



Australian Government

Community
Grants Hub
Improving your grant experience



Improving Market Transparency in Perishable Agricultural Goods Industries

Feedback for applicants

The intended outcome of the program is to improve market transparency in Perishable Agricultural Goods (PAG) industries by supporting projects which aim to achieve this objective. These projects may have been co-designed by participants in workshops.

Five million (GST exclusive) in grants funding was available under this grant opportunity.

The grant round opened on 25 January 2022, with a closing date of 22 February 2022. The grant was a targeted competitive opportunity, subject to an invitation to apply. The Community Grants Hub (the Hub) sent copies of the Grant Opportunity Guidelines to all eligible applicants by email on 25 January 2022.

Applications were submitted through the whole-of-government GrantConnect portal. The Hub provided phone and email support to address enquiries from applicants during the application period.

A total of 11 applications were received, seeking Australian Government funding through the Department of Water, Environment and Energy (the department) of \$6,850,310 (GST exclusive). Ten of the applications were eligible and lodged on time. The Hub received one request from an organisation who was not invited to apply under this grant opportunity, who requested an eligibility waiver be granted (consistent with the relevant provision in the Grant Opportunity Guidelines). The department permitted the organisation to submit a late application and agreed to put it to the decision maker for eligibility consideration.

As a precaution, the department conducted a preliminary assessment, and referred the application to the Selection Advisory Panel (SAP) without prejudice. The department referred the eligibility outcome to the decision maker, who was provided with information relating to the nature of the late submission and advice on potential risks associated with waiving eligibility requirements for this application. The decision maker agreed with the department's preliminary assessment and rejected the eligibility waiver request.

The Hub provided the department with all eligible applications and related eligible attachments via email on 28 February 2022. This package included all the applications and eligible attachments submitted in support of applications. An independent probity adviser was engaged to provide probity oversight and advice throughout the assessment process. This included conducting a training and briefing session for the Chair, SAP members and Secretariat staff. The probity adviser attended all SAP meetings and had access and oversight to all documentation and communications occurring throughout assessment.

There was strong interest in the program and successful applications were of a very high standard. Applications were assessed according to the procedure detailed in the Grant Opportunity Guidelines and outlined in the selection process below.

This feedback is provided to assist grant applicants to understand what generally comprised a strong application and the content of quality responses to the assessment criteria for this grant opportunity.

Selection process

The department used a targeted competitive selection process to select providers to deliver the Improving Market Transparency in Perishable Agricultural Goods Industries grant.

Applications were screened for eligibility and compliance against the requirements outlined in the Grant Opportunity Guidelines by the Hub, before progressing to the preliminary assessment phase.

Applications were assessed on merit, based on:

- the initial preliminary score against the assessment criteria
- the overall objective/s to be achieved in providing the grant
- whether the proposed project was in scope
- the relative value of the grant sought
- the extent to which the evidence in the application demonstrated it would contribute to meeting the outcomes/objectives of the program
- the extent to which the applicant demonstrated a commitment to the program
- the risks; financial, fraud and other risks which the applicant or project posed for the department
- the risks which the applicant or project posed for the Commonwealth
- if there were multiple applications from the same industry, the total amount of funding being applied for each industry.

Each applicant was required to address the following selection criteria:

Criterion 1 – Project Proposal. Describe how your project proposal will contribute to the grant opportunity and intended outcomes.

Criterion 2 – Experience. Describe your organisation's experience working with and delivering projects for your industry.

Criterion 3 – Value for Money. Describe how your project proposal represents value for money

Preferred applicants were identified based on the strength of their responses to the selection criteria and their demonstrated ability to meet the grant requirements outlined in the Grant Opportunity Guidelines.

Selection results

Seven organisations were selected to deliver the Improving Market Transparency in Perishable Agricultural Goods Industries grants.

The selected organisations provided strong responses to the selection criteria and demonstrated their ability to meet the eligibility requirements outlined in the Grant Opportunity Guidelines. Further detail about what constituted a strong response to each criterion is provided below.

Criterion 1

Describe how your project proposal will contribute to the grant opportunity and intended outcomes.

When addressing the criterion, strong applicants will:

- demonstrate how the project will achieve the objective and intended outcome of the grant opportunity
- outline how the activities or which activities will be implemented online
- demonstrate how the project will engage relevant stakeholders and the extent to which the project leverages existing initiatives
- describe anticipated short, medium and long-term project outcomes and how outcomes will be monitored and evaluated
- outline how the project will be implemented and the impact across the relevant supply chain
- outline how the project will be supported, funded and maintained after the grant agreement has ended (if relevant)
- demonstrate how the project is supported by the industry, this may include co-sponsorship by partners from across the relevant supply chain (optional).

Strength	Example
Rating of Strong (3) The applicant provided a strong response to the criteria, indicating a valuable project would be delivered with acceptable risks.	<p>The applicant demonstrated a strong alignment with the policy intent of this program, and a high level of confidence a useful project can be delivered.</p> <p>All criteria was addressed with the majority addressed to a high standard.</p> <p>A strong case was made by the applicant through clear and convincing arguments which were supported by evidence.</p> <p>Limited areas of relevant weakness may have been identified.</p>



Strength	Example
<p>Rating of Satisfactory (2)</p> <p>The applicant provided a satisfactory response to the criteria.</p>	<p>The applicant demonstrated a satisfactory understanding of the subject area/the grant objectives/the expected benefits.</p> <p>Activities described were expected to provide reasonable impacts in the subject area/provide medium to short-term benefits to the subject area.</p> <p>Some relevant stakeholders or an existing initiative to leverage were identified, however some information was ambiguous.</p> <p>Most anticipated project outcomes over short, medium, or long-term were described.</p> <p>Monitoring and evaluation was addressed.</p> <p>An acceptable case was made to describe how the project would be implemented, and the project's impact across the relevant supply chain.</p>
<p>Rating of Weak (1)</p> <p>The applicant provided a weak response to the criteria.</p>	<p>The applicant demonstrated an insufficient understanding of the subject area, the grant objectives, or the expected benefits.</p> <p>The grant activities were expected to provide some benefits/impacts to the subject area, but project outcomes over the short, medium, or long-term were not clear.</p> <p>Few or no stakeholders relevant to project delivery were identified, or information provided did not clarify how the project would engage them.</p> <p>There was little evidence provided to support monitoring and evaluation of this project.</p> <p>There was little evidence provided in relation to the project implementation and impact across the relevant supply chain.</p>



Strength	Example
<p>Rating of Very Weak (0)</p> <p>The applicant provided a very weak response to the criteria.</p>	<p>The applicant demonstrated no understanding of the subject area, the grant objectives, or its expected benefits.</p> <p>The grant activities would not provide benefits/impacts to the subject area.</p> <p>No stakeholder information was provided which was relevant to the project outcome.</p> <p>Project outcomes over the short, medium, or long-term were unclear or not identified.</p> <p>There was insufficient evidence to consider project monitoring and evaluation.</p> <p>Project implementation and impact was unclear or irrelevant.</p>



Criterion 2

Describe your organisation's experience working with and delivering projects for your industry.

When addressing the criterion, strong applicants will:

- provide details of the key personnel engaged in delivering the project/sub-projects or collaboration with relevant/specialist organisations
- describe the particular skills or expertise that personnel/project partners will bring to the project
- outline proposed governance arrangements to manage the projects effectively, including management of consortia (if applicable).

Strength	Example
<p>Rating of Strong (3)</p> <p>The applicant provided a strong response to the criteria, indicating a valuable project would be delivered with acceptable risks.</p>	<p>Strong applicants described highly relevant qualifications and work history for all key staff involved in the project.</p> <p>Applicants identified key personnel to deliver the project or a component, and clearly described the skills or expertise the personnel bring to the project.</p> <p>Project collaborations were with relevant organisations. The benefits partners would bring to the project was clearly described.</p> <p>Proposed governance arrangements to manage project activities effectively throughout the project were described.</p> <p>There were strong grounds for confidence a valuable project could be delivered.</p>



Strength	Example
<p>Rating of Satisfactory (2)</p> <p>The applicant provided a satisfactory response to the criteria.</p>	<p>The applicant provided relevant qualifications and made reasonable claims about the work history for all key staff involved in the project.</p> <p>The applicant identified most personnel to deliver the project or a component and described some skills or expertise the personnel bring to the project.</p> <p>Collaborations with relevant/specialist organisations were discussed, but some information on their relevance to the project was unclear.</p> <p>The applicant described some governance arrangements which would manage project activities effectively.</p>
<p>Rating of Weak (1)</p> <p>The applicant provided a weak response to the criteria.</p>	<p>The applicant did not provide relevant qualifications, or sufficient work history for all key staff involved in the project, their skills or expertise.</p> <p>Collaborations with relevant/specialist organisations were discussed, but information on their relevance to the project was unclear.</p> <p>Governance arrangements to manage project activities effectively were ambiguous.</p>
<p>Rating of Very Weak (0)</p> <p>The applicant provided a very weak response to the criteria.</p>	<p>The applicant did not demonstrate or provided irrelevant work history or qualifications.</p> <p>Collaborations with relevant/specialist organisations were irrelevant, or not described.</p> <p>Governance arrangements were ambiguous, irrelevant to the project, or not described.</p>



Criterion 3

Describe how your project proposal represents value for money.

When addressing the criterion, strong applicants will:

- demonstrate how the project proposal represents an efficient, effective, economical and ethical use of public resources
- outline the project budget including items that are eligible, reasonable and relevant to the project activities
- identify any risks associated with the project, and mitigation strategies to manage these risks.

Strength	Example
<p>Rating of Strong (3)</p> <p>The applicant provided a strong response to the criteria, indicating a valuable project would be delivered with acceptable risks.</p>	<p>The applicant provided reasonable descriptions of services to support the budget requested.</p> <p>The applicant provided clear details on how the project would be managed.</p> <p>The applicant identified delivery risks and provide control measures to address all or most risks.</p> <p>The applicant clearly described how the project represents value for money, or an efficient, effective, economical, and ethical use of public resources.</p> <p>The applicant could substantiate most project budget claims with eligible, reasonable, and relevant project activities.</p>



Strength	Example
<p>Rating of Satisfactory (2)</p> <p>The applicant provided a satisfactory response to the criteria.</p>	<p>The applicant provided a satisfactory description of services to support the budget requested.</p> <p>The applicant provided some details on how the project would be managed.</p> <p>While some information was ambiguous, overall, a clear picture emerged.</p> <p>The applicant identified delivery risks and provided control measures to reduce certain risks while some ambiguities remained.</p> <p>Value for money was addressed, and the project demonstrated an efficient, effective, economical, and ethical use of public resources.</p> <p>The applicant substantiated some project budget claims with eligible, reasonable, and relevant project activities.</p>
<p>Rating of Weak (1)</p> <p>The applicant provided a weak response to the criteria.</p>	<p>The applicant made a weak case through claims which were at times ambiguous, or irrelevant.</p> <p>The applicant provided few details on how the project would be managed.</p> <p>Significant areas of weakness were identified in the project.</p> <p>The applicant identified few delivery risks, or the SAP identified a risk in the review of the application.</p> <p>The description of value for money was ambiguous, not substantiated, or irrelevant.</p> <p>Project budget claims were ambiguously linked to project activities.</p>



Strength	Example
<p>Rating of Very Weak (0)</p> <p>The applicant provided a very weak response to the criteria.</p>	<p>A very weak or no case was made by the applicant.</p> <p>The applicant did not provide sufficient detail on how the project would be managed.</p> <p>Significant areas of weakness were identified.</p> <p>The applicant identified no or very few delivery risks, or the SAP identified a risk in the review of the application.</p> <p>The description of value for money was ambiguous, not substantiated, irrelevant, or implied inefficient, ineffective, uneconomical, or unethical use of public resources.</p> <p>Project budget claims were not substantiated or their relationships to project activities were unclear.</p>