



Social Enterprise Development Initiative - First Nations 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) - First Nations Grants Administrator grant opportunity.

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

Overview

The application submission period opened on 22 April 2025 and closed on 20 May 2025.

The purpose of the grant is to engage a First Nations Grants Administrator who will provide capability building grants on a competitive basis to First Nations social enterprises. The First Nations Grants Administrator will advertise for grant applications, run the grant application process, assess applicants, administer the grant funding, and monitor grant activities with successful First Nations social enterprises (grantees).

Selection Process

The selection process involves 4 stages:

- Eligibility and compliance reviews.
- Assessment of each application against selection criteria.
- Selection Advisory Panel consideration of applications against: selection criteria; value for money; cross application comparisons.
- Delegate consideration and decision.

The Community Grants Hub (the 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 eligible and compliant applications through a targeted competitive grant selection process.

The Selection Advisory Panel (panel) established by the Department, comprised of subject matter experts who assessed applications and provided advice to inform the final funding recommendations to the Financial Delegate.

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

- how well applications met the assessment criteria and objectives of the grant
- whether an application represented value for money including how services would be delivered, ability to have national reach and budget breakdown
- how an application compared to other applications.

Selection Results

There was strong interest in the grant opportunity. Strong applicants demonstrated their ability to meet all the selection requirements outlined in the Grant Opportunity Guidelines and demonstrated value for money. Less competitive applications were strong in some areas only and/or were not able to demonstrate grant delivery capability with national reach and within the grant parameters.

The discussion below provides further information about what was considered a strong application.

Value for Money

Value for money is a judgement based on the grant proposal representing an efficient, effective, economical and ethical use of public resources. A range of factors are considered in this assessment including financial and non-financial factors, such as quality, alignment with objectives, relevant experience and performance history, and risk. In this case, the value for money assessment included consideration of the relative split in proposed budgets between administrative costs and what proportion of funds would flow to social enterprises. Given the fixed funding envelope available, applications with higher administrative costs were able to deliver fewer grants to recipient social enterprises. Strong applications provided clear rationale for their administrative costs and how they would contribute to maximising the program’s overall impact on First Nations social enterprises.

Criterion 1

Demonstrated knowledge of and experience working with the First Nations for-purpose sector and the wider social enterprise sector

When addressing the criterion strong applicants demonstrated:

- understanding of the social enterprise sector and the different capability building needs of First Nations organisations, particularly those operating as a social enterprise seeking to deliver a social benefit
- understanding of the objectives of the SEDI First Nations Capability Building Funding to support First Nations social enterprises
- experience working nationally with First Nations organisations, particularly social enterprises, to facilitate their growth and cultivate meaningful relationships with relevant parties and networks.

Strong applications:

Sub-criterion reference	Generally, strong responses:
Demonstrated understanding of the social enterprise sector and the different capability building needs of First Nations organisations, particularly those	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Identified the sector’s unique needs, referring to relevant information and research about these needs and providing evidence of addressing them.▪ Identified the importance of supporting self-determination in working with First Nations organisations.

operating as a social enterprise seeking to deliver a social benefit	
Demonstrated understanding of the objectives of the SEDI First Nations Capability Building Funding to support First Nations social enterprises.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Articulated understanding of the policy context such as outlining the purpose of the grant. ▪ Articulated why the applicant was well placed to deliver the policy outcome including providing evidence of supporting similar outcomes. ▪ Articulated understanding of relevant sector and/or policy's background.
Demonstrated experience working nationally with First Nations organisations, particularly social enterprises, to facilitate their growth and cultivate meaningful relationships with relevant parties and networks.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Identified key actors in the sector and/or provided evidence of projects or programs where the applicant had worked with First Nations organisations and actors in the social enterprise sector. ▪ Demonstrated ability to work with First Nations social enterprises in a national context. ▪ Demonstrated productive relationships with a range of relevant stakeholders.

Criterion 2

Cultural Capability and Awareness

When addressing the criterion strong applicants outlined:

- cultural capability and awareness and experience working with and meeting the diverse needs of First Nations individuals or organisations
- for consortia: how any Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations party to the consortium have a decision-making role in the consortium and how any non-Indigenous organisations have cultural capability.

Strong applications:

Sub-criterion reference	Generally, strong responses:
Outlined cultural capability and awareness and experience working with and meeting the diverse needs of First Nations individuals or organisations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Provided evidence of structures in place that embed First Nations wisdom. ▪ Demonstrated that the approach was First Nations led including outlining the principle of self-determination, and importance of flexibility and accessibility. ▪ Demonstrated practical experience of working in genuine partnership with First Nations people, communities, and/or organisations. ▪ Demonstrated culturally appropriate practices within the application's organisation.
For consortia: Outlined how any Aboriginal and Torres Strait	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Demonstrated considered power sharing and decision-making arrangements between

<p>Islander organisations party to the consortium have a decision-making role in the consortium and how any non-Indigenous organisations have cultural capability.</p>	<p>non-Indigenous and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations party to the consortium.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Demonstrated suitable dispute resolution mechanisms between consortium partners. ▪ Provided evidence of cultural capability of non-Indigenous organisations in the consortium.
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Criterion 3

Ability to successfully deliver the Capability Building Funding in a national context and meet Australian Government objectives

When addressing the criterion strong applicants:

- demonstrated how they have the skills required to administer the funding arrangements with a well-considered and reasonable budget that maximises outcomes for First Nations social enterprises
- will have or will gain access to infrastructure to support efficient implementation and monitoring of the grant program
- outlined their strategy for promotion of the First Nations Capability Building Funding
- outlined their strategy for receiving and assessing applications and distributing the allocated funding in line with the Commonwealth Grant Rules and Principles (inclusive of process)
- outlined their approach to working with the DSS
- outlined their ability to deliver the activity across a national context and how regional, rural, and remote social enterprise will be included in the delivery.

Strong applications:

Sub-criterion reference	Generally, strong responses:
<p>Demonstrated how they have the skills required to administer the funding arrangements with a well-considered and reasonable budget that maximises outcomes for First Nations social enterprises.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Demonstrated sufficient maturity and evidence to suggest an ability to deliver the grants successfully. ▪ Provided a proposed expenditure breakdown of administration and Capability Building Funding that is rationalised with explanatory line items. ▪ The relative budget for administration and Capability Building Funding maximised expenditure for grants to Indigenous social enterprises. ▪ Outlined a comprehensive end-to-end administration process. ▪ Demonstrated capability to develop and deliver grant administration processes within the specified timeframe.
<p>Applicants will have or will gain access to infrastructure to support efficient implementation and monitoring of the grant program.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Outlined a specific system i.e. grants management platform that the applicant have/use or will obtain if successful.

Outlined their strategy for promotion of the First Nations Capability Building Funding.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Outlined a considered and multi-channel promotion strategy for the Capability Building Funding, inclusive of communications resourcing.
Outlined their strategy for receiving and assessing applications and distributing the allocated funding in line with the Commonwealth Grant Rules and Principles (inclusive of process).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Demonstrated clear principles and a proposed process for how the applicant will receive, assess, and distribute grants in accordance with Commonwealth Grant Rules and Principles (CGRPs) including specific reference to mechanisms within process that support compliance with CGRPs.
Outlined their approach to working with the DSS.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Identified collaboration/codesign with DSS within proposed process.
Outlined their ability to deliver the activity across a national context and how regional, rural, and remote social enterprise will be included in the delivery.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Demonstrated evidence of having a national reach and/or sufficient mechanisms, channels, and partners to support national reach including reference to regional, rural, and remote social enterprises.

Criterion 4

Governance structures and reporting compliance measures

When addressing the criterion strong applicants demonstrated:

- the proposed governance structure for managing the Capability Building Funding including cultural governance
- demonstrated the capability to meet the reporting and performance requirements necessary to ensure compliance with the administration of the funding, including evidence of existing reporting and monitoring activities for similar services
- demonstrated the ability to mitigate and manage risks associated with fraud and conflict of interest, including relationship management with Capability Building Funding recipients and expert advisors.

Strong applications:

Sub-criterion reference	Generally, strong responses:
Demonstrated the proposed governance structure for managing the Capability Building Funding including cultural governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Clearly articulated overarching organisational roles and responsibilities and articulated governance and roles of the proposed project team. ▪ Outlined governance experience of the organisation’s leadership team.
Demonstrated the capability to meet the reporting and performance requirements necessary to ensure compliance with the administration of the funding, including evidence of existing reporting and monitoring activities for similar services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Demonstrated comprehensive understanding of the need for transparency, regular quality reporting and adherence to legislative and compliance requirements. ▪ Demonstrated experience of keeping records and producing reports and the ability to produce regular reports on program impacts, efficiency, effectiveness, and issues/risks.

<p>Demonstrated the ability to mitigate and manage risks associated with fraud and conflict of interest, including relationship management with Capability Building Funding recipients and expert advisors.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Outlined policies in place for risk, fraud, and conflict of interest. Clearly articulated how these policies mitigate and manage risk.▪ Identified reporting framework for issues, concerns, or incidents.
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Individual feedback

Individual feedback will be available upon request. Applicants seeking individual feedback should submit requests to socialimpactinvesting@dss.gov.au. Requests for individual feedback will only be accepted within 10 business days of receipt of the outcome of your application. Feedback will be provided within 20 business days of receiving your request.