



Australian Government

**Department of Innovation
Industry, Science and Research**

Enterprise Connect Discretionary Grant Guidelines

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website: www.enterpriseconnect.gov.au

Enterprise Connect Hotline: 131 791

About these guidelines

The Enterprise Connect Discretionary Grant Guidelines contained in this document, as amended by the Department from time to time, (**Guidelines**) provide information on:

- the Enterprise Connect program, including its objectives;
- criteria for the eligibility of prospective applicants to be considered for an Enterprise Connect discretionary grant;
- requirements for the format and content of an application for an Enterprise Connect discretionary grant;
- selection criteria applied in the assessment of an application for an Enterprise Connect discretionary grant;
- the process for the assessment and approval of an application for an Enterprise Connect discretionary grant; and
- other general terms governing the provision of Enterprise Connect discretionary grants and these Guidelines.

Further information on Enterprise Connect can be found on our website at www.enterpriseconnect.gov.au or by contacting the Enterprise Connect Hotline on 131 791.

These Guidelines are issued by the Commonwealth of Australia as represented by the Department of Innovation, Industry, Science and Research (the **Department**).

Terms used in these Guidelines

In addition to the above defined terms ('Department' and 'Guidelines') terms used in these Guidelines have the following meanings:

Centre means any of the following Enterprise Connect centres: Manufacturing Centres; Creative Industries Innovation Centre; Clean Energy Innovation Centre; Remote Enterprise Centre; Mining Technology Innovation Centre and Innovative Regions Centre.

Discretionary Grant means a grant from the Department to an approved applicant to fund a Project or Projects for the purposes of Enterprise Connect (and does not include a grant for the performance of TAS or Enterprise Connect business reviews).

Program funds means funds available for the awarding of Discretionary Grants under Enterprise Connect.

Project means a project or activity, whether existing or proposed, intended to assist in the implementation, design and delivery of services consistent with the objectives of Enterprise Connect and in respect of which an applicant seeks to obtain funding through a Discretionary Grant.

SMEs means small and medium-sized Australian enterprises.

TAS means a tailored advisory service provided to participating SMEs through Enterprise Connect.

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1 Introduction and eligibility

1.1 Introduction

The Australian Government has committed \$251 million over five years for the Enterprise Connect initiative. The initiative will provide small and medium sized enterprises (**SMEs**) with better access to new ideas, knowledge and technologies, to enable businesses to become more innovative, efficient and competitive and to lift productivity across Australian industry. The Enterprise Connect network will comprise a number of Manufacturing and Innovation Centres located around Australia.

Eligible firms can access a free business review and up to \$20,000 in funding, matched by the firm, in the form of a Tailored Advisory Service (**TAS**) grant to implement the recommendations of the business review. Information on, and the terms governing, how to access those services are detailed in the Enterprise Connect Manufacturing Centre Client Guidelines.

Separate to the Enterprise Connect business review and TAS grant elements mentioned above, Enterprise Connect has a budget allocation to award discretionary grants to approved applicants to fund projects and activities to assist in the implementation, design and delivery of services consistent with the objectives of Enterprise Connect (**Discretionary Grants**).

These Guidelines apply only in relation to the Discretionary Grants, and may be amended by the Department of Innovation, Industry Science and Research (the Department) from time to time. Applicants for a Discretionary Grant should ensure that they have the latest Guidelines available from the Enterprise Connect website at www.enterpriseconnect.gov.au or by contacting the Enterprise Connect Hotline on 131 791.

1.2 Objectives of Enterprise Connect

The objectives of the Enterprise Connect initiative are to:

- providing specialist advice and services to SMEs to improve their business performance
- make it easy for SMEs to source and finance specialist advice, know-how, and technologies to improve their business performance
- provide SMEs with new skills, technologies and business strategies to remain competitive both in Australia, and globally
- enable SMEs to apply this knowledge and technology obtained through Enterprise Connect to build their internal capacity which will help them to become more innovative, efficient and competitive and lift productivity across Australian industry and
- improve the performance of SMEs by providing a range of services designed to link SMEs to new ideas, technologies and markets.

1.3 Eligibility for a Discretionary Grant

To be eligible to be considered for a Discretionary Grant, an applicant must:

- be registered with an Australian Business Number (or in the case of consortia, the lead organisation must be registered with an Australian Business Number) and
- not be bankrupt or insolvent.

1.4 How to apply

Applicants are generally required to provide the Department with a written application submitted by email to enterpriseconnect@innovation.gov.au. The application should generally be no longer than five pages in length and must include the following information:

- **Applicant details** - including the following information in relation to the applicant (and where other entities are involved in the proposed Project, each other entity):
 - registered name
 - Australian Business Number
 - address (in the case of a company, the registered address)
 - type of legal entity (for example, individual, company, partnership)
 - place of incorporation (if applicable)
 - name(s) and contact details of the applicant's nominated contact person(s)
 - whether the applicant is seeking a Discretionary Grant as the trustee of a trust and, if so, the name of the trust
 - a statement of whether or not the applicant satisfies the eligibility criteria set out in section 1.3 of these Guidelines and
 - the applicant's experience, qualifications and capabilities relevant to the performance of the Project.
- **Project information** - including:
 - the aims and objectives of the Project
 - the nature and scope of the Project
 - proposed time frames for the performance of the Project
 - proposed Project deliverables and outcomes.
- **Funding requirements and financial information** - including:
 - the nature and amount of funding sought for the Project, including the specific funding sought under a Discretionary Grant
 - the applicant's proposed financial and other contributions to the Project; and
 - a proposed annual budget for the Project.
- **Response against the selection criteria** - how the applicant's Project addresses the general selection criteria in section 2.1 of these Guidelines, and any Centre-specific selection criteria in section 2.2 of these Guidelines, below.

Applicants may be contacted by the Department for further information or to negotiate issues prior to final assessment of an application for a Discretionary Grant. The Department may use information obtained from other sources for the purpose of assessing an application for a Discretionary Grant.

2 Selection

2.1 General selection criteria

An application for a Discretionary Grant which is submitted by an applicant satisfying the eligibility criteria in section 1.3 of these Guidelines will be assessed against the general selection criteria:

- the extent to which the Project proposed in the application addresses the following relevant outcomes:
 1. facilitates the achievement of the Enterprise Connect objectives specified in section 1.2 of these Guidelines
 2. facilitates the delivery of the Enterprise Connect initiative on behalf of the Government / Department
 3. contributes to future improvements in the ongoing delivery of the Enterprise Connect initiative
 4. leads to improvements in the productivity and competitiveness of Australian SMEs;
 5. links Australian SMEs with sources of expertise and advice relevant to their businesses
 6. provides useful knowledge that could be applied across the Enterprise Connect network
- the extent to which the Project would involve an efficient, effective and ethical use of the proposed Discretionary Grant and
- the financial viability of the applicant and the Project.

2.2 Centre specific selection criteria

An application for a Discretionary Grant which:

- is submitted by an applicant satisfying the eligibility criteria in section 1.3 of these Guidelines and
- which involves a Project to support the operations of a particular Centre listed below

will, in addition to being assessed against the general selection criteria in section 2.1 of these Guidelines, be assessed for the extent to which the Project satisfies the following relevant Centre-specific selection criteria:

Manufacturing Centres:

1. aids in the establishment of the Enterprise Connect Manufacturing Centres network
2. enhances the effective operation of the Enterprise Connect Manufacturing Centres network
3. facilitates the delivery of the Enterprise Connect initiative on behalf of the Government / Department and

4. contributes to future improvements in the ongoing delivery of the Enterprise Connect initiative.

Creative Industries Innovation Centre:

1. assists in building up market research knowledge to foster the growth of the creative industries sector.

Clean Energy Innovation Centre:

1. connects SMEs with technologies and technological solutions for use in the clean energy sector
2. assists SMEs' access to prototyping and testing facilities to turn innovative ideas into new products, or to test products for new markets
3. collaborates with research institutions, government and industry to develop sectoral data and analysis on the development of clean energy technology and
4. facilitates innovative joint business development opportunities for SMEs in the clean energy sector.

Remote Enterprise Centre:

1. connects remote SMEs with technologies, technological solutions and business intelligence
2. assists SMEs access to prototyping and testing facilities to turn innovative ideas into new products, or to test products for new markets
3. collaborates with research institutions, government and industry to develop sectoral data and analysis on the development of competitive remote industry and
4. facilitates innovative joint business development opportunities for remote SMEs.

Mining Technology Innovation Centre:

1. connects SMEs with technologies and technological solutions for use in the mining technology sector
2. assists SMEs' access to prototyping and testing facilities to turn innovative ideas into new products, or to test products for new markets
3. collaborates with research institutions, government and industry to develop sectoral data and analysis on the development of mining technology sector and
4. facilitates innovative joint business development opportunities for SMEs in the mining technology sector.

Innovative Regions Centre:

1. the extent to which the project involves and benefits a range of SMEs in the region and
2. encourages links and partnerships between SMEs and universities, training providers, research agencies or other businesses.

2.3 Assessment

Each application for a Discretionary Grant which is submitted by an applicant satisfying the eligibility criteria in section 1.3 of these Guidelines will be assessed against the general selection criteria in section 2.1, and any relevant Centre-specific selection criteria in section 2.2 of these Guidelines, by Department officers in the Enterprise Connect Branch.

The assessment of an application for a Discretionary Grant will ordinarily be completed within two months of the date of receipt of the application. Following an assessment, assessing officers will submit a recommendation to the assigned delegate for approval of the application.

2.4 Final approval

Authority to award final approval of an application for Discretionary Grants will be delegated to an officer (the Program Delegate) within in the Department by the Minister for Innovation, Industry, Science and Research. The Program Delegate will have the final decision in determining the quantum, terms and conditions of a Discretionary Grant.

The Program Delegate will not approve an application if he/she reasonably considers, following an assessment of:

1. commitments of program funds in the current financial year
2. commitments in future years and
3. Program Funds currently available

that the application cannot be accommodated within the Program Funding of the financial years in the which the application relates.

Applicants can expect to be notified of a decision on their completed application in a timely manner as detailed below:

1. Application for funding of less than \$100,000 - two weeks
2. Applications for funding between \$100,000 and \$2,000,000 – four weeks
3. Applications for funding above \$2,000,000 or that span more than three years – eight weeks.

Details of successful applicants, including the name of the applicant, the purpose of the grant and value of the grant will be published on the Department's website. There may also be a public announcement of successful applicants. Prior to any announcement, successful applicants will be notified of the outcome of their application.

2.5 Formal agreement

Following the final approval of the application, successful applicants must enter into a grant agreement with the Commonwealth. A grant agreement must:

1. require that the Commonwealth is empowered to recover program funds in circumstances where the applicant has acted in a manner to reduce the benefits that were expected to be generated by the project
2. not be inconsistent with the law of the Commonwealth, a State or Territory of these guidelines
3. specify the amount of grant assistance for the project to which the application relates and the timing and methodology of delivery of the grant
4. require the recipient to conduct the project to which the application relates
5. require the recipient to keep records relating to the conduct and management of the project
6. require funding payments to be paid progressively against the achievement of agreed milestones
7. require the appropriate acquittal of grant funds by the recipient
8. provide for variation and termination of the agreement and
9. may include other matters.

It should be understood that these guidelines are not a definitive statement of the Department's requirements in relation to Discretionary Grants. The obligations of a successful applicant and of the Department in relation to a Discretionary Grant will be set out in a formal funding agreement.

In addition, the Enterprise Connect Program Delegate may make policies of general application and other guidelines and decisions in relation to the administration of Enterprise Connect which may affect the awarding of Discretionary Grants.

2.6 Tax implications

Ten per cent will be added to the agreed amount of a grant offer for the purposes of GST. A successful applicant must pay this additional amount directly to the Australian Taxation Office (ATO).

For example, if a project for \$50,000 is approved, the Commonwealth will pay \$55,000 to the successful applicant and the applicant must then pay \$5,000 to the ATO.

Note that grants are not of themselves exempt from income and other taxes. It is for applicants to make their own assessment and decision on taxation issues as part of the process of deciding whether or not to apply for funding. DIISR does not give legal or taxation advice.

2.7 Unsuccessful applications

Applicants that are unsuccessful in obtaining a Discretionary Grant will be notified as soon as possible by the Department following the Department's decision in relation to the application.

Unsuccessful applicants may contact the Department (using the contact details in section 4 of these Guidelines) to obtain reasons for the Department not awarding a Discretionary Grant to that applicant.

3 Privacy and confidentiality

Information provided by applicants to Enterprise Connect is regulated by the relevant provisions and penalties of the *Public Service Act 1999*, the *Public Service Regulations*, the *Privacy Act 1988*, the *Crimes Act 1914*, the *Criminal Code* and general law.

The information provided in an application for a Discretionary Grant:

- will be used by the Department to determine eligibility for Discretionary Grants, and for the administration and further development of Enterprise Connect. Any subsequent information provided to the Department, its Business Advisers or other service providers in the course of Enterprise Connect, may be used for similar purposes
- may be disclosed between the Department, its Business Advisers and other contractors and service providers for the purposes described above
- will not be used for marketing or publicity purposes without your consent, except to the extent that it is used in a public announcement of a successful application as described below
- may be disclosed for audit purposes to contractors engaged by the Department and to other Commonwealth agencies for audit, reporting and law enforcement purposes

- may be disclosed by the Department if it obtains the applicant's consent and
- may also be disclosed as permitted or required by law, or in response to questions posed by the Minister, Parliament or its committees (for example, if the Department is required to respond to a resolution of the Parliament, or an order of a court).

Aggregated information may be disclosed to other Commonwealth departments and agencies, or made public, however, an applicant's name and other identifying information will not be disclosed.

There will be regular public announcements of successful applicants for Discretionary Grants. The public announcement will include broad details of an application, for example, the identity of the successful applicant, the value of the assistance and/or grant and a brief description of the purpose of the assistance and/or grant.

Applicants concerned about confidentiality should discuss it with their Enterprise Connect state office.

4 Enquiries and feedback on the Enterprise Connect discretionary grant program

Applicants are encouraged to provide feedback on Enterprise Connect services and the process for the provision of Discretionary Grants.

If an applicant has a complaint, please contact the Enterprise Connect hotline on 131 791 as a first point of contact.

If an applicant has feedback or is not satisfied with the complaint resolution procedure, the applicant can contact General Manager of Enterprise Connect in writing at the following address:

General Manager
Enterprise Connect
GPO Box 9839
CANBERRA ACT 2601.

5 The Department's other rights

Nothing in these Guidelines should be construed to give rise to any contractual obligations or rights, express or implied, by the issue of these Guidelines or the submission of an application for a Discretionary Grant. No contract will be created until a formal written agreement is executed between a successful applicant and the Department.

Notwithstanding any other provision of these Guidelines, the Department reserves the right, at any time, to:

- alter, amend or vary these Guidelines, and the process outlined in these Guidelines and
- act, refrain from acting, or make a decision, that is inconsistent with these Guidelines.

Notwithstanding the approval of any application for a Discretionary Grant, the provision of a Discretionary Grant by the Department, and the amount of any Discretionary Grant, is subject to available Commonwealth funding and changes in Commonwealth policy.