularly when focused on longer-term outcomes. Is the two years purely for the intervention, or does it include collecting and measuring the data at the completion of the project?

A. We are constrained by the timing attached to the funding, which expires in June 2020. We are relying on rapid prototyping and the theory of change to ensure we deliver the desired outcome. In many cases, the theory of change will support the identification of proxy measures or other indicators of changes in participants' trajectories that support improved long-term outcomes.

Q. Is it worth small communities applying?

A. Yes, the overall objective is to generate evidence that a project works and that it is broadly applicable, therefore, small communities could consider collaborating with nearby communities to develop and deliver a project.

There is no specific minimum number of participants that must be serviced through a Try, Test and Learn Fund grant. Due to the trial nature of projects financed through the fund, some may have quite a small number of participants.

We do not do a mathematical equation to determine whether an intervention in a regional area saves as much money as interventions elsewhere because it's targeting a smaller cohort. What is important is:

- sample size, there need to be sufficient participants to demonstrate that an intervention works or doesn't work. This may vary depending on the nature of the project and its location. There are no hard and fast rules around this.

- potential for an intervention be scaled up or replicated elsewhere. So, it could be a remote-area strategy that can be rolled out in a number of remote communities across Australia, we would absolutely welcome that. We do need to have some sort of statistical confidence about it, so it may need to be trialled in a number of remote communities.

Q. How should applicants interpret the department's intended resource allocation to the co-development phase of the project?

Question received by email

A. The resources, funding and time available for co-development will be determined on a project-by-project basis in consultation with successful grant applicants. The tranche 2 co-development process will be flexible to the needs of individual projects and may range from some short end user workshops to more in-depth consultations. As part of the process of negotiating and planning the co-development process, we will work with successful grant applicants on reasonable timeframes, including providing notice to other stakeholders who we wish to involve.

Q. Are honoraria allowable to service-users who engage in co-development? Does the department have expectations or precedents as to what would be considered appropriate? Similarly, are payments considered appropriate to other organisations who contribute their staff time to co-development?

Question received by email

A. Details of any honoraria or other payments which may be made as part of co-development will be determined on a project-by-project basis in consultation with successful grant applicants. If it seems appropriate to the design of your project, you may propose rates for such payments and we will discuss them with you if you are successful.

Q. When you say that you will fund successful applicants for co-development, what does that mean?

A. We will be funding organisations to further develop their proposals. Co-development funding and duration will vary depending on how far progressed the application is.

Q. Who will be involved in co-development? Other applicants?

A. In tranche 1 co-development of some projects involved a number of applicants, together with other stakeholders and it worked well in some instances and not so well in others. In tranche 2 it is unlikely that co-development of any project would involve other applicants. While it will vary, depending on the project, co-development will likely involve some or all of the following groups:

- individuals who are members of the group that the project is designed to assist
- representatives from government agencies who have relevant policy expertise
- other relevant stakeholders or potential stakeholders.

What is your view on risk?

Co-development will allow the opportunity to identify and mitigate risks where possible.

Research and data

Q. In some cases, no one has done the work yet to do the level of research to come up with the innovation and no one has the money now to do that. We really need to do a deep dive.

A. We are looking for innovation so if there was a proposal to do something and the longer-term aim was intervention, I don't think we would say no absolutely at this point. The idea is to trial something to test whether it will make a difference to long-term welfare dependency.

Q. Do applications have to be supported by data?

A. Your application needs to provide evidence. The data can give you an indication of the number of income support recipients in your area and their history, but you may also have local information that is specific to your project.

A. Try Test and Learn funding recipients will be required to report program performance data through the Data Exchange (DEX), the Community Grants Hub's program performance reporting tool. It is an easy-to-use IT system that accommodates the sector's varying business processes regardless of a provider's size, type or delivery focus. It allows funded organisations to report their service delivery information and demonstrate the outcomes they are achieving for their clients, which can be measured in a standard and comparable way.

The DEX Framework has been designed to ensure clients' personal information is protected through stringent protocols that comply with the requirements of the *Commonwealth Privacy Act 1988*, including the Australian Privacy Principles. Where a service provider enters client data through the DEX web-based portal, only the service provider will access the personal information stored on this DSS-hosted information system. Strict IT security protocols will prevent DSS staff from accessing personal information in this system for policymaking, grants program delivery, or research and evaluation purposes.

DEX uses a statistical linkage key (SLK) to de-identify clients and this effectively enables two or more records belonging to the same individual to be brought together. The SLK is an algorithm that creates a code consisting of a combination of some letters in the person's name, some components of their date of birth and their gender.

For more information on privacy, view the [Data Exchange website fact sheet on privacy](#).

Batching and funding

Q. If I submit my application in January, and it's not successful in the January batch, how will I know if you will look at it again in March, or at another point?

A. If you submit your application in January, and it's not suitable we will notify you that it will not be considered further during tranche 2. If your application is suitable but not successful in receiving funding in the January batch, we will notify you that we may consider it later. You can apply as many times as you like and can withdraw applications at any stage.

Q. How are you ensuring that you are approving the best application, if you award funding for a project in January, and in September, someone puts in a very similar but better project?

A. The Try, Test and Learn Fund is taking an innovative and flexible approach to seeking proposals for funding. Part of the design of tranche 2 involves offering an extended application period to be flexible to applicants' needs and emerging policy priorities.

We have developed a robust assessment process and assessment criteria that will allow us to select ideas across the tranche in a way that is fair and maximises value for money. The assessment process will be led by the Community Grants Hub, which has expertise in best practice for running complex grants processes.

We intend to distribute funding across the five assessment batches and across different groups at risk of long-term welfare dependence, including the four priority groups. The distribution of funding will also depend on the volume and quality of applications that we receive. One of the ways that we will manage demand will be through being able to consider applications at different times across the tranche, and potentially revisit earlier applications later in the tranche.

The best approach to gaining grant funding for your project is to submit a high quality application that addresses the selection criteria and is supported by evidence and data.

Q. How is the assignment of funds linked to batches? Are those who put in early submissions in a better position than those who come in later?

A. The intention is to have funds available across all the batches. We want the funds to be distributed across all of the priority groups in a wide geographical area.

If you submit your application in January, and it's not suitable we will notify you that it will not be considered further during tranche 2. If your application is suitable but not immediately successful in receiving funding, we will notify you that we may consider it later. You can apply as many times as you like and can withdraw applications at any stage. Among the considerations in the assessment of applications will be the need to ensure a reasonable funding spread geographically, across priority groups and across the batches.

Q. If you put in for one of the early batches in tranche 2 and you miss out, can you try again?

A. Yes, and as explained in the Grant Opportunity Guidelines on the Community Grants Hub, a feedback summary will be provided to offer general feedback related to the grant process and will include the main strengths and areas of improvement for the applications received in this process. Please note that individual feedback will not be provided. The

feedback summary will be published on the GrantConnect and Community Grants Hub websites when the grant process has been completed for each regular assessment batch.

Q. If I am successful in the January batch, how long after that will I get the funding?

A. The timing of the awarding of individual grants will depend on the volume and complexity of applications, and how long it takes to finalise grant agreements. It is likely that assessment of applications will take around 12 weeks after each closing date. Recommendations will then be made to the Minister for Social Services, who will make final decisions on projects to be funded. It is expected that grant agreements will be awarded around three months after the Minister gives approval.

Q. Will early batches receive money early or will they need to wait until September before receiving the money and therefore starting the project?

A. The timing of the awarding of individual grants will depend on the volume and complexity of applications, and how long it takes to finalise grant agreements. It is likely that assessment of applications will take around 12 weeks after each closing date. Recommendations will then be made to the Minister for Social Services, who will make final decisions on projects to be funded. It is expected that grant agreements will be awarded around three months after the Minister gives approval.

The Department may also develop a process to stimulate ideas generation. Ideas generation will partly depend on whether we receive suitable applications spread across the range of priority groups and geographical locations.

Q. If successful in the March batch, when would distribution of funding begin and is it annual or quarterly disbursements?

A. It would likely be around the middle of the year before any money is distributed from March applications. Disbursements would depend on the project, but likely to be more often than annual.

Q. How will the available funds be the distributed across the priority groups?

A. This has not been pre-determined. However, DSS will endeavour to ensure a spread of funded projects across priority groups and geographically across Australia, including regional areas.

Q. Can you provide some insight on how the process of spreading the funding over five batches, and holding over some application to assess in future batches, is going so far?

A. It is difficult to discuss at this early point. We are still assessing batch 1 and there is quite a process to go through. We were satisfied with the number of applications from batch 1, however, we want to encourage more applications, particularly applications that are innovative. We are not looking to extend funding for things that already exist; we are looking to fund new and innovative projects.

Q. Does the proposed funding have to take into account evaluation and co-development?

A. We are funding the University of Queensland (UQ) independently to evaluate both the Try, Test and Learn Fund (TTL) overall and to support the evaluation of the individual tranche 1 projects. A similar arrangement will be made with an independent evaluator for the tranche 2 projects. Organisations that receive funding to deliver projects, successful applicants, need to be aware that they will need to collect data and do some local analysis of the data but they will be supported in setting up their evaluations by UQ.

The evaluators will be looking to answer specific questions the department has about these projects: how successful they are and what aspects of them are successful. Individual service providers may have other questions they want answered and would need to think about what data or other information they would need to answer those questions, including setting up their project to collect the data they need for that purpose.

There are projects in tranche 1 that have included an evaluation partner to help providers answer their own specific questions, in some cases this evaluation data is intrinsic to the project. Applicants for tranche 2 funding may want to include their own evaluation partner. The involvement of UQ as the overarching TTL evaluator is not intended to displace any evaluation activities that might be intrinsic to a project but rather to support and complement such work.

Q. Does it matter if an organisation has previously been funded by government either as a contractor or through a grant?

A. We are interested in funding programs that have not been funded before and we are not concerned whether an organisation that is applying has been previously funded by government to deliver a different project.

Application process

Q. Who is assessing the applications?

A. The Community Grants Hub will initially assess all submissions. We will also convene an expert panel to look at applications, and consult with our Inter-departmental Committee on any project selection.

The Minister for Social Services, in consultation with the Prime Minister and other colleagues, will approve funding for all Try, Test and Learn Fund projects.

Q. Can you tell us about the consultation that happens with the states and territories in the selection of these projects?

A. We consult with DSS state and territory offices which have strong links with and comprehensive understanding of the relevant environment in their jurisdictions. We also consult with colleagues in other APS agencies that are relevant to this policy area and who have their own state and territory offices with similar connections to the relevant jurisdictions.

Q. Who do I go to with questions about the application process?

A. The Community Grants Hub can answer questions about your application. They will provide contact details once you register on the site.

Q. Is there any department or anyone who is able to assist people in their applications to guide them to develop better applications, rather than put a lot of effort into them if they are completely off track?

A. Now that the tranche is open there are probity issues around giving people additional assistance. It can be perceived as unfair support. Due to the nature of grant guidelines, we can't go down the route of supporting and guiding individual applicants.

Q. Could the Department subcontract another party to provide additional support and information to potential proponents so that applicants are supported but the Department is still able to maintain the level of probity required?

A. Ultimately, there will never be a perfect process, but resources are limited, and the Department has tried to make this as fair as possible.

Q. When will I be notified if I am successful for funding?

A. There will be a period of time, possibly several months after each batching period, before we have a final decision on the successful outcomes of the funding rounds. You will be notified as soon as we are able to confirm the outcome.

Q. Is there any limit to the number of applications that can go in for a particular group?

A. No.

Q. Can we submit multiple applications?

A. Yes.

Q. What is the biggest pitfall to avoid for people trying to draft their submissions?

A. It is important to be clear in explaining:

- what it is that makes your proposal innovative or different from other approaches
- the problem your project is attempting to address
- how you would identify and recruit or attract potential participants to your project
- what success would look like and how you would measure the impact.

In tranche 1 we got a lot of application that were essentially looking for top-up funding, that is not what this is for, it is for new and innovative projects.

Q. Are there any hidden formulas we should know about? For example, charities being small, medium and large, regardless of the application, will there be some discrimination against small charities who will be seen as unable to handle the larger project funding?

A. We want new players, we want people who are connected to the priority groups, so local knowledge and connections can help. Having said that, the capacity of the organisation seeking funding to deliver a project is a consideration. Organisations that lack demonstrable experience in delivering comparable projects would be well advised to include some evidence of how they can manage delivery. In such circumstances, another strategy might be to consider collaboration with another organisation that can provide the required skills or capacity.

Q. In this system of attracting applications, you will end up getting many good ideas. What is the assurance that the ideas will not be given to larger organisations to deliver?

A. It is a very fair point. I was explicit when I pointed out that we did not have any north Queensland projects in tranche 1 – this is why we are here. We want to give everyone equal opportunities to apply and to be considered. Unlike in tranche 1 the process for tranche 2 means that in submitting an application you are applying for funding for your organisation to implement and deliver the idea or project.

Q. The ideas that are produced in Townsville are generally very advanced projects but hardly any of them get the recognition they deserve. The funding allocation is used up by big organisations. What assurances are there that this will not happen in this program?

A. Some of the organisations that received funding approval for projects in tranche 1 are organisations that are receiving first-time funding from the Department of Social Services.

Q. Given that this is federal funding, do you expect that proposals would be national proposals or can they be tailored for particular states or territories given that it's still in a testing phase?

A. An effective approach might be to focus on a local problem and a local solution but with an eye to say the project could be replicated in comparable places. This is not to get to a one-size-fits-all national program, it is important to design something that is locally relevant.

Q. New and emerging organisations and communities have limited organisational structures and most applications from such organisations are rejected. How can you make it a more level playing field for such organisations?

A. We want new players, we want people who are connected to the priority groups, so local knowledge and connections can help. Having said that, the capacity of the organisation seeking funding to deliver a project is a consideration. Organisations that lack demonstrable experience in delivering comparable projects would be well advised to include some evidence of how they can manage delivery. In such circumstances, another strategy might be to consider collaboration with another organisation that can provide the required skills or capacity.

Q. Is a sole trader considered a business?

A. Yes.

Q. Can an individual apply to start a business?

A. There are already certain schemes that focus on individuals wanting to start a business. This is not really a business creation program, we are more looking at organisations wishing to create or expand a program.

Q. Are individuals and universities eligible to apply for funding?

A. Yes, individuals are eligible to apply however not for business creation that is a different matter. Universities can certainly apply.

Q. Could you address the issue of intellectual property? If we develop an idea and it is successful and it then gets scoped up, who owns the intellectual property?

A. We recognise applicants will have done significant amounts of work on this and we respect that. Our experience to date is that this is an issue that needs to be addressed case by case.

Q. What is the safeguard with intellectual property, particularly with regard to collaboration?

A. That was one of the things that we learnt from tranche 1, most of the time collaboration worked well, sometimes it did not, particularly with regard to intellectual property. We have tried to improve that in tranche 2, through the design of a different application process.

Q. When you receive the applications and you see the potential to improve an idea, what stops you from discussing that idea with others?

A. We will only discuss applications with the applicants who have submitted the idea. If it is approved for funding, then that is when we will discuss intellectual property and any other issues with applicants before the funding agreement is finalised. Funding will generally also include an allocation for co-development, it is at this point that we would seek to explore, in collaboration with the funding applicant and possibly other experts or stakeholders, any potential improvements.

Q. Is transferability one of the criteria?

A. We are looking for scalability; that is, can an approach be rolled out elsewhere, perhaps with some modification.

Ultimately the ambition is that we might learn things that might not be replicated exactly but that might inform other projects and policies.

Q. Is there some sort of pathway built in for systems change and how that might be advocated? For example, when you are looking at employment in a remote community you are looking very long-term. What you think of as employment from a 'white fella' perspective might be very different from that of an Aboriginal community. Being able to accept that there are pathways of employment that supports their culture and bringing these young people through to a greater strength in their culture, that is employment, it is delivered by senior men and women. Is that kind of thinking outside the box that could be incorporated in this?

A. We absolutely encourage that.

Q. Can you confirm whether ideas submitted to this tranche of the fund will be published on the DSS website, as they were in round one?

A. No, applications to this grant round will not be published by the department. Tranche 2 was designed to take account of feedback from tranche 1, which has included adapting how we encourage collaboration. The purpose of publishing ideas in tranche 1 was to support partnerships between applicants. In tranche 2, we encourage applicants to collaborate and explore opportunities for partnerships using a directory of interested stakeholders (available on the [Community Grants Hub](#) website). We will also support collaboration through the co-development process for successful grant applicants.

Q. Will you be able to publicly advise who has been successful in each batch so other applicants can nuance or adapt their proposals to avoid duplicating applications?

A. The successful ones will be announced, however, this will take some time. For example, for the January batch we won't be able to announce the successful ones until approximately April/May depending on the ministerial approval process. You will note that there is \$50 million available, so we are expecting to have more projects in tranche 2 than we did in tranche 1.

Q. What value is placed on data that is collected at the local level? Recently, I was informed that 47% of people are not employed or registered for ISP.

A. It is expected that people will use their own data sources along with data such as the PIA data available. You can use any data to justify your target group, just be sure to describe where the data has come from.

For statistics like you mention here, we are aware this is an issue and we would be interested in knowing more about where that figure has come from.

Q. How do you guarantee that you're not doing something that has already been done?

A. We have access to a comprehensive network of advisors in the relevant policy areas, within and beyond the department; the assessment process also involves an environment scan to identify any similar interventions; and funding applicants are asked also to outline

how their proposed project addresses an existing service gap and does not duplicate existing services or supports that are available to your targeted group.

Q. If we are interested in a project that will cover two cohorts, do we need to submit separate applications?

A. No.

Q. Can we obtain feedback if our application is unsuccessful?

A. General feedback on the application will be provided. We are unable to provide specific feedback.

Q. Will you be giving feedback as you assess the batches and then applicants will be able to tweak their application and resubmit for later batches

A. Yes, while only general feedback on applications will be provided, applications that are considered in the earlier batches that are deemed to be ineligible could be adjusted and resubmitted for consideration in later batches.

Q. Are you going to be advising people whether they are successful?

Yes, we will advise applicants as early as possible whether their application was successful, is being held over, or was found unsuitable.

Evaluation

Q. Who undertakes the evaluation of a project and deems it successful?

A. The Department is contracting external experts to conduct evaluation of the Try, Test and Learn Fund as a whole, and of individual projects.

Q. How do you pick the evaluator, or do we?

A. It depends on the project. For example, in tranche 1 there are a number of projects that incorporate partners and members of the consortium who are experts in evaluation. In those cases, they work directly with our independent evaluators to ensure that the evaluation is of an appropriate standard and that there is some consistency across the TTL projects.

Some projects are less sophisticated in their evaluation planning and those ones will get much more intensive support from the independent evaluators to ensure their projects are set up to gather the relevant data. This will be negotiated and set up at the beginning, depending on the nature of the project.

This isn't to preclude delivery organisations from having their own evaluators but rather to support them.

Q. Do I have to include funds for evaluation in my budget?

A. Applications that include a strategy for evaluation including such things as theories of change and some explicit consideration of measures of success will be considered favourably.

Successful service delivery organisations will need to provide regular progress reports to DSS, and there will be a requirement to gather data to support the evaluation.

The successful service delivery organisations will also be provided with capacity building and support for this monitoring and evaluation work – the level of support will depend on the need within the organisation.

For those projects for which applicants consider that gathering data for monitoring and evaluation purposes will require resources beyond those needed for implementation and delivery of the project, it would be prudent to include this need in the budget.

Q. Does the application need to be designed with the evaluation built in? Are applicants responsible for conducting the evaluation?

A. No, not necessarily. We are asking applicants to think through how their project might be evaluated; e.g. what would be the appropriate evidence to demonstrate success, what is the right number of participants. While it is encouraged, project applicants are not required to fully design their own evaluation plan.

The department has engaged an independent evaluation contractor to support project delivery partners to ensure, firstly that their project is 'evaluation-ready' and to ensure consistency in evaluation across the projects.

Q. Will there be an evaluation of the different consortia?

A. The department has engaged an independent evaluation contractor to support the evaluation of TTL, including the individual projects.

The evaluation is very important. The TTL Fund is experimental and time limited. We really want to look at how we take the lessons from it, to inform how the projects could evolve, and potentially future policy decisions. There might be some projects that are funded, but are not implemented successfully, and which therefore might need to be adapted or concluded. There might be others that are really good for scaling up into larger initiatives.

We are very conscious that we are doing this as a whole-of-government initiative; we are trying to work very closely with the Department of Jobs and Small Business in particular, as we are both working on a range of projects that address issues related to employment. How do we work better with them, and how do we work better with the states?

Q. You mentioned that part of the evaluation will be based on actuarial analysis – but people who have been in this space a long time get frustrated with the numbers game, and invariably innovation is stifled when you are constantly chasing numbers. We recognise that you have to be accountable. Do we have any idea what the key performance indicators (KPIs) might look like for these projects, or is it too early to say?

A. Each of the tranche 1 projects has a draft evaluation plan, which includes early ideas about KPIs. We are very conscious that moving people into employment will not necessarily be achieved quickly or directly, there may be a pathway involving education and support that ultimately leads to employment. There are other impacts that lead to an overall outcome. We are very conscious of having a theory of change within each project, and a logic for getting to that change: what's the objective you're trying to deliver, what is the problem you are trying to solve?

Your point about the numbers game is important: applications should be really clear about what projects will achieve in a certain time because we are interested in seeing the pathways, and how you show progress towards an ultimate goal. It could be around participants' motivation, or willingness to engage in training or a particular program.

You could consider a behavioural insights approach to this: looking at motivation, behaviours, and attitudes, those sort of non-numbers things could have a big impact on people. As well as the support available within family networks and within a community. We have to look at all of those things, and the impacts they may have.

With the data, we are very keen on looking at longitudinal data – part of it will also be looking at the qualitative issues, as well as the bald numbers.

Q. How would you know what success is?

A. In many cases, we will be looking for intermediary measures that are indicative of likely longer-term benefits. For example being able to show a change in motivation is indicative of greater likelihood of participation in work or other activities. We are open to how this might be defined. Sometimes positive change can cost more to government in the short term but have better long-term outcomes.

Q. How are you going to bring state-based intelligence into the evaluation of applications?

A. The expert advice would depend on the nature of the project. We have access to advice from DSS state and territory offices as well as other agencies and departments; those other

Commonwealth agencies also have networks of state and territory offices. We also have access to other independent experts, primarily a group of academics, who have knowledge from various regions across the country.

Q. As there is an external contractor undertaking the evaluation, does that mean that individual projects will not require their own internal evaluation?

A. We are asking applicants to think through how their project might be evaluated; e.g. what would be the appropriate evidence to demonstrate success, what is the right number of participants. While it is encouraged, project applicants are not required to fully design their own evaluation plan. The purpose of employing independent evaluators is to support project delivery partners to ensure, firstly that their project is 'evaluation-ready' and to ensure consistency in evaluation across the projects.

Q. Will the evaluation be about the process, rather than about the outcomes?

A. Each project will have a theory of change with the aim of reducing long-term welfare dependency. The contract evaluator will be available to support development of theories of change. In most cases there would likely be short-term goals, depending on the target group, e.g. a demonstrated change in attitude, the acquisition of skills that enhance employability or changes in local employer attitudes. Ultimately we would be looking to be able to identify a strong and realistic pathway and demonstrable achievements within the timeframe that could imply longer-term outcomes.

Q. With the evaluation being conducted externally, how does this fit with engaging with university academics in the design of the proposal?

A. We do ask applicants to think through how their project might be evaluated, e.g. what would be the appropriate evidence to demonstrate success, what is the right number of participants. While it is encouraged, project applicants are not required to fully design their own evaluation plan. The purpose of employing independent evaluators is to support project delivery partners to ensure that their project is 'evaluation-ready' and to ensure consistency in evaluation across the projects. Having a well-developed strategy for project evaluation, whether that includes engagement with evaluation experts or not, would be viewed positively.

Q. We are working on an Empowering Youth Initiative trial with the Department of Jobs and Small Business. With their help, we have done a randomised controlled trial. Will you be providing that kind of support? They have identified clients within the eligibility group and they work with providers to organise referrals. Will that kind of thing be appropriate?

A. The more robust the evidence generated by the trial, the better, and randomised controlled trials would be viewed favourably. A randomised control trial will not be suitable in all circumstances, so we do not require them, rather each project will require a different evaluation methodology and advice about this will be available from the contracted evaluators.

Q. In order to maximise data collection, does evaluation of the project need to be completed by June 2020?

A. Evaluation of projects will begin at the time the project begins delivering support to participants. The evaluator will work closely with project providers at the start of the project, throughout delivery and for a period following the completion of the project to compile the data and complete the evaluation. This will inform whether a project is working, needs adjusting or should be ceased.

Q. If the aim is to gain evidence that is not yet available, would it be better to propose a project with a single design or a more integrated, wrap-around type service noting these are harder to evaluate?

A. This is a judgement call for applicants. The evaluator contracted by DSS will assist providers to develop an appropriate evaluation methodology.

Q. Evaluation is difficult in a remote setting. Is it your project that is having the impact, or is it a particular key person or something else? If the project is successful in gaining funding is there someone early on that helps design the evaluation? What we see as success might not align with how you see and measure success.

A. Absolutely the intention is that the independent evaluator will work with the organisation that is receiving the funding from the start.

Q. Is the evaluation result owned by the organisation or by DSS?

A. As DSS is paying for the evaluation, it would belong to the Department.

Q. If it is a successful project are we able to use the evaluation data for future funding applications.

A. Absolutely, and we are very open to negotiating IP for all projects. We would at least like to be licensed for the use of any IP produced from each trial, but this would be negotiated for each project.

Q. What data collector are we using for participants in the programs? Are we looking at the Department of Social Services' Data Exchange (DEX)?

A. Try Test and Learn funding recipients will be required to report program performance data through the Data Exchange. DEX is the Community Grants Hub's program performance reporting tool, which is an easy to use IT system that accommodates the sector's varying business processes regardless of a provider's size, type or delivery focus. It allows funded organisations to report their service delivery information and demonstrate the outcomes they are achieving for their clients, which can be measured in a standard and comparable way.

Funded service delivery organisations will also need to provide quarterly progress reports to DSS, and, while the TTL evaluators will have access to DEX, there may also be a need to gather additional data to support evaluation of the project. The funded service delivery organisations will also be provided some capacity building and support by the evaluators for this monitoring and evaluation work – the level of support will depend on the need within the organisation.

Q. Will clients be identified?

A. The DEX Framework has been designed to ensure clients' personal information is protected through stringent protocols that comply with the requirements of the *Commonwealth Privacy Act 1988*, including the Australian Privacy Principles. Where a service provider enters client data through the DEX web-based portal, only the service provider will access the personal information stored on this DSS-hosted information system. Strict IT security protocols will prevent DSS staff from accessing personal information in this system for policymaking, grants program delivery, or research and evaluation purposes.

DEX uses a statistical linkage key (SLK) to de-identify a client and this effectively enables two or more records belonging to the same individual to be brought together. The SLK is an algorithm that creates a code consisting of the second, third and fifth characters of a person's family name, the second and third letters of the person's given name, the day, month and year of the persons date of birth and the gender of that person. For example, John Smith, a male born on 14th February 1971 has an SLK of: MIHOH140219711

For more information on privacy, view the [Data Exchange website fact sheet on privacy](#).

Q. Is the option to not be identified still there?

Yes. When 'creating a client' in DEX the client has the option to not have their personal information stored. This is in line with the *Commonwealth Privacy Act 1988*, including the Australian Privacy Principles. Organisations can use pseudonyms in cases where clients are reluctant to use their real name, however this reduces the ability to reliably draw knowledge from this data. More information is available in the [Data Exchange Protocols](#).

Q. Can a person reserve the right to not be identified?

A. Yes, a client can opt to not have their personal information stored in DEX. It is also important to note that DEX de-identifies client data through the use of a statistical linkage key. More information about this is available in the [Data Exchange Protocols](#).

Q. Even though there is independent evaluation happening is there still opportunity to partner with a local university?

A. Yes, we will have an independent evaluator supporting the projects; however, we recognise that individual projects will also have their own evaluation strategies in place. The purpose of the independent evaluator is to ensure that the overarching evaluation and those for the individual projects fit together and support each other to build the evidence base.

Q. When the evaluation process is going on, will they take into account other programs that are already running in the area that might be of a similar nature?

A. This is one of the difficult things with these projects: how do we evaluate the effect of these projects when others are running in the area? The intent is to try to tease out the difference in effect as best we can but also recognise that there will be a collective impact effect.

Q. The documentation talks about wanting evidence but it is also activity focused. How do you evaluate those endeavours that are trying to incorporate both?

A. The evaluators are mindful that we want a mix of evidence, not just quantitative evidence and that this will vary across projects. It is important to look at some of the preventative risk

factors that may be identified through focus groups or other forms of more qualitative evaluation.

Q. Which part of the University of Queensland is undertaking the evaluation?

The evaluation will be conducted by the Institute for Social Science Research at the University of Queensland, in partnership with the Melbourne Institute: Applied Economic and Social Research at the University of Melbourne.

All enquiries about the evaluation should be directed to the department.

Q. Will there be qualitative as well as quantitative evaluation?

Yes. Quantitative evaluation would make use of Priority Investment Approach data, administrative data and data produced by individual projects. There will also be qualitative data sources such as surveys.

Q. Will service providers be able to influence the evaluation of their projects?

Funded TTL service providers will be required to participate in the independent Try, Test and Learn Fund evaluation. DSS has its own questions that it is seeking to answer through the evaluation, and service providers will have the opportunity to have input and may be able to add questions. They will also be able to conduct their own evaluations.

Post-trial period

Q. What are the plans for when these trials finish? If the project is successful, will it receive on-going funding?

A. Funding is only for the trial period. Evidence resulting from Try, Test and Learn Fund projects regarding the efficacy, or otherwise, of specific interventions and their applicability to particular groups within the welfare system will inform future policy thinking. In some cases this might result in decisions regarding ongoing funding; in others, it might influence the evolution of existing or new programs. We are developing a plan for how we ensure that evaluation outcomes inform policy decisions going forward.

Q. The tranche 1 funding is for an 18 month to a two year trial, at the end of that, if it is showing results, is there any guarantee that the project will be continues?

A. There is no guarantee. At the moment, funding for TTL ends on 30 June 2020, which limits the time trials are able to run.

Importantly, we need to consider how we use learnings from the interventions to influence and inform other programs and broader policy decisions.

Q. Will successful TTL projects be rolled out to broader policy?

A. All projects need to be scalable. The intent is to fund projects that will produce evidence regarding approaches that are effective. Such evidence would subsequently inform decisions about existing policies and programs and potential new policy and programs. That may have implications for other interventions or it may result in decisions to roll out the same or similar approaches more broadly.

Q. Is there a currently a mechanism to build on successful projects?

A. No.

Q. If a project was successful, would that project then be used by DSS for future funding?

A. It may be. If the trial shows that a project is successful then consideration could be given for further funding for that project, or for change to existing programs. We are interested in the evidence.

Q. The TTL Fund grants are for up to two years. Most of these sorts of programs have a much longer life than that, so what happens in year three?

A. At the moment, funding for TTL ends on 30 June 2020, which limits the time trials are able to run.

Importantly, we need to consider how we use lessons from the interventions to influence and inform other programs and determine whether some programs are worthy of additional funding. An important question is how we use lessons from TTL to inform decisions on how to spend that money more effectively.

Q. What about the ethics of a person participating in a TTL project who thinks that the project is going to run for 15 months and then it ends at nine months?

A. All projects have finite timeframe, so participants should not end up in a situation where they enter into an activity for a set time and then it closes early. If it was decided that a project was not meeting expectations and did not realistically have the potential to achieve objectives and should therefore be discontinued, strategies would be developed to ensure that no existing participants are disadvantaged.

Q. Regarding sustainability after the project is completed – is that something that you are taking into consideration that it will continue post the pilot period?

A. TTL is not a normal grant process. There is a big emphasis on policy evaluation. If the project does not show promise, we may stop or consider some changes to the project in response to issues that may arise. It could well be that we stop some projects prior to the end of the contract if the implementation goes off the rails. The policy's expansion or continuance will be a matter for government. We would want the best available evidence as soon as we can to make a case for government to determine whether a program is worth investing in and scaling up, noting all the other priorities that government has. It would not just be about continuing that project in a particular location; it could be about using the data to model that project elsewhere. Government would have to make the decision whether to model the project and make it a program elsewhere.

Q. So is the aim to see people in jobs at the end of the projects?

A. We want to see progress toward a job. We don't necessarily expect this will be the outcome of a project, although obviously that would be great. It might be that following involvement in the project participants have more experience or qualifications that would help them move into a job.

Q. Are the results of the funded applications available?

A. Yes. Details of the tranche 1 projects are available on the DSS website. Our aim is to use the evidence from the evaluations to inform government policy going forward. We have not reached that stage yet, as tranche 1 projects are only just commencing and as such, we haven't started getting results yet; it is one of the elements of the fund that we will look at soon.

Q. Is there a requirement for projects to be sustainable after the life of the grant?

This is not a requirement, but DSS would look favourably on applications that are planned to be self-sustaining.

Q. We know there have been successful pilots but then the money runs out.

A. Funding is only for the trial period. Evidence resulting from Try, Test and Learn Fund projects regarding the efficacy, or otherwise, of specific interventions and their applicability to particular groups within the welfare system will inform future policy thinking.

Funding

Q. Noting that in tranche 1 you received almost 400 applications, yet only 14 were funded, how many will be funded in tranche 2?

A. We do not have a predetermined number of projects for tranche 2. The number of projects funded will depend to some extent on the numbers, nature and sizes of the projects for which applications are received.

Q. Is the money distributed over 10 years?

A. No, TTL funding is limited to four years. Generally projects are anticipated to run for 18 months to two years. In any event the TTL funding ceases in June 2020.

Q. I was successful in tranche 1 and the project was planned to be delivered in the ACT, however DSS thought that my idea might work better in WA. I luckily had a colleague in WA, and we shared the idea however not the funds. I read back all over your website, and it did not mention that DSS had the ability to take an idea and give funding to another organisation to deliver it. This may be something you want to put on your website if you will be doing that in tranche 2 as well.

A. As I mentioned earlier, we learnt a lot from tranche 1. We are encouraging collaboration in tranche 2; however, we are conscious that this works well in some situations and not so well in others. The TTL Fund is very new and we are learning all the time. We understand that we don't always get it right the first time.

Q. What are the obligations to receive grant funding from DSS, (not sure if there is any other information available other than the comprehensive grant agreement – Terms and Conditions).

Question received through Grans Community hub, 30 January 2018

A. The grant opportunity guidelines and comprehensive grant agreement terms and conditions outline the general conditions for receiving grant funding through the Try, Test and Learn Fund.

If successful, applicants will be provided with a grant agreement and an activity work plan will be developed in consultation between the applicant and the department. These two documents outline specific requirements and obligations, including agreed milestones and outcomes, record keeping, reporting, and participation in evaluation activities.

Q. You mentioned that funding was available over two years and that there was additional funds available for co-development, does that extend the time?

A. The TTL funding expires in June 2020. This means that most projects will need to get up and going during the course of this year so they have sufficient time to be implemented and to show whether or not they have some impact. There may be projects that only take six months but most are likely to be longer. The co-development stage may slightly extend the expected time for the project. Co-development generally takes weeks to complete, dependent on the project itself; some may take longer. In any case, TTL funding is only available until June 2020. It is hoped that, where possible, end users would be involved in the co-development process.

Q. Does the \$5 million limit count when you go national?

A. Yes – \$5 million is a substantial amount of funding. It is a lot of money to spend in a short amount of time. We need projects to be contained enough to be a good pilot.

Q. Will you be distributing the funding prior to the closing date of submissions in September?

A. The grant process will be undertaken in five batches. The Community Grants Hub will conduct an assessment and then we will progress them through the review process and we may then recommend some to the Minister. We expect to fund successful applications around four months after the closing of each batch period. Applications from previous batches may be considered up until 28 September 2018.

Q. Will tranche 1 projects influence the funding for tranche 2 projects?

No. \$23 million has been allocated for tranche 1 projects and up to \$50 million has been budgeted for tranche 2.

Q. Will the \$50 million be divided by the priority groups?

A. We intend to distribute funding across the five assessment batches and across different groups at risk of long-term welfare dependence, including the four priority groups. The distribution of funding will also depend on the volume and quality of applications that we receive.

Q. What length of project are you funding?

A. Typically we would anticipate that projects will go for up to two years, but shorter projects will be considered. TTL funding expires in June 2020, so projects for which funding is approved after June 2018 will be funded for less than two years.

Q. What is the end date of the program?

A. TTL funding expires in June 2020.

Q. Is there any capacity to fund smaller projects in regional areas, for example \$50,000?

A. I would encourage you to put a proposal forward. We may look at ways to upscale the project through co-development. The evaluation component of the projects requires a certain scale.

Q. Ultimately the decision about which projects are funded is made by senior members of the government, so is likely to be influenced by political considerations. Given the nature of the local politics, it seems unlikely that anything would be approved here. Why would we go to the trouble of writing an application?

A. The projects will go through a significant and robust assessment process including consultation with policy experts and then recommendations will be made to the Minister for Social Services, who will make the final decision in consultation with his senior Cabinet colleagues.

The department is primarily interested in the quality of the proposals, and their potential to create new evidence regarding new ways to assist the priority groups to move out of the welfare system.

Q. Given that this project is funded for two years (2020) is there any commitment to funding beyond that, given that getting people off welfare dependency will take longer than two years?

A. At the moment, funding for TTL ends on 30 June 2020, which limits the time that trials are able to run. Importantly, we need to consider how we use evidence produced from these interventions to influence and inform other programs and determine whether some programs are worthy of additional funding.

Q. On page 10 [of the Grant Opportunity Guidelines], allowable expenditure under program delivery includes ‘apps or other technology solutions’, but I interpret this to have many possible meanings, and need to confirm the scope behind this; in particular, does this indicate that funds can be used for the development process of apps or other software platforms, where evidence indicates these would meet the fund objectives?

Question received by email

A. Grant funds may be used on the development of apps or other software and technology platforms if necessary for a particular project. To help you understand the scope of eligible funding, you may view current projects from the Try, Test and Learn Fund [here](#). Some current projects include the development of apps and technology.

Q. Question seeking feedback on the following clause in the Department of Social Services compressive Grant Agreement Terms and Conditions.

A. This is a Department of Social Services (DSS) grant, therefore is subject to the DSS grant conditions for funding. Of note in their conditions is the following:

- 14.1 This clause 14 applies unless the Schedule specifies that Supplementary Condition P in Annexure A to the Schedule applies.
- 14.2 You own the Intellectual Property Rights in all Agreement Material subject to clause 14.3
- 14.3. We own all Commonwealth Material, including Intellectual Property Rights in that Material.
- 14.4 You grant us a licence to use, reproduce, publish, adapt and exploit the Intellectual Property Rights in Agreement Material and Existing Material, (excluding Secret and Sacred Material) for any Commonwealth purpose. This licence is permanent, irrevocable, free, worldwide, non-exclusive and includes a right of sublicense.

Q. I have reviewed several other DSS documents pertaining to the information above and it appears that should we be successful in our great application, DSS will be able to use our existing information and any new information that is developed as a result of the grant. From my understanding of the information above, my concern lies with the need for confidentiality of the information in our program development and from reading the DSS conditions, DSS will have express permission to use our program however they see fit. I have to say that I would highly doubt that the department would take any form of financial advantage from our information however it is worth

requesting your decision and feedback on what the DSS could actually use our information for.

A. It is the intention of clause 14 of the Comprehensive Grant Agreement Terms and Conditions (T&Cs) to provide the Commonwealth a broad licence to use Agreement Material and Existing Material for any Commonwealth purpose. The definition of Existing Material restricts this licence only to that Material incorporated in the Agreement Material, supplied with or part of the Agreement Material or required to be supplied with or part of the Agreement Material. However, it remains the case that the licence in clause 14.4 of the T&Cs is broad. This is intentionally the case otherwise the Commonwealth may not be able to 'up-scale' or 'co-develop' successful programs as necessary.

As stated in the Tranche 2 Grant Opportunity Guidelines, the objective of the Try, Test and Learn Fund is to generate new insights and empirical evidence into what works to reduce long-term welfare dependence. As such, we require broad license of both the Agreement Material and Existing Material to replicate and scale up successful projects, or elements of projects.

It is a matter for each grant applicant to decide if they can comply with the broad licence in the T&Cs. There is also an opportunity for a grant applicant to request special conditions on the intellectual property clauses at the time of their application.

Q. What is the plan in relation to evaluations down the line to try to influence program design and capacity for funding?

A. The Try, Test and Learn funding ceases at the end of June 2020. The intention is that these projects will produce evidence that can help inform thinking about policy interventions for these groups in the future.

Q. If people have applied to tranche 1 or a previous batch of tranche 2, are they excluded from seeking further funding?

A. No, applicants can apply for funding for more than one project in tranche 2. Applicants will be informed if their applications are to be funded, held over, or are found unsuitable. Applications that are held over may be considered in a later batch. Applicants whose submissions are found to be unsuitable are welcome to adjust and resubmit their application, or submit a different application.

Q. Can schools apply for funding?

A. Schools that are not part of the public school system can submit applications. A number of schools are involved in tranche 1.

Q. We are a public school can we be funded?

A. Public schools, State or Territory Education Departments or other state/territory or federal government departments are not able to apply for a grant under the TTL fund but could be a partner or collaborator.

TableBuilder and data management

Where do I find the PIA data?

Refer to the Tablebuilder presentation

Q. The figures provided in Table Builder need to be multiplied by 20 to achieve a population estimate?

A. Yes because it is a 5% sample of the PIA research dataset. So to reach a 100% estimate, you need to multiply the figures in the tables by 20.

Q. Where can we find a definition of the available variables?

A. The definitions are available in the data list under our [User Guide in Table Builder](#). There is also a list of variables and categories on the Community Grants Hub website under 'Available Variable PIA Tablebuilder'.

Q. Is there information that shows how long people have been on a payment such as Newstart Allowance, rather than a snapshot?

A. TableBuilder data does not show how long people in the dataset have been on welfare.

Q. Does the data include the length of time that someone has been on a benefit?

A. Unfortunately, no we do not have duration data. However, the design of these data releases are made with users in mind, so it would be great to hear from people about what data they need, or would be interested, or what they feel is missing. I would encourage people to email in about this, so we can add this information for future iterations.

Q. Are there different levels of access to data within TableBuilder depending on what organisation you are in?

A. No (there are not different levels of access within TableBuilder). There are three types of data available: the secure enclave; TableBuilder (which is openly accessible through registration); and synthetic data.

The secure enclave includes more variables and access to sensitive information, while the data provided through TableBuilder and the synthetic datasets are free, openly accessible, but only include a subset of the data.

Q. Is TableBuilder available for not-for-profits and researchers?

A. It is available for anyone to use. You simply register at abs.gov.au/register and send an email asking for access to the PIA data in TableBuilder. If your organisation has access to other TableBuilder products then you will have access to those datasets as well.

Q. Are there dollar values available in the TableBuilder data?

A. No. There are descriptions of the cohorts, but no sum of the payments.

Q. On the secure data, it is set up for university-type research environments. Is it something private companies or individuals can get access to?

A. There are two things taken into consideration in determining whether or not you are granted access to the secure data: level of skill, and whether you need access to the data.

Q. How do we prove whether we need access to the secure data?

A. You are asked for a project description, where you need to describe the purpose and intent of accessing the data. This need is assessed for each project separately.

Q. Is there any service matching up people who need research done with those who can do research?

One of the things we are looking at is how we get better partnerships with researchers, who can work with you on accessing this data; we are looking at how we do that, and recognise there would be great benefits to such partnerships. The data is secure and safe, and has to be in a protected environment.

Q. Access to the secure data is quite expensive and for a year. Is there any way to get monthly access?

A. We are looking at open access where possible, and are looking at the cost. Feedback on this provided to the department would be valuable in formulating access in future.

Q. What would be helpful, is when you are building cases for funding, you look at the social cost–benefit analysis, and other things. Is there any way of looking at the costs related to some of these groups in other databases so we can then relay this information into other sources?

A. The annual valuation reports give a global figure about what the costs are for particular cohorts at a broad level, but not at a specific level. We are trying to look at how we get much more sophisticated data.

Q. In the secure enclave environment, do you have an identifier that you can track people through different payments over time?

A. Yes. That is one of the elements that has been taken out for public access, but it is available in the secure environment so you get that longitudinal aspect.

On the program side, we are also trying to build the DSS Data Exchange (DEX), as that is also building a data picture. Through DEX, we can look at who is accessing our funded services, and see what outcomes they are getting through the programs we deliver. DEX is one of the things we will look at in the evaluation process as well.

Q. When looking at the migrants and refugees fact sheet, I am interested to know which payments you included from the Priority Investment Approach (PIA) Data in TableBuilder? I see there are 21 types of benefits and although we have researched what types of benefits we would include when looking at TableBuilder data for the above population I was wondering if you could advise us on exactly which benefits you included for the information obtained in the fact sheet?

A. The fact sheet *Try, Test and Learn Fund – Migrants and refugees on income support* looks at the group of migrants and refugees aged 16 to 64 who are receiving any of the following payments: Newstart Allowance, Parenting Payment Partnered, Parenting Payment Single, Partner Allowance, Sickness Allowance, Special Benefit, Widow Allowance, or Youth Allowance (Other).

Please note that migrant and refugee population numbers obtained through the PIA data in TableBuilder may not align exactly with the 299,400 figure quoted in the fact sheet. The analysis in the fact sheet is based on internal administrative and PIA data. TableBuilder is based on a subset of the PIA data.

Q. Can you explain what data you will be collecting and whether outcomes will need to be demonstrated within the 24-month period?

A. Each project will have a theory of change with the aim of reducing long-term welfare dependency. There would be short-term goals dependent on the target group that may be achievable, e.g. a demonstrated change in attitude, or change in local employer attitude. We need to be able to identify a strong and realistic pathway, and demonstrate related short-term achievements within the timeframe that could infer longer-term outcomes.

Q. How long has TableBuilder been available?

A. The Priority Investment Approach (PIA) data for TableBuilder was released in early December 2017. We needed to ensure that it was safe, secure and usable before releasing.

Q. Is all data including the 'super user' data from 2015?

A. Yes, PIA data is the same in quarterly snapshots.

Q. How far down (geographically) can you search in TableBuilder?

A. Down to postcode.

Q. There are no LGAs in the census data. How do I then build a table using LGAs?

A. Determine what postcodes apply, then use the 'custom data' tab and select the relevant post codes to create your own LGA categories.

Q. What is the lowest geographic area you can look at?

A. Postcode. We also have region and state level data. The region that we have used (in this presentation) is SA3.

Q. What does it mean for us to be comparing our data against New South Wales and Victoria's data when we are only interested in a very small part?

A. The example used today has been designed specifically for the purpose of the roadshow; therefore, the data is quite broad. The information about TableBuilder provides more detail about this; however, the information goes down to postcode level. You can access data from postcode, region of residence (if you have specific regions in your area), as well as state level.

Q. Does the PIA data stop in 2015?

A. The PIA data is in quarterly snapshots from July 2001 to June 2015 only. It is not a continuing dataset and so no data is available from after June 2015. We are creating another dataset called 'DOMINO' that is continuing and has more information.

Q. Is there a launch date for 'DOMINO'?

A. DOMINO has recently been released and is currently available in the secure environment of SURE. However, that dataset will not be made available to the public because it has more detailed information and can only be made available in a secure environment.

Q. Is most of the PIA data, Centrelink and census data?

A. PIA does not include census data; however, using TableBuilder you can access the census dataset as well.

Q. Does ABS extrapolate from their data or do they only show the raw data?

A. Only the raw data. For those making grant submissions, they are free to make interpretations of that data but they would need to be justified.

Q. Does TableBuilder have the DEX data and the like?

A. No it doesn't have the DEX data. DEX data will be linked with the DOMINO dataset but that won't be publically available, it is too sensitive. However, it will be available through the secure enclave, if you are interested.

Q. Is it possible to show long-term welfare reliance through the TableBuilder data?

A. No. We do not have duration of dependence in the dataset in TableBuilder as a measure of increasing privacy.

Q. Would we need access to the secure enclave for that information?

A. Yes, duration of dependence is available in the PIA data in the SURE environment. Through this secure enclave we are also releasing another dataset called Domino which is event based data over a similar timeframe.

Q. What sort of validity of data can we expect as we are only using 5 per cent of the total data sample?

A. To clarify, it is 5 per cent of the PIA population, not the general public population. If you build a table where you are getting too specific and there is a low number of people in a cell where someone may be identified, then the data will be suppressed and it will give you an alert to tell you that. You will be able to access general information, but if it is too specific, it will be suppressed.

Q. When you have a suppressed table, how do you know that all those zeros aren't actually zeros and they're suppressed?

A. You get an alert, a little red icon to warn you. Similarly, when you create a large table you'll have a pop-up box display.

Q. In terms of comparing different states, can you compare nationwide as well as state-wide?

A. Yes, you can. You can download only the aggregate information and manipulate that yourself. The other advantage of downloading it is you can compare it to other data sources, for example census data.

Q. Is there a plan to update the data to 2017?

A. We would like to but there is nothing in place currently. We would like to see how this progresses and then assess it at a later date. This is the test case.

In data.gov we publish social security information every quarter, it does not go into the variables in the PIA, but gives you a sense if there has been a change. You can get a good understanding of how PIA data compares with the most up-to-date data.

Q. Is the 5 per cent a fixed number or is it randomised each time you run the report?

A. In the first quarter — July 2001, they did a complete randomised sample. Where those individuals appear in the data between then and July 2015, they are maintained in the dataset. Each quarter is topped up with a new random sample. Those who have been represented in the subsequent datasets and who are represented in future datasets will also be maintained and the remaining percentage will be added. This is ABS methodology.

Q. You mentioned that access is via organisation, is there predetermined data that you receive with reference to your organisation?

A. If your organisation has not had dealings with ABS data before you will not have access to any TableBuilder data. If your organisation has had dealings with ABS data, those will be pre-populated in TableBuilder.

On another note, people are often saying that they want more data, while others recognise that we have a huge amount of data at hand. The difficult part is understanding how to define the problem you want to look at and knowing how to use the data available to address that.

Q. Within the secure enclave, if my university has access, how do I get permission?

A. Each project needs to make a new application. Even if your organisation already has access, you need to submit a new application. The secure enclave is hosted by the [Australian Institute of Health and Welfare](#) and these are the regulations they have set. The secure enclave is the only way you will get access to that level of data. If you do not need access at that level, TableBuilder is the way to go.

Q. Is this ABS data?

A. No it is PIA data. This is the data that TTL is based on. We hold a research subset of the whole dataset in the secure enclave with 60 variables and 5 million people in the records. This is anyone who has received any payment benefit. In here (Tablebuilder) we have a 5% sample of the research version of the PIA data.

Q. Where does the TableBuilder data come from?

A. It is a subset of the original PIA data; the information (on the priority groups) that was presented earlier is from the same dataset. This highlights 15 years of people who have been on income support.

Q. We can use TableBuilder data for funding applications?

A. Absolutely.

Q. Is there a TableBuilder function for ABS data too?

A. Yes. One of the interesting things you can do is use the PIA data from Tablebuilder and compare that to the census data that you have in TableBuilder as well.

There's more than just census data, and the census data is openly accessible to everyone. You just need to register. The other datasets that are available: there's migrant datasets, there's carers datasets, I think they all have a fee attached to them.

On that note, Tablebuilder is free for six months only, at this stage. We will be reviewing this at the end of six months, but it may have to have a fee attached to it after that time. So join now.

There is a dataset in TableBuilder where the data has been directly linked from the 2011 and 2016 census to the social security related information. This is called the ACLD-SSRI dataset.

Q. Is it across each state?

A. It is nationwide. In TableBuilder, you can go as specific as the postcode.

Q. Can we find out Indigenous status from the dataset?

A. Yes. On another note, we publish income support information on data.gov on a quarterly basis. This is across all payments broken down by an SA2 level that is even more fine grain data than postcode. Whilst the data that TableBuilder uses only goes up to 2015 – if you go to this website, it will give you a good snapshot of the most up to date data.

Q. Do you have a dataset that breaks down those who are not registered for payments currently, but may be in the future?

A. There are sources that will show this information, however one of the limitations of TableBuilder is that it is administrative data. That is, it is only representative of those who are on income support. You can also use other data sources as well to support your proposal.

Q. Is there a site where you can go in and use TableBuilder on the census data without registering?

A. Yes. You can get a feel for TableBuilder via the Guest Census option without registering. This might be good to do before you register for the PIA data.

Q. How representative is TableBuilder of the circumstances in small communities, considering how small the populations are?

A. It is representative of the research data that sits in the secure enclave. That is taken from all recipients, it is not population-based. If someone is not on a payment, or even if they are and haven't given us information it won't be in the data. So for example, if someone has mental health issues and isn't on a payment, they won't be in our data. But, you can use census data for population information, and compare this against our PIA data.

Q. The projects that are getting through, is there an average of how much data is being included?

A. We haven't done this process with tranche 1, which was a bit different in that the application process involved suggestions of bare ideas and then we did some co-development with idea proponents.

In tranche 2, it is more developed and this is why we're encouraging people to access the data. We haven't done any assessment of any of the tranche 2 projects yet.

What I would say is the use of relevant data can only enhance your application.

Having said that, we don't want to make this onerous. If you do not have access to expert data analysis this will not negatively impact on our assessment of a project. We do not want to advantage bigger organisations over smaller ones, for example.

Q. Approximately how much time should be allowed for data requests?

A. For simple ones, a few weeks. If the request will take longer than this, it will likely be beyond the scope of that team. It will also depend on demand.

Q. Can we look at more recent data?

A. The data points are from 2001 to 2015 — more recent data isn't publicly available. This means there may be some variation in what you see and the published figures. Another reason why numbers from TableBuilder might vary a bit from published figures is that TableBuilder uses a 5% sample (which you then multiple by 20). The figures obtained are representative but may not be exactly the same.

One option you have is to use TableBuilder to run your questions and then compare the broad figures at June 2015 (the latest quarter in TableBuilder) to those figures available from the quarterly releases available on data.gov to see if there are any remarkable changes across recent years.

Q. Are the tables that we create only for our own use or are they open for other people to see?

A. The tables that you create cannot be seen by anyone else (even others inside your agency), but they can be shared.

Q. Can you confirm that access to Tablebuilder is free though to June but that may change after June?

A. This is correct. We are strongly advocating to the Australian Bureau of Statistics that Tablebuilder continues to be free after June.

Q. Is it a matter of registering before June?

A. Confirming Tablebuilder is free until June but undetermined after that.

Q. Is the data in Tablebuilder based on latest census data?

A. No, the data used for TableBuilder holds over 50 datasets including the Priority Investment Approach (PIA) data. The PIA data has been used to inform the development of the Try, Test and Learn Fund and identify the priority groups outlined in both Tranche 1 and Tranche 2. The PIA data contains information about those people who have received one of 21 benefits including Aged Pension, Disability Support Pension, Newstart Allowance, Youth Allowance and Carer Payment. Census data can be accessed from the index on the Tablebuilder front page.

Q. If that's 2015 data, and you are looking at people aged 50 or over, would you recommend doing that with people from say 47 onwards so you can see picture of what that would look like in 2018 or would that be too chancy?

A. No I would not suggest that. If you were to change those birth dates or age range, then you are missing a couple of years for people in that age bracket and your numbers would no longer be representative. You are only getting data across a 15 year age range (people aged 50-65 years old) as people will go onto the age pension at 65. If you take out three of those years, you will be distorting the numbers considerably. To get an up to date comparison you are better off to take your information from TableBuilder and compare the more general numbers to the information you can get from the quarterly reports on data.gov. Typically, population figures will not change significantly across just a few years but comparing to the quarterly reports can check for large changes.

Q. Are the data tables downloadable as an excel file?

A. The data tables themselves you download into whichever of the seven file types you like.

Q. When applying, in what context are we expected to use data, and to what extent?

A. Currently, we can only compare it to tranche 1 and it was a totally different process – we didn't ask people to supply us data. In tranche 2, the grant guidelines state that we expect evidence supporting your argument, data is one of the examples. The idea is that you can use data to justify why the project is needed, and also why it might work etc. It is a stronger argument than providing an application without any data.

Q. Are the datasets available to organisations or individuals who are not funded by DSS?

A. Yes, but for information accessed through the secure enclave you would need to be backed by an institution such as a university.

Q. Given the department is already aware of the data, how much detail should applicants go into regarding the data?

A. One of the assessment criteria requires applicants to provide some justification and narrative for their proposed projects. The data could help applicants to persuade the assessors that:

- the group that is proposed to be supported is at risk of welfare dependence, and therefore within the scope of the TTL Fund
- the applicant understands the nature of the problem or problems that this group faces
- whether and how the proposed solution might assist the group to address such problems and that this would reduce their risk of welfare dependence.

While the department has access to a lot of rich data, the value of the data largely depends on what questions are being explored using the data and the department is very conscious that it does not necessarily know all the questions.

Q. Is this a national dataset?

A. Yes. It is only of those who have received one of 21 benefit types between July 2001 and June 2015.

Q. Data can be filtered by geography?

A. Yes. We have state, postcode and SA3 region (Region of Residence).

Q. Is the data broken down to the LGA level?

A. No, but you can create your own within TableBuilder. To do this, determine which postcodes apply, then use the 'custom data' tab and select the relevant postcodes to create your own LGA categories.

Q. Can it be broken down to the level of postcodes?

A. Yes.

Q. Does the information come the department?

A. The PIA data is derived from administrative data that is data regarding payment recipients.

Q. Is it enough to talk to the data in the application or would there be an expectation that data would be attached as an appendix to project plan?

A. It is not required for detailed data to be attached applications. Referencing the data is sufficient so long as the source of the data is identified and it is verifiable.

Q. Does the data include educational qualification levels of individuals?

A. Yes, the data includes details that individuals have provided regarding their highest education qualification.

There is a link on the Community Grants Hub website to a page of which is a spreadsheet of all the variables and categories available in TableBuilder.

Q. Can you drill down at the graph view?

Yes. You can remove certain categories and it will dynamically shift the graph.

Q. You can change the graphical demonstration?

A. Yes, data can be displayed in a number of different ways (pie charts, stacked bar, etc.)

Q. Would you be using the Unique Student Identifier data as part of your data?

A. No, not at the moment.

Q. How are people tracked or identified? How are they tracked across time and programs?

A. This is not applicable to the data in TableBuilder as there is no way to track individuals across quarters.

Other data, such as DOMINO, uses Centrelink Reference Number (customer reference number) but these are only available in the secure enclave.

Q. You mentioned you can download the graphs, if you want to use these graphs internally can this be done?

A. Yes, absolutely.

Q. Does it use the same 5% of the dataset for every query?

A. Yes. The 5% sample is drawn from the full research PIA dataset for the 56 quarters. These smaller 56 quarters are then the data that sits behind TableBuilder and is what the queries are run from. That is, you will get the same numbers each time you run a single table.

Q. Can you log onto TableBuilder as a guest?

A. Yes, but you will only be able to access the census data.

Q. What information will I need to provide when I register?

A. You will be required to provide your name, organisation, and contact details. You should have access within a week. If there are any issues, you can write to me (tara.spokes@dss.gov.au) and I will follow it up.

Q. Can DSS provide data on a regional level?

A. The following session will go into this more, but yes, most data sources allow you to see data at the regional level (sometimes LGA, sometimes SA2, sometimes postcode, etc.).

Q. What parameters are there around these projects? Especially in regards to the number of participants needed? Will smaller numbers trials with smaller numbers still be considered?

A. The projects will vary. We expect that if there is an issue around the number of participants in a project design, then applicants will need to collaborate with others in other areas. As trials will need enough participants to create enough evidence for evaluation, multiple trial sites may be needed. That is not to say a small trial would not yield important evidence.

Q. I have a concept, but I am an individual who does not have a recruitment strategy. How will I be able to find participants?

A. Recruiting participants is something that could be workshopped during co-development. As these trials are not compulsory for welfare recipients to participate in, we cannot use Centrelink data. Connecting with local jobactive providers may be an option for grant applicants. Co-development may also help with finding participants.

Q. Can you rename the tables in the TableBuilder spreadsheet?

A. Yes, they are excel sheets.

Q. Can you register as an individual?

A. Yes. Just leave the 'Organisation' field blank. This is not recommended where possible because the access to datasets is allocated at the organisation level. So, when there is an organisation to align to then applying in line with that organisation would be the preferred approach.

Question and Answer added on 27/08/2018

Q. When will we know if our application for TTL Tranche 2 was successful? Is it possible to receive feedback on our application?

A. Thank you for your email enquiring about the progress of the TTL Tranche 2 applications. It has taken the Department longer than anticipated to process applications. We are working as quickly as we can to finalise the outcomes of the first batches, however at this time we are unable to indicate when successful and unsuccessful applications will be announced by the Minister for Social Services.

We are not providing individual feedback to applicants to the Try, Test and Learn Fund, but a general feedback document from batch 1 is now available on the [Community Grants Hub](#) website. You may want to look at the main strengths of successful grant applications.

Applicants who were unsuccessful in applying for grants may reapply later in the Tranche 2 application period. Even if applicants address the issues raised by the feedback summaries, there is no guarantee that they will receive funding in the next assessment batch.

You are able to submit additional applications and / or to replace a previous application with a new application. If you would like to replace a previous application, please notify the Community Grants Hub by calling 1800 020 283 or emailing support@communitygrants.gov.au. Please be ready to quote your application's Submission Reference Numbers upon request.

Question and Answer added 14th September 2018

Q. Previously my organisation could select the option to apply as 'Organisation established through a specific piece of Commonwealth or State/Territory legislation', but this option isn't available in these guidelines. What should I do?

Organisations that previously applied by selecting the option 'Organisation established through a specific piece of Commonwealth or State/Territory legislation' may be eligible to apply as a Statutory Entity if they are a non-government entity. This option is listed in the guidelines.