



Grant Opportunity Guidelines

Small and Medium Enterprises (SME) Export Hubs grant opportunity

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Administering entity	Department of Industry, Innovation and Science
Enquiries:	If you have any questions, contact us at business.gov.au .
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1. Small and Medium Enterprises (SME) Export Hubs grant opportunity processes

The SME Export Hubs grant opportunity is designed to achieve Australian Government objectives

This grant opportunity contributes to the Department of Industry, Innovation and Science's Outcome 1. The department has worked with stakeholders to plan and design the grant opportunity according to the *Commonwealth Grants Rules and Guidelines*.



The grant opportunity opens

We publish the grant guidelines on business.gov.au and [GrantConnect](#).



Stage one - Expression of interest

You complete and submit an expression of interest



We assess all expressions of interest

We assess the expressions of interest against eligibility criteria and Stage 1 merit criterion. All eligible expressions of interest are provided to relevant Growth Centres for consideration and advice to the department. The department considers the advice of the relevant Growth Centre/s and recommends to the program delegate which expressions of interest should be invited to submit a Stage 2 grant application. The program delegate then makes a decision. If your expression of interest is successful, you will be invited to submit a stage 2 grant application.



We notify you of the outcome

We advise you of the outcome of your expression of interest.

Stage two - Grant application

You are invited to complete and submit a grant application

The application is to be developed with advice from Growth Centres that are providing support for the application.



We assess all grant applications

We assess applications against the merit criteria including an overall consideration of value with relevant money and compare it to other applications.



We make grant recommendations

We provide advice to the decision maker on the merits of each application.



Grant decisions are made

The Minister decides which applications are successful.



We notify you of the outcome

We advise you of the outcome of your application. We may not notify unsuccessful applicants until grant agreements have been executed with successful applicants.



We enter into a grant agreement

We will enter into a grant agreement with successful applicants. The type of grant agreement is based on the nature of the grant and proportional to the risks involved.



Delivery of grant

You undertake the grant activity as set out in your grant agreement. We manage the grant by working with you, monitoring your progress and making payments.



Evaluation of the grant opportunity

We evaluate the specific grant activity and grant opportunity as a whole. We base this on information you provide to us and that we collect from various sources.

2. About the grant opportunity

These guidelines contain information about the Small and Medium Enterprises (SME) Export Hubs grant opportunity that was announced as part of the Australian Government's 2018-19 Budget. It will support the development of local, regional and Indigenous brands through business collaborations in the identified areas of competitive strength.

The grant opportunity complements existing initiatives, such as those delivered through the Australian Export Finance Corporation - [Efic](#), the Australian Trade and Investment Commission - [Austrade](#), the [Entrepreneurs' Programme](#), and the [Industry Growth Centres Initiative](#).

For the purpose of this grant opportunity, SME refers to small and medium enterprises that may be local, regional, remote and/or Indigenous.

The objectives of the grant opportunity are to:

- support the establishment and/or operation of SME export hubs (export hubs) in the six Growth Centre sectors:
 - Advanced Manufacturing
 - Cyber Security
 - Food and Agribusiness
 - Medical Technologies and Pharmaceuticals
 - Mining Equipment, Technology and Services
 - Oil, Gas and Energy Resources.
- support SME development through facilitation of export opportunities and working with the Growth Centres.

The intended outcomes of the grant opportunity are:

- greater cooperation and collaboration between participating SMEs and others to deliver commercial outcomes
- growth of participating SMEs through activities such as developing collective brands and leveraging infrastructure to support the participation of their region in global supply chains
- building on competitive strengths and improved local capability to increase exports, encourage growth and create jobs.

The grant opportunity will be delivered through a two-stage competitive selection process. Refer to section 8 on how to apply.

This document sets out:

- the eligibility and merit criteria
- how we consider and assess grant applications
- how we monitor and evaluate grantees
- responsibilities and expectations in relation to the opportunity.

The department is responsible for administering the grant opportunity.

We will publish the [opening and closing dates](#) and any other relevant information on business.gov.au¹ and [GrantConnect](#)².

We administer the program according to the Commonwealth Grants Rules and Guidelines (CGRGs)³.

We have defined key terms used in these guidelines in appendix A.

You should read this document carefully before you fill out an expression of interest or your grant application.

2.1. Grant amount and grant period

The Australian Government has announced a total of \$20 million over four years for this grant opportunity, of which \$18.8 million is available for grants.

3. Grants available

Applicants can apply for grant funding for a newly established export hub or an existing (mature) export hub.

The grant amount will be up to 50 per cent of eligible project costs (grant percentage).

- The minimum grant amount is \$150,000
- The maximum grant amount is \$1.5 million.

The remaining 50 per cent of eligible project costs we consider your contribution. Your contribution must be cash, and not in-kind.

Your contribution must be from sources other than the Commonwealth and can include state, territory and local government and industry partners.

3.1. Project duration

The maximum grant period is four years.

You must complete your project by 30 June 2022.

4. Eligibility criteria

We cannot consider your expression of interest or your grant application if you do not satisfy all eligibility criteria.

4.1. Who is eligible?

To be eligible you must:

- have an Australian Business Number (ABN)
- and
- be one of the following entities:
 - an incorporated not-for-profit organisation such as:
 - an incorporated association

¹ <https://www.business.gov.au/SMEEH>

² <https://www.grants.gov.au/>

³ <https://www.finance.gov.au/sites/default/files/commonwealth-grants-rules-and-guidelines.pdf>

- a company limited by guarantee
- a non-distributing co-operative
- an Indigenous not for profit corporation
- a not-for-profit incorporated trustee on behalf of a trust
- an Australian local government agency or body
- an Australian state/territory government agency or body
- a [Regional Development Australia \(RDA\)](#) committee.

If you are applying as a not for profit organisation you must demonstrate your not-for-profit status through one of the following:

- current Australian Charities and Not for profits Commission's (ACNC) registration
- state or territory incorporated association status
- constitutional documents and/or Articles of Association that demonstrate the not for profit character of your organisation.

Joint applications are acceptable, provided you have a lead applicant who is eligible to apply. For further information on joint applications, refer to section 8.5.

4.2. Additional eligibility requirements

We can only accept applications:

- where you can provide evidence from your board (or chief executive officer or equivalent if there is no board) that the project is supported, and that you can complete the project and meet the costs of the project not covered by grant funding.
- where you can provide evidence of how you will provide your share of project costs. You must use the Accountant Declaration form available on business.gov.au and [GrantConnect⁴](#).

We cannot waive the eligibility criteria under any circumstances.

4.3. Who is not eligible?

You are not eligible to apply if you are:

- an incorporated for-profit organisation
- an unincorporated association
- an individual
- a partnership
- a publicly funded research organisation (PFRO) including universities as defined in appendix A
- a research organisation
- a trust (however, a not for profit incorporated trustee may apply on behalf of a trust)
- a Commonwealth government agency or body (including government business enterprises), unless listed in section 4.1.

⁴ <https://www.grants.gov.au/>

5. Eligible grant activities

5.1. Eligible projects

To be eligible your project must:

- include eligible activities and eligible expenditure
- have at least \$300,000 in eligible expenditure
- support the establishment and/or operation of a new or existing export hub
- support participating SMEs to improve their capability to increase exports, and create jobs
- develop and implement an export strategy, building on identified SME strengths and innovation potential.

5.2. Eligible activities

Eligible activities must directly relate to the project and can include:

- activities associated with establishment and operation of an export hub that assists participating SMEs improve their capabilities, increase exports and create jobs
- developing and delivering workshops, training, seminars and other events for participating SMEs in the areas of business management, workforce skills development, collaboration, innovation and export market development
- developing and implementing an export strategy focused on current or future global opportunities, building on identified competitive strengths and innovation potential of participating SMEs
- identifying emerging needs of export markets to inform and facilitate commercially focussed industry-research collaboration to address those needs
- providing market intelligence about export opportunities and facilitation of opportunities for participating SMEs to access global supply chains.

We may also approve other activities.

5.3. Eligible expenditure

You can only spend grant funds on eligible expenditure you have incurred on an agreed project as defined in your grant agreement.

- For guidelines on eligible expenditure, see appendix B.
- For guidelines on ineligible expenditure, see appendix C.

If your application is successful, we may ask you to verify project costs that you provided in your application. You may need to provide evidence such as quotes for major costs.

Not all expenditure on your project may be eligible for grant funding. The program delegate makes the final decision on what is eligible expenditure and may give additional guidance on eligible expenditure, if required.

To be eligible, expenditure must:

- be a direct cost of the project
- be incurred by you for required project audit activities.

You must incur the project expenditure between the project start and end date for it to be eligible unless stated otherwise.

You may start your project from the date we notify you that your application has been successful. We are not responsible for any expenditure you incur until a grant agreement is executed.

6. The merit criteria you need to address in your expression of interest (Stage 1)

You must address the following merit criterion in your expression of interest for an SME Export Hub grant. Your response to this merit criterion will be forwarded to the relevant Growth Centre/s for consideration and advice to the department.

6.1. Merit criterion 1

How your project aligns with the objectives and outcomes of the grant opportunity

You should demonstrate this by identifying:

- a. whether you are seeking to establish a new export hub or expand operations of an existing (mature) export hub. Briefly outline how you propose to carry out the project
- b. the location and reach of your proposed export hub, and how the export hub will ensure new participants can engage. Provide an estimated number of SMEs that will be able to access the services your export hub will provide in your region
- c. how your proposed export hub addresses one or more [Growth Centres'](#) strategic priorities, (including promoting cyber resilience within the hub and participating SMEs)
- d. the services to be delivered by your proposed export hub and how these services will contribute to improving SMEs capabilities to generate new export activities and commercial outcomes
- e. the knowledge, capability and capacity gaps that have been barriers to export for SMEs and how the hub will address these identified gaps
- f. the risks associated with your export hub and how you expect to mitigate these
- g. whether your proposed export hub project would go ahead without the SME Export Hub grant.

7. The merit criteria you need to address in your application (Stage 2)

To be competitive, you will need to address all merit criteria in your application. We will assess your application against each merit criterion using the weighting indicated. To account for the challenges faced in outer regional and remote areas, we will apply a loading to your total assessment score. Projects located in the very remote areas will receive the highest loading (6 points) and projects located in major cities will receive the lowest loading (0 points). We will determine the remoteness of your project based on the [Australian Statistical Geography Standard \(ASGS\) remoteness structure](#).

The application form asks questions that relate to the merit criteria below. The amount of detail and supporting evidence you provide in your application should be relative to the project size, complexity and grant amount requested. You should provide evidence to support your answers. The application form displays size limits for answers.

We will only award funding to applications that score highly against all merit criteria, as these represent best value for money.

7.1. Merit criterion 1

How your project aligns with the program objectives, in particular how it will benefit Small and Medium Enterprises through building export capability (40 points)

You should demonstrate this by identifying:

- a. how your project aligns with the program objectives and outcomes outlined in section 2
- b. how your project will generate new export activities and sustainable commercial outcomes for participating SMEs that would not have occurred otherwise
- c. your engagement plan that includes your plan to:
 - leverage existing commercial strengths in your area
 - engage and provide services to SMEs in one or more of the Growth Centre sectors
 - identify new export opportunities for participating SMEs
 - build and maintain relationships in one or more of the Growth Centres and related Growth Centre sectors
 - leverage and participate in the networks of the Growth Centres (including through sharing learnings and insights with your industry)
 - seek alignment with other government initiatives including (but not limited to) Cooperative Research Centres, the Growth Centre Project Funds, the Entrepreneurs' Programme, Austrade and/or TradeStart and promote (and potentially facilitate) opportunities for SME's to access these other initiatives and services to supplement their export capabilities
 - address the shared interests of the participant firms; and improve the interactions between industry, researchers and educators to deliver commercial outcomes
 - align with relevant regional economic development strategies.

7.2. Merit criterion 2

Capacity, capability and resources to deliver the export hub (30 points)

You should demonstrate this by identifying:

- a. your capacity and capability for managing the project including access to personnel with the right skills and experience. If you are establishing a new export hub, provide track record and experience of key personnel, including management and technical staff, delivering comparable projects
- b. your access to facilities, capital equipment, technology, intellectual property, administrative systems, including record keeping practices, reporting and required regulatory or other approvals
- c. a sound project plan to manage and monitor the project and risks, including scope, implementation methodology, timeframes, cyber security, and budget.

7.3. Merit criterion 3

Impact of grant funding on the project (30 points)

You should demonstrate this by identifying:

- a. whether your project will go ahead without the grant. Explain how the grant will impact your project in terms of scale, timing and reach
- b. your justification for the funding amount requested with respect to the scale of the project, grant period and intended outcomes
- c. the total estimated cash investment the grant will leverage.

8. How to apply

Before applying, you should read and understand these guidelines, and the sample [grant agreement](#) published on business.gov.au and [GrantConnect⁵](#).

You will need to set up a user account to access our online portal. The portal allows you to apply for and manage grants in a secure online environment.

To apply, you must:

- complete and submit both your expression of interest and your grant application through the portal
- provide all the information requested
- address all eligibility and merit criteria
- include all necessary attachments.

8.1. Stage one – Expression of interest

You must submit an expression of interest for an SME Export Hub grant opportunity.

We will first assess your expression of interest against the eligibility criteria and then against the stage 1 merit criterion.

We will seek advice from the relevant Growth Centre/s on the capability, capacity, likelihood of success and alignment of your expression of interest with the objectives and outcomes of this grant opportunity and the strategic priorities of the relevant [Growth Centres](#).

We will invite the most meritorious expressions of interest to submit a SME Export Hub grant application. You may be asked to work together with other applicants and submit a joint grant application for either a newly established or existing export hub.

8.2. Stage two – Grant application

If your expression of interest is successful, we will invite you to submit an SME Export Hub grant application. The relevant Growth Centre/s will be able to provide advice as you develop your stage 2 grant application.

You are responsible for making sure your application is complete and accurate. Giving false or misleading information is a serious offence under the *Criminal Code 1995* (Cth). If we consider that you have provided false or misleading information we may not progress your application. If you find an error in your application after submitting it, you should call us immediately on 13 28 46.

If we find an error or information that is missing, we may ask for clarification or additional information from you that will not change the nature of your application. However, we can refuse to accept any additional information from you that would change your submission after the application closing time.

If you need further guidance around the application process or if you are unable to submit an application online [contact us](#) at business.gov.au or by calling 13 28 46.

⁵ <https://www.grants.gov.au/>

8.3. Attachments to the application

We require the following documents with your application:

- project plan including an SME engagement plan
- detailed project budget
- accountant declaration (template provided on business.gov.au and [GrantConnect⁶](#))
- evidence of support from the board, CEO or equivalent
- trust deed (where applicable).

You must attach supporting documentation in line with the instructions provided in the portal. You should only attach requested documents. We will not consider information in attachments that we do not request.

8.4. Timing of grant opportunity

You can only submit an application between the published opening and closing dates. We cannot accept late applications.

Table 1: Expected timing for this grant opportunity

Activity	Timeframe
Assessment of EOI (Stage 1)	4 weeks
Outcomes of EOI process	2 weeks
Assessment of grant applications (Stage 2)	6 weeks
Approval of outcomes of selection process	4 weeks
Notification to applicants	2 weeks
Negotiations and award of grant agreements	up to 4 weeks
Earliest start date of project	The date you are notified your application has been successful
End date of grant commitment	30/06/2022

8.5. Joint applications

We recognise that some organisations may want to join together as a group to deliver a project. In these circumstances, you must appoint a lead organisation. Only the lead organisation can submit the application form and enter into the grant agreement with the Commonwealth. The application should identify all other members of the proposed group and include a letter of support from each of the project partners. Each letter of support should include:

- details of the project partner
- an overview of how the project partner will work with the lead organisation and any other project partners in the group to successfully complete the project
- an outline of the relevant experience and/or expertise the project partner will bring to the group
- the roles/responsibilities the project partner will undertake, and the resources it will contribute (if any)

⁶ <https://www.grants.gov.au/>

- details of a nominated management level contact officer.

The lead organisation must have a formal arrangement in place with all parties to the project. Only eligible applicants listed in section 4.1 can be lead applicants in a joint application.

9. The selection process

We first assess stage one expressions of interest against the eligibility criteria and the stage 1 merit criterion. We provide all eligible applications to the relevant Growth Centres for consideration. The Growth Centres will provide advice to the program delegate on the capability, capacity, the likelihood of success and alignment of the expression of interest with the strategic priorities of the relevant Growth Centres.

The department considers the advice of the relevant Growth Centres and recommends to the program delegate which expressions of interest should be invited to submit a stage 2 grant application. The program delegate then makes a decision. If your expression of interest is successful, you will be invited to submit a stage 2 grant application.

An advisory committee will assess your stage 2 grant application against the stage 2 merit criteria and compare it to other invited stage 2 applications. We will group applications in categories according to the type of export hub (e.g. newly established or existing/mature) to ensure similar projects are compared against each other. The committee may also seek additional advice from independent technical experts.

The committee will make recommendations to the Minister about which applications should be approved for funding. To recommend an application for funding, it must score highly against each merit criterion. While we assess all applications against the same merit criteria, we will score applications relative to the project size, complexity and grant amount requested. The evidence provided to support an application should be proportional to the size and complexity of the project.

If the selection process identifies unintentional errors in your application, we may contact you to correct or clarify the errors, but you cannot make any material alteration or addition.

9.1. Final decision

The Minister decides which grants to approve taking into account the recommendations of the committee and the availability of grant funds.

The Minister's decision is final in all matters, including:

- the approval of applications for funding
- the amount of grant funding awarded
- the terms and conditions of funding.

We cannot review decisions about the merits of your application.

The Minister will not approve funding if there is insufficient program funds available across relevant financial years for the program.

10. Notification of application outcomes

If you are successful, we will email you and include in the email any specific conditions attached to the grant. If you are unsuccessful, we will email you and give you an opportunity to discuss the outcome with us.

11. If your application is successful

11.1. Grant agreement

You must enter into a grant agreement with the Commonwealth. A sample [grant agreement](#) is available on business.gov.au and [GrantConnect⁷](#).

We will manage the grant agreement through the portal. Accepting the grant agreement through the portal is the equivalent of signing a grant agreement. After you have accepted it, we will execute the agreement. Execute means both you and the Commonwealth Government have entered into the grant agreement. We will notify you when this happens and a copy of the executed grant agreement will be available through the portal. The grant agreement will not become binding until it is executed.

We must execute a grant agreement with you before we can make any payments. We are not responsible for any expenditure you incur before a grant agreement is executed.

The approval of your grant may have specific conditions determined by the assessment process or other considerations made by the Minister. We will identify these in the offer of funding.

If you enter an agreement under this grant opportunity, you cannot receive other grants for this project from other Commonwealth granting programs.

The Commonwealth may recover grant funds if there is a breach of the grant agreement.

11.2. Simple grant agreement

We will use a simple grant agreement for this grant opportunity.

You will have 30 days from the date of a written offer to execute this grant agreement with the Commonwealth ('execute' means both you and the Commonwealth have signed the agreement). During this time, we will work with you to finalise details. The offer may lapse if both parties do not sign the grant agreement within this time. Under certain circumstances, we may extend this period. We base the approval of your grant on the information you provide in your application. We will review any required changes to these details to ensure they do not impact the project as approved by the Minister.

11.3. How we pay the grant

The grant agreement will state the:

- maximum grant amount we will pay
- proportion of eligible expenditure covered by the grant (grant percentage)
- any financial contribution provided by you or a third party.

We will not exceed the maximum grant amount under any circumstances. If you incur extra costs, you must meet them yourself.

We will make payments according to an agreed schedule set out in the grant agreement. Payments are subject to satisfactory progress on the project. We set aside five per cent of the total grant funding for the final payment. We will pay this when you submit a satisfactory end of project report demonstrating you have completed outstanding obligations for the project. We may need to adjust

⁷ <https://www.grants.gov.au/>

your progress payments to align with available program funds across financial years and/or to ensure we retain a minimum five per cent of grant funding for the final payment.

11.4. How we monitor your project

You must submit reports through the portal in line with the grant agreement. We will provide samples of these reports as appendices in the grant agreement. We will remind you of your reporting obligations before a report is due.

We will expect you to report on:

- progress against agreed project milestones
- project expenditure, including expenditure of grant funds
- contributions of participants directly related to the project.

The amount of detail you provide in your reports should be relative to the project size, complexity and grant amount.

We will monitor the progress of your project by assessing reports you submit and may conduct visits to confirm details of your reports if necessary. Occasionally we may need to re-examine claims, seek further information or request an independent audit of claims and payments.

11.5. Progress reports

Progress reports must:

- outline progress against the export strategy
- include details of activities including location
- include details of participating SMEs (name and ABNs/ICNs)
- include case studies and surveys of participants to demonstrate impact
- include evidence of increased SME exports, or progress towards increased SME exports
- include details of your progress towards completion of agreed project milestones
- show the total eligible expenditure incurred to date
- include evidence of expenditure
- be submitted by the report due date (you can submit reports ahead of time if you have completed relevant project activities).

We will only make grant payments when we receive satisfactory progress reports.

You must discuss any project or milestone reporting delays with us as soon as you become aware of them.

11.6. End of project report

When you complete the project, you must submit an end of project report.

The end of project report must:

- include the agreed evidence as specified in the grant agreement
- identify the total eligible expenditure incurred for the entire project
- be submitted by the report due date
- be in the format provided in the grant agreement.

11.7. Ad-hoc report

We may ask you for ad-hoc reports on your project. This may be to provide an update on progress, or any significant delays or difficulties in completing the project.

11.8. Independent audit report

We may ask you to provide an independent audit report. An audit report will verify that you spent the grant in accordance with the grant agreement. The audit report requires you to prepare a statement of grant income and expenditure. The report template is attached to the sample grant agreement.

11.9. Compliance visits

We may visit you during the project period or at the completion of your project to review your compliance with the grant agreement. We may also inspect the records you are required to keep under the grant agreement. We will provide you with reasonable notice of any compliance visit.

11.10. Grant agreement variations

We recognise that unexpected events may affect project progress. In these circumstances, you can request a variation to your grant agreement through the portal, including:

- changing project milestones
- extending the timeframe for completing the project but within the maximum four-year period (i.e. by 30 June 2022).
- changing project activities.

Note the program does not allow for:

- an increase of grant funds.

If you want to propose changes to the grant agreement, you must put them in writing before the grant agreement end date.

If a delay in the project causes milestone achievement and payment dates to move to a different financial year, you will need a variation to the grant agreement. We can only move funds between financial years if there is enough program funding in the relevant year to allow for the revised payment schedule. If we cannot move the funds, you may lose some grant funding.

You should not assume that a variation request will be successful. We will consider your request based on factors such as:

- how it affects the project outcome
- consistency with the program policy objective, grant opportunity guidelines and any relevant policies of the department
- changes to the timing of grant payments
- availability of program funds.

11.11. Keeping us informed

You should let us know if anything is likely to affect your project or organisation.

We need to know of any key changes to your organisation or its business activities, particularly if they affect your ability to complete your project, carry on business and pay debts due.

You must also inform us of any changes to your:

- name
- addresses
- nominated contact details
- bank account details.

If you become aware of a breach of terms and conditions under the grant agreement you must contact us immediately.

You must notify us of events relating to your project and provide an opportunity for the Minister or their representative to attend.

11.12. Evaluation

We will evaluate the program to determine the extent to which the grant is contributing to the program objectives and outcomes. We may use information from your application and project reports for this purpose. We may also interview you, or ask you for more information to help us understand how the grant impacted you and to evaluate how effective the program was in achieving its outcomes. We may contact you up to one year after you finish your project for more information to assist with this evaluation.

11.13. Tax obligations

If you are registered for the Goods and Services Tax (GST), we will add GST to your grant payment where applicable and provide you with a recipient created tax invoice. You are required to notify us if your GST registration status changes during the project period.

Grants are assessable income for taxation purposes, unless exempted by a taxation law. We recommend you seek independent professional advice on your taxation obligations or seek assistance from the [Australian Taxation Office](#). We do not provide advice on tax.

11.14. Grant acknowledgement

If you make a public statement about a project funded under the program, you must acknowledge the grant by using the following:

‘This project received grant funding from the Australian Government’s SME Export Hubs grant opportunity.’

12. Conflicts of interest

12.1. Your conflict of interest responsibilities

A conflict of interest will occur if your private interests conflict with your obligations under the grant. Conflicts of interest could affect the awarding or performance of your grant. A conflict of interest can be:

- real (or actual)
- apparent (or perceived)
- potential.

We will ask you to declare, as part of your application, any perceived or existing conflicts of interests or that, to the best of your knowledge, there is no conflict of interest.

If you later identify that there is an actual, apparent, or potential conflict of interest or that one might arise in relation to your grant, you must inform us in writing immediately.

12.2. Our conflict of interest responsibilities

We recognise that conflicts of interest may arise with our staff, technical experts, committee members and others delivering the program between:

- their program duties, roles and responsibilities and
- their private interests.

We manage our conflicts of interest according to the APS Code of Conduct (section 13 (7) of the *Public Service Act 1999* (Cth)). We publish our [conflict of interest policy](#)⁸ on the department's website.

Program officials must declare any conflicts of interest. If we consider a conflict of interest is a cause for concern, that official will not take part in the assessment of relevant applications under the program.

13. How we use your information

Unless the information you provide to us is:

- confidential information as per 13.1, or
- personal information as per 13.3,

we may share the information with other government agencies for a relevant Commonwealth purpose such as:

- to improve the effective administration, monitoring and evaluation of Australian Government programs
- for research
- to announce the awarding of grants.

13.1. How we handle your confidential information

We will treat the information you give us as sensitive and therefore confidential if it meets all of the following conditions:

- you clearly identify the information as confidential and explain why we should treat it as confidential
- the information is commercially sensitive
- disclosing the information would cause unreasonable harm to you or someone else
- you provide the information with an understanding that it will stay confidential.

13.2. When we may disclose confidential information

We may disclose confidential information:

- to the committee and our Commonwealth employees and contractors, to help us manage the program effectively
- to the Auditor-General, Ombudsman or Privacy Commissioner
- to the responsible Minister or Assistant Minister

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<https://www.industry.gov.au/AboutUs/InformationPublicationScheme/Ourpolicies/Documents/Conflict-of-Interest-and-Inside-Trade-Expectations-Policy.pdf>

- to a House or a Committee of the Australian Parliament.

We may also disclose confidential information if:

- we are required or authorised by law to disclose it
- you agree to the information being disclosed, or
- someone other than us has made the confidential information public.

13.3. How we use your personal information

We must treat your personal information according to the Australian Privacy Principles (APPs) and the *Privacy Act 1988* (Cth). This includes letting you know:

- what personal information we collect
- why we collect your personal information
- to whom we give your personal information.

We may give the personal information we collect from you to our employees and contractors, the committee, and other Commonwealth employees and contractors, so we can:

- manage the program
- research, assess, monitor and analyse our programs and activities.

We, or the Minister, may:

- announce the names of successful applicants to the public
- publish personal information on the department's websites.

You may read our [Privacy Policy](#)⁹ on the department's website for more information on:

- what is personal information
- how we collect, use, disclose and store your personal information
- how you can access and correct your personal information.

13.4. Public announcement

We will publish non-sensitive details of successful projects on [GrantConnect](#)¹⁰ and [business.gov.au](#). We are required to do this by the *Commonwealth Grants Rules and Guidelines* and the [Australian Government Public Data Policy Statement](#)¹¹, unless otherwise prohibited by law. This information may include:

- name of your organisation
- title of the project
- description of the project and its intended outcomes
- amount of grant funding awarded
- Australian Business Number
- business location
- your organisation's industry sector.

⁹ <http://www.industry.gov.au/Pages/PrivacyPolicy.aspx>

¹⁰ <https://www.grants.gov.au/>

¹¹ <http://www.dpmc.gov.au/resource-centre/data/australian-government-public-data-policy-statement>

We publish this information to ensure open access to non-sensitive data within Australian Government agencies to enable greater innovation and productivity across all sectors of the Australian economy.

13.5. Freedom of information

All documents in the possession of the Australian Government, including those about the program, are subject to the *Freedom of Information Act 1982* (Cth) (FOI Act).

The purpose of the FOI Act is to give members of the public rights of access to information held by the Australian Government and its entities. Under the FOI Act, members of the public can seek access to documents held by the Australian Government. This right of access is limited only by the exceptions and exemptions necessary to protect essential public interests and private and business affairs of persons in respect of whom the information relates.

If someone requests a document under the FOI Act, we will release it (though we may need to consult with you and/or other parties first) unless it meets one of the exemptions set out in the FOI Act.

14. Enquiries and feedback

For further information or clarification, you can contact us on 13 28 46 or by [web chat](#) or through our [online enquiry form](#) on business.gov.au.

We may publish answers to your questions on our website as Frequently Asked Questions.

Our [Customer Service Charter](#) is available at business.gov.au. We use customer satisfaction surveys to improve our business operations and service.

If you have a complaint, call us on 13 28 46. We will refer your complaint to the appropriate manager.

If you are not satisfied with the way we handle your complaint, you can contact:

Head of Division

AusIndustry - Support for Business

Department of Industry, Innovation and Science

GPO Box 2013

CANBERRA ACT 2601

You can also contact the [Commonwealth Ombudsman](#)¹² with your complaint (call 1300 362 072). There is no fee for making a complaint, and the Ombudsman may conduct an independent investigation.

¹² <http://www.ombudsman.gov.au/>

Appendix A. Definitions of key terms

Term	Definition
Application	The details that applicants provide in the online portal to apply for funding under the grant opportunity.
AusIndustry	The division of the same name within the department.
Department	The Department of Industry, Innovation and Science.
Committee	An independent body established to consider and assess eligible applications and make recommendations to the Minister for funding under the program.
Eligible activities	The activities undertaken by a grantee in relation to a project that are eligible for funding support as set out in 5.2.
Eligible application	An application or proposal for grant funding under the program that the program delegate has determined is eligible for assessment in accordance with these guidelines.
Eligible expenditure	The expenditure incurred by a grantee on a project and which is eligible for funding support as set out in 5.3.
Eligible expenditure guidelines	The guidelines that are at Appendix B.
Existing (mature) export hub	A mature export hub is a hub that has been operating for more than one year. A mature export hub has existing activities and services, and governance structure. Mature export hubs are expected to have at least 10 active participants accessing hub activities and services.
Grant agreement	A legally binding contract between the Commonwealth and a grantee for the grant funding
Grant funding or grant funds	The funding made available by the Commonwealth to grantees under the program.
Grantee	The recipient of grant funding under a grant agreement.
Growth Centre	See <i>Industry Growth Centres Initiative</i> .
Guidelines	Guidelines that the Minister gives to the department to provide the framework for the administration of the program, as in force from time to time.

Term	Definition
Industry Growth Centres Initiative	<p>The Industry Growth Centres Initiative is an industry-led approach driving innovation, productivity and competitiveness by focusing on areas of competitive strength and strategic priority. Six Growth Centres have been established in priority growth sectors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Advanced Manufacturing ▪ Cyber Security ▪ Food and Agribusiness ▪ Medical Technologies and Pharmaceuticals ▪ Mining Equipment, Technology and Services ▪ Oil, Gas and Energy Resources
Minister	The Commonwealth Minister for Industry, Innovation and Science.
Newly established export hub	A newly established export hub is a hub that is in the development phase, or not fully established, and wishes to fast track their formation.
Personal information	<p>Has the same meaning as in the <i>Privacy Act 1988</i> (Cth) which is:</p> <p>Information or an opinion about an identified individual, or an individual who is reasonably identifiable:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ whether the information or opinion is true or not; and ▪ whether the information or opinion is recorded in a material form or not.
Priority growth sectors / Growth Centre sectors	See <i>Industry Growth Centres Initiative</i> .
Program Delegate	An AusIndustry general manager within the department with responsibility for the program.
Program funding or Program funds	The funding made available by the Commonwealth for the program.
Project	A project described in an application for grant funding under the program.
Publicly funded research organisation (PFRO)	All higher education providers listed at Table A and Table B of the <i>Higher Education Support Act 2003</i> (Cth) and corporate Commonwealth entities, and State and Territory business enterprises which undertake publicly funded research.
Small and medium enterprise (SME)	Businesses employing fewer than 200 people.

Appendix B. Eligible expenditure

This section provides guidelines on the eligibility of expenditure.

The program delegate makes the final decision on what is eligible expenditure and may give additional guidance on eligible expenditure if required.

To be eligible, expenditure must:

- be incurred by you within the project period
- be a direct cost of the project
- be incurred by you to undertake required project audit activities
- meet the guidelines on eligible expenditure.

How we verify eligible expenditure

If your application is successful, we will ask you to verify the project budget that you provided in your application when we negotiate your grant agreement. You may need to provide evidence such as quotes for major costs.

The grant agreement will include details of the evidence you may need to provide when you achieve certain milestones in your project. This may include evidence related to eligible expenditure.

If requested, you will need to provide the agreed evidence along with your progress reports.

You must keep payment records of all eligible expenditure, and be able to explain how the costs relate to the agreed project activities. At any time, we may ask you to provide records of the expenditure you have paid. If you do not provide these records when requested, the expense may not qualify as eligible expenditure.

At the end of the project, you may be required to provide an independent financial audit of all eligible expenditure from the project, up to a maximum of 1 per cent of total eligible project expenditure.

Labour expenditure

Eligible labour expenditure for the grant covers the direct labour costs of employees you directly employ on the core elements of the project. We consider a person an employee when you pay them a regular salary or wage, out of which you make regular tax instalment deductions.

We consider costs for technical, but not administrative, project management activities eligible labour expenditure. However, we limit these costs to 10 per cent of the total amount of eligible labour expenditure claimed.

We do not consider labour expenditure for general leadership or administrative staff (such as CEOs, CFOs, accountants and lawyers) as eligible expenditure, even if they are doing project management tasks. The salary costs of the relevant SME Export Hub Manager counts as eligible expenditure for the purposes of this grant opportunity.

Eligible salary expenditure includes an employee's total remuneration package as stated on their Pay As You Go (PAYG) Annual Payment Summary submitted to the Australian Taxation Office (ATO). We consider salary-sacrificed superannuation contributions as part of an employee's salary package if the amount is more than what the Superannuation Guarantee requires.

The maximum salary for an employee, director or shareholder, including packaged components that you can claim through the grant is \$175,000 per financial year.

For periods of the project that do not make a full financial year, you must reduce the maximum salary amount you claim proportionally.

You can only claim eligible salary costs when an employee is working directly on agreed project activities during the agreed project period.

Labour on-costs and administrative overhead

You may increase eligible salary costs by an additional 30 per cent allowance to cover on-costs such as employer paid superannuation, payroll tax, workers compensation insurance, and overheads such as office rent and the provision of computers.

You should calculate eligible salary costs using the formula below:

$$\text{Eligible salary costs} = \text{Annual salary package} \times \frac{\text{Weeks spent on project}}{52 \text{ weeks}} \times \text{percentage of time spent on project}$$

You cannot calculate labour costs by estimating the employee's worth. If you have not exchanged money (either by cash or bank transactions) we will not consider the cost eligible.

Evidence you will need to provide can include:

- details of all personnel working on the project, including name, title, function, time spent on the project and salary
- ATO payment summaries, pay slips and employment contracts.

Contract expenditure

Eligible contract expenditure is the cost of any agreed project activities that you contract others to do. These can include contracting:

- another organisation
- an individual who is not an employee, but engaged under a separate contract.

All contractors must have a written contract prior to starting any project work—for example, a formal agreement, letter or purchase order which specifies:

- the nature of the work they perform
- the applicable fees, charges and other costs payable.

Invoices from contractors must contain:

- a detailed description of the nature of the work
- the hours and hourly rates involved
- any specific plant expenses paid.

Invoices must directly relate to the agreed project, and the work must qualify as an eligible expense. The costs must also be reasonable and appropriate for the activities performed.

We will require evidence of contractor expenditure that may include:

- an exchange of letters (including email) setting out the terms and conditions of the proposed contract work
- purchase orders
- supply agreements
- invoices and payment documents.

You must ensure all project contractors keep a record of the costs of their work on the project. We may require you to provide a contractor's records of their costs of doing project work. If you cannot provide these records, the relevant contract expense may not qualify as eligible expenditure.

Travel and accommodation expenditure

Eligible travel expenditure may include:

- domestic travel limited to the reasonable cost of accommodation and transportation required to conduct agreed project and collaboration activities in Australia
- international travel for hub facilitators limited to the reasonable cost of accommodation and transportation to conduct agreed project activities overseas and to accompany participating export hub SMEs overseas. Travel for participating SMEs will not be considered as eligible expenditure. All international travel expenses must be approved by the program delegate prior to travel.

Eligible air transportation is limited to the economy class fare for each sector travelled; where non-economy class air transport is used only the equivalent of an economy fare for that sector is eligible expenditure. Where non-economy class air transport is used, the grantee will require evidence showing what an economy air fare costs at the time of travel.

Other eligible expenditure

Other eligible expenditures for the project may include:

- financial auditing of project expenditure up to a maximum of 1 per cent of total eligible project expenditure
- contingency costs up to a maximum of 10 per cent of the eligible project costs. Note that we make payments based on actual costs incurred.
- licensing fees to deliver third party services and tools to improve firms competitiveness and export capability
- cost of research activities directly related to the following eligible activities:
 - identifying emerging needs of export markets to inform and facilitate commercially focussed industry-research collaboration to address those needs
 - providing market intelligence about export opportunities and facilitation of opportunities for participating SMEs to access global supply chains.

Other specific expenditures may be eligible as determined by the program delegate.

Evidence you need to supply can include supplier contracts, purchase orders, invoices and supplier confirmation of payments.

Appendix C. Ineligible expenditure

This section provides guidelines on what we consider ineligible expenditure.

The program delegate may impose limitations or exclude expenditure, or further include some ineligible expenditure listed in these guidelines in a grant agreement or otherwise by notice to you.

Examples of ineligible expenditure include:

- cost of research activities, unless they are directly related to the following eligible activities:
 - identifying emerging needs of export markets to inform and facilitate commercially focussed industry-research collaboration to address those needs
 - providing market intelligence about export opportunities and facilitation of opportunities for participating SMEs to access global supply chains).
- cost of activities, equipment or supplies that are already being supported through other sources
- costs incurred before a grant agreement is executed
- any in-kind contributions
- financing costs, including interest
- capital expenditure for the purchase of assets such as office furniture and equipment, motor vehicles, computers, printers or photocopiers and the construction, renovation or extension of facilities such as buildings and laboratories
- costs involved in the purchase or upgrade/hire of software (including user licences) and ICT hardware (unless it directly relates to the project)
- costs such as rental, renovations and utilities
- non-project-related staff training and development costs
- insurance costs (the participants must effect and maintain adequate insurance or similar coverage for any liability arising as a result of its participation in funded activities)
- debt financing
- costs related to obtaining resources used on the project, including interest on loans, job advertising and recruiting, and contract negotiations
- depreciation of plant and equipment beyond the life of the project
- maintenance costs
- costs of purchasing, leasing, depreciation of, or development of land
- infrastructure development costs, including development of road, rail, port or fuel delivery networks
- costs associated with site preparation activities
- opportunity costs relating to any production losses due to allocating resources to the agreed grant project
- routine operational expenses, including communications, accommodation, office computing facilities, printing and stationery, postage, legal and accounting fees and bank charges
- costs related to preparing the grant application, preparing any project reports (except costs of independent audit reports we require) and preparing any project variation requests
- travel or accommodation costs that exceed 10 per cent of total project costs except where otherwise approved by the program delegate.

This list is not exhaustive and applies only to the expenditure of the grant funds. Other costs may be ineligible where we decide that they do not directly support the achievement of the planned outcomes for the project or that they are contrary to the objective of the program.

You must ensure you have adequate funds to meet the costs of any ineligible expenditure associated with the project.