



Social Enterprise Development Initiative – Grants Administrator

Feedback for applicants

The Department of Social Services (the department) has provided the following general feedback for applicants of the Social Enterprise Development Initiative (SEDI) Grants Administrator grant opportunity.

Assessment of applications was in accordance to the procedure detailed in the Grant Opportunity Guidelines and outlined in the selection process below.

Overview

The application submission period opened on 9 November 2023 and closed on 6 December 2023. The grant opportunity received 61 applications.

Of those applications, 41 were applying for other funding (for example, a SEDI Capability Building Grant). Social enterprises will be able to apply for SEDI Capability Building Grants later this year. The contact details of applicants applying for other funding have been added to the register of interested parties to receive updates about upcoming SEDI grant opportunities.

The SEDI was announced as part of the Targeting Entrenched Disadvantage package in the 2023–24 Budget. \$11.6 million has been committed to SEDI over 3 years from 2023–24 to 2025–26.

The SEDI will engage a Grants Administrator to provide \$6 million of capability-building grants to eligible for-purpose organisations. The objective of this grant opportunity was to engage an organisation or consortia as the SEDI Grants Administrator, to administer, manage and collect meaningful data in relation to the SEDI Capability Building Grants. Grants of up to \$120,000 may be awarded to eligible for-purpose organisations and will be targeted towards supporting organisations to stimulate growth of their activity or organisation to achieve a social impact.

The grants will allow eligible social enterprises to purchase business and impact capability building services from intermediaries. Capability building services will be unique to the enterprises maturity and focussed on but not limited to financial services, evaluation and impact measurement, business services and legal advice.



Selection process

The Community Grants Hub undertook the initial screening for organisation eligibility and compliance against the requirements outlined in the Grant Opportunity Guidelines. This information was provided to the department's grant opportunity delegate for final decisions on whether an application met the eligibility and compliance criteria.

The department assessed and considered all applications through an open competitive grant process. The selection advisory panel (panel) comprised of subject matter experts who assessed applications and provided advice to inform the funding recommendations to the Financial Delegate.

When assessing applications the panel took into consideration a number of factors incorporating the inclusion and exclusion of late applications, the volume of applications received, meeting the identified requirements outlined in the grant opportunity guidelines and the available funding envelope.

The panel's consideration of assessed applications was, based on:

- How well each application met the assessment criteria.
- How an application compared to other applications.

When assessing the extent to which the application represented value with relevant money, the panel considered:

- the overall objectives to be achieved in providing the grant
- the relative value of the grant sought
- extent to which the geographic location of the application matched identified priorities
- the extent to which the evidence in the application demonstrates that it would contribute to meeting the outcomes/objectives
- how the grant activities would target groups or individuals (see section 2.2 of the Grant Opportunity Guidelines).

Selection results

There was a strong interest in the grant opportunity and applications were of a high standard.

The preferred applicant demonstrated their ability to meet the grant requirements outlined in the Grant Opportunity Guidelines based on the strength of their responses to the assessment criterion.

The Community Grants Hub notified applicants of the outcome in writing, where their applications did not meet the requirements outlined in the Grant Opportunity Guidelines.

This feedback is provided to assist grant applicants to understand what comprised a strong application and the content of quality responses to the assessment criterion.



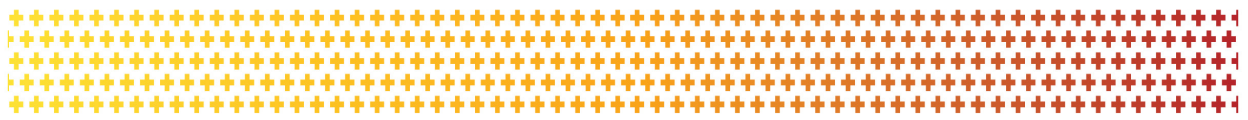
Criterion 1: Expert knowledge of and experience in the SII eco-system in Australia

In providing a response to this criterion, applicants' responses demonstrated their organisation's:

- understanding of the social impact investing (SII) eco-system in Australia including social enterprises and intermediaries, including:
 - community benefit focussed social enterprises
 - work focussed/work integrated social enterprises (WISE)
 - rural and regionally located social enterprises
 - First Nations owned social enterprises
 - specialised social enterprise intermediaries
 - traditional business intermediaries
- understanding of the purpose and need for the SEDI capability building grants to support social enterprises
- awareness of the different needs of community focussed, WISE, rurally and regionally located, and First Nations owned social enterprises
- skills and experience working collaboratively and creating an environment that cultivates and nurtures meaningful relationships between key SII stakeholders such as:
 - social enterprises
 - specialised social enterprise intermediaries
 - traditional business intermediaries
 - investors, including private investors and philanthropist
- ability to these connections to support SEDI capability building grants grant recipients.

Strong applications:

- Demonstrated a deep understanding of the SII eco-system including social enterprises and intermediaries, and investors.
- Acknowledged SII investors perspectives.
- Differentiated between mainstream business intermediaries and specialist SE intermediaries.
- Understood why data collection and storytelling was important for attracting investors and improving social outcomes.
- Demonstrated understanding of the purpose and need for the SEDI capability building grants.
- Demonstrated a very good understanding of the policy context, referencing SEDI as a critical enabler for sector growth.
- Demonstrated experience and learnings from providing capability support including having a deep knowledge of complex capability that is required.
- Demonstrated a high-level theory of change.
- Demonstrated clear connections between proposed grants activities and systemic improvements in the SII and SE sectors.
- Demonstrated awareness of the different needs of community focussed, WISE, rurally and regionally located, and First Nations owned social enterprises.
- Demonstrated connections and evidence of successful working relationships with First Nations, CALD, disability networks and organisations; those with different impact models (WISE, community focussed and so on) and those with diverse capability building needs.
- Demonstrated lived experience working with different enterprises and gave compelling evidence of a deep understanding of the needs.
- Demonstrated their organisation's skills and experience working collaboratively and creating an environment that cultivates and nurtures meaningful relationships.



- Demonstrated longstanding relationships with a range of stakeholders (e.g. extensive networks and connections with employers, social enterprises, intermediaries, jobseekers, communities, industry groups, financial institutions, universities and the private sector, and government).
- Described the evidence, evaluation, data, case studies, anecdotal stories, lived experience that support the need for SEDI.
- Showed how their organisation would use these connections to support grant recipients for the SEDI capability building grants.
- Demonstrated important roles of intermediaries demonstrating strong partnerships with them (most provided extensive lists).
- Described how the organisations would use connections to support capability building grant recipients.
- Demonstrated how they would use connections to the broader community to disseminate the grant opportunity.

Criterion 2: Cultural Safety and meeting diverse needs

Demonstrated cultural safety awareness and experience working with and meeting the needs of:

- First Nations individuals or organisations
- People from culturally and linguistically diverse communities
- People with a disability/disabilities.

Strong applications:

- Were able to demonstrate cultural safety awareness.
- Demonstrated how lived experience could inform their approach and why cultural safety and meeting diverse needs was important in relation to the SEDI Grants Administrator role.
- Demonstrated how their staff are diverse across culture and ethnicity, disability, age and background.
- Described gender equality principles.
- Described the organisation's Code of Conduct emphasising diversity and inclusiveness.
- Described training in cultural awareness and safety.
- Described communication, selection panels and other public-facing panels and information that include diversity in representation.
- Demonstrated how they could meet the needs of First Nations individuals or organisations.
- Demonstrated practical experience of working in partnership with beneficiaries who identify as First Nations people and/or organisations.
- Described having a Reconciliation Action Plan.
- Demonstrated Closing the GAP priority reforms.
- Demonstrated how the organisation meets the needs of people from culturally and linguistically diverse communities.
- Demonstrated practical experience of partnership with beneficiaries who identify as CALD people and/or organisations.
- Demonstrated supporting translation when necessary.
- Described how their CALD methods included tone of voice, using clear and simple language and using multimedia formats with written words, images and spoken videos.
- Demonstrated how the organisation meets the needs of people with a disability/disabilities.
- Demonstrated practical experience of working in partnership with beneficiaries who identify as people with disability/disabilities.
- Demonstrated their ability to follow Web Content Accessibility Guidelines and Universal Design principles in our communications and project liaison.



Criterion 3: Ability to deliver capability building grants and meet Government objectives

In responding to this criterion applicants demonstrated how their organisation:

- would promote the grant program, receive and assess grant applications for the capability building grants in regard to the principles of the Commonwealth Grant Rules and Guidelines (CGRGs), with reference to the activity and your proposed selection process
- would distribute grants
- have existing infrastructure to support efficient implementation with low-establishment time and value for money.

Strong applications:

- Were able to demonstrate how the organisation will promote the grant program.
- Demonstrated the organisation's large networks of relationships, which can be used to promote the grant opportunities across the country, including in less densely populated areas.
- Demonstrated promotional strategy that includes regional and rural, CALD, Indigenous and First Nations and people with disabilities.
- Demonstrated their promotional strategy was strongly supported by sector knowledge, connections and experience.
- Demonstrated the organisation's communication and marketing team's extensive grant promotion experience.
- Demonstrated their communications strategy or plan as an attachment to their application outlining key stakeholders and messaging over different phases of the grants process.
- Demonstrated how they would receive and assess grant applications for the capability building grants in regard to the principles of the Commonwealth Grant Rules and Guidelines (CGRGs).
- Demonstrated direct connections to legislative and regulatory requirements.
- Demonstrated principles and proposed process for how the applicant would receive, assess and distribute grants in accordance with CGRG principles.
- Demonstrated the importance of adhering to the CGRGs to promote proposed use and management of public resources and achieve government policy outcomes.
- Demonstrated evidence of working closely with departments to design components of a grant administration process.
- Demonstrated the proposed process for grant administration as an attachment to their application.
- Demonstrated how their organisation would distribute grants.
- Demonstrated comprehensive end-to-end administration process.
- Demonstrated mechanism on how to manage grants.
- Demonstrated process on how the Grants Administrator would support social enterprises following the social enterprise receiving a capability-building grant.
- Demonstrated the grants management software/platform they would use.
- Demonstrated how their organisation has the existing infrastructure to support efficient implementation with low establishment time and value for money.
- Demonstrated existing infrastructure is highly developed and ready for grant administration with minimal adjustments required.
- Demonstrated extensive experience in grant programs through refined grant administration processes, which are underpinned by probity, fraud prevention, risk management and subject matter expertise.
- Demonstrated requisite specialist expertise and IT infrastructure to assure secure data hosting, efficient application assessment and resource management.
- Demonstrated experience of working with other government departments effectively.



Criterion 4: Governance structures and reporting compliance measures

In responding to this criterion applicants demonstrated:

- their organisation's proposed governance structure for managing the capability building grants
- their organisation's capability to meet the reporting and performance requirements necessary to ensure compliance with the administration of the grants, including evidence of existing reporting and monitoring activities for similar services
- how their organisation mitigated and managed risks associated with fraud and conflict of interest, including relationship management with grant recipients and expert advisors.

Strong applications:

- Were able to demonstrate their organisation's proposed governance structure for managing the capability building grants.
- Demonstrated governance experience of the organisation's leadership team.
- Demonstrated responsive to needs and expectations.
- Described their proposal to engage a dedicated grants administration team to project manage each capability building grant.
- Described their proposal to create a SEDI Advisory Committee who will provide written reports and minutes from each meeting for review by the department, to provide additional accountability and oversight of SEDI's grant management.
- Demonstrated their organisation's capability to meet the reporting and performance requirements necessary to ensure compliance with the administration of the grants, including evidence of existing reporting and monitoring activities for similar services.
- Demonstrated comprehensive understanding of the need for transparency, regular quality reporting and adherence to legislative and compliance requirements.
- Demonstrated extensive experience of keeping records and producing reports with the ability to produce annual reports on demonstrated program impacts, efficiency, effectiveness and issues/risks.
- Demonstrate how their organisation mitigated and managed risks associated with fraud and conflict of interest, including relationship management with grant recipients and expert advisors.
- Outlined potential risks, likelihood, impact, mitigation, residual likelihood and residual impact.
- Demonstrated the ability to follow a best-practice framework for risk management supported by expert advice.
- Demonstrated an Employee Code of Conduct that requires declaration of conflicts of interest and clear rules in relation to bribery and corruption.

Individual feedback

Individual feedback will not be provided for this grant opportunity.