



AUSTRALIAN AID: FRIENDSHIP GRANTS FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Updated 27 August 2018

Due to some applicants experiencing technical difficulties when submitting their application, the SmartyGrants system has been reopened and will close at 6:00pm (AEST) on Tuesday 28 August 2018. Applications must be submitted through SmartyGrants before this time. There will be no further extensions.

Overview

Why was this program established?

- Australian community organisations such as charities, service clubs and diaspora organisations have a record of providing development assistance in the Indo-Pacific region. They have unique, on-the-ground experience in international development and have forged strong relationships and people-to-people links with local communities overseas.
- The Friendship Grants program will harness this experience and build on these connections by providing grants to high-performing organisations that will expand or enhance their existing international development activities, including through new projects.

Will the grant funding be ongoing?

- No. The Friendship Grants will provide one-off funding only. Grants must be expended within 12 months.
- However, an organisation can apply for funding in all three, annual grant rounds.

Eligibility Questions

In which countries can the grants be used to support aid work?

- Friendship Grants can be used to support aid activities in countries within the Indo-Pacific region which are eligible for overseas development assistance.
- Activities will not be funded in regions and locations in countries that are listed as “do not travel” or “reconsider your need to travel” on [Smartraveller](#).
 - Activities in locations which are listed as “exercise normal safety precautions” and “exercise a high degree of caution” are eligible Activity locations.
- A full list of eligible countries can be found on the DFAT website: www.dfat.gov.au/FriendshipGrants.

Why are the grants restricted to the Indo-Pacific region?

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- The *Foreign Policy White Paper* focuses on strengthening Australia’s connections in the Indo-Pacific region.
 - Strong community-to-community linkages in the Indo-Pacific will support Australia’s economic prosperity and stability.

What type of activities will be funded through the grants?

The grants will fund development activities:

- that strengthen an overseas community’s capacity or socio-economic situation; and
- that build on existing activities to improve the lives of poor and vulnerable people in a way that is sustainable.

For more information on eligible activities, refer to the Friendship Grants Guidelines, section 6.1.

What can the grant funds not be used for?

There are limitations on what sort of activities or expenditure items the grant money can be used for.

Some examples of activities that are not eligible include:

- research, conferences, seminars, training events and/or exchanges to Australia or a third country;
- costs associated with participants attending events (e.g. travel, accommodation and per diems);
- substantial freight of goods and supplies to the overseas country;
- major capital expenditure (purchase of buildings or land);
- activities in locations listed as “do not travel” or “reconsider your need to travel” on [Smartraveller](#);
- activities that involve unskilled volunteers supporting orphanages or residential care institutions;
- evangelism or missionary outreach, or similar activities by political organisations; or
- activities that are determined to be contrary to the interests of the Commonwealth of Australia.

Can the grants be used to support humanitarian and disaster relief activities?

- No. Humanitarian and disaster relief often requires an immediate and urgent response.
- Disaster relief needs to arrive as soon as possible after the event and given the timeframes around Friendship Grants, they are not suitable to fund humanitarian activities.
- However, funding can be used to support activities to build long-term resilience.

Can the grants be used to fund activities that have already been paid for?

- No. Activity items that have already been paid for or ordered are not eligible for funding.

How do I register my organisation with the Australian Charities & Not-for-Profits Commission (ACNC)?

- For information about how to become registered with the ACNC, please visit the [ACNC website](#).



An organisation has been delivering international development in the target country for ten months as of June 2018. Is the organisation eligible to apply?

- As long as the organisation has been delivering international development in the target country for 12 months by the application closing date (i.e. 27 August 2018) and they meet all other eligibility criteria, they are eligible to apply.

Can Australian local government associations and local governments (councils) apply?

- As per the [Friendship Grants Guidelines](#) section 5.1, local government associations are eligible to apply.
- Local governments (councils) are also eligible to apply.

Are training programs in the partner country, such as leadership development programs, eligible for funding?

- Training programs held in the partner country (in-country) are eligible. However, applicants applying for in-country training programs should make it clear how the training is part of their broader international development work.
- Training members of an Australian organisation or bringing in-country representatives to Australia for training are not eligible activities.
- Applicants should note that costs associated with participants attending training is not eligible.

Are universities eligible to apply?

- A university entity is eligible to apply if it is not-for-profit and registered with the Australian Charities and Not-for-Profits Commission, a state or territory regulator, or the Office of the Registrar of Indigenous Corporations, and meets all other eligibility criteria.

My organisation is applying for a Friendship Grant and I am proposing to implement the Activity with a number of partners who may be providing funds. Do eligibility requirements apply to these proposed partners or just my organisation?

- An organisation must apply for a Friendship Grant in its own right.
- It can implement the grant in collaboration with Australian partners. These partners need not meet all the eligibility requirements.
- Irrespective of its partners, the applicant organisation is responsible for meeting all conditions of the Friendship Grant.
- The strength of the proposed partnership and implementation arrangements will be taken into account in assessment following initial eligibility checks.

Are audited financial statements required for all applicants?

- Yes. The audit of the accounts should be performed by an accountant independent of your organisation's management group.
- DFAT has to strike a balance between the need to manage the significant risks associated with providing taxpayer funds to new partners operating in what can be challenging environments overseas, and our genuine interest in bringing high-performing community groups into the Australian aid program.

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- In the first round of the new Friendship Grants program, we have struck that balance in favour of requiring audited financial statements for all applicants.
 - DFAT will review the need for this requirement in subsequent rounds of the Friendship Grants.

My organisation does not have audited financial statements for 2017/18. Can audited financial statements from previous years be provided?

- If your 2017/18 statements are not yet available, your 2016/17 statements will be acceptable.

Can I get an exemption from some of the eligibility requirements?

- In accordance with the Commonwealth Grants Rules and Guidelines, DFAT has an obligation to ensure the grants process is fair and equitable.
- This means that to be eligible, all applications must be compliant with the Friendship Grants Guidelines.
- Accordingly, we are not able to grant organisations an exemption to the eligibility requirements.

Can I provide additional documents and information not requested in the Application Form to support my application?

- In accordance with the Commonwealth Grants Rules and Guidelines, DFAT has an obligation to ensure the grants process is fair and equitable.
- This means that only the material requested in the Grant Guidelines and submitted through the Application Form can be used to inform the evaluation.
- Accordingly, we are not able to accept any other supporting information.

Applying for a Friendship Grant

How do I apply for a grant?

- To apply in Round 1, you will need to register on DFAT's online grant management system, SmartyGrants, and complete and submit the [online application form](#) before the closing date (2:00pm AEST on Monday 27 August 2018).
- Guidance documents, including a 'How to Apply' video, can be found on the [Friendship Grants website](#).
- It is your responsibility to ensure your application is complete, accurate and submitted in accordance with the Guidelines and the Application Form.

If the selection process identifies unintentional errors in your application, DFAT, at its discretion, may contact you to ask that you correct or explain the information.

Will the application process be time consuming and difficult for organisations?

- As Australian Aid: Friendship Grants will use taxpayers' money, there needs to be appropriate levels of accountability and transparency.

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- DFAT has tried to make the application process as easy as possible for organisations to apply. Resources, including a 'How to Apply' video and the Friendship Grant Guidelines, are available on the DFAT website to explain the program and the application process. Questions can also be answered through FriendshipGrants@dfat.gov.au or by calling +61 2 5104 0633 between 9am to 5pm AEST, Monday to Friday.

What is the closing time and date for applications?

- The Application Form must be submitted by **2.00pm AEST on Monday 27 August 2018**. It is recommended that you submit your application well before the closing time and date.
- Late applications will not be accepted.

Can organisations apply for more than one grant?

- No. Organisations can only submit one application per round.
- An organisation is identified by its Australian Business Number (ABN). This means DFAT can only accept one application per ABN.
- Different branches or affiliates of the same organisation are welcome to apply, but must use separate ABNs.
- If an organisation submits multiple applications using the one ABN, DFAT will contact the organisation after applications close asking it to confirm which application should proceed for evaluation.
- However, an organisation can apply for funding in all three grant rounds.

Can I apply for multiple Activities/projects in the one application?

- No. Organisations can only apply for one Activity per application.

Can I apply for multiple countries in one application?

- Yes, provided:
 - the same Activity is being implemented in each country;
 - the organisation has been delivering international development in each of the target countries for a minimum of 12 months, and
 - the appropriate in-country authority can be demonstrated for each country.

How much money can organisations apply for?

- Between AUD\$30,000 and AUD\$60,000 per round.

Can I start my Activity before the grant is awarded?

- No. The Activity start date must be after the award date. Friendship Grant funding cannot be used to fund activities that were not approved in your Friendship Grant application.

Can I change my Activity after the grant is awarded?

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- DFAT recognises that unexpected events may affect the progress of an Activity. If absolutely necessary, you may request an Activity variation. For example to extend the timeframe for completing the Activity. DFAT reserves the right to accept or reject such a request.

Do organisations need to contribute any money towards the Activity?

- Yes. Successful grantees will be required to contribute \$1 for every \$5 of Friendship Grant funding (matched at 20 per cent). This match can be either financial or in-kind, including volunteer hours. In-kind contributions must be converted into a dollar value in the application.

The question in the Application Form ‘What is the population (to the nearest thousand) of the town/city in which your organisation is located?’ – is this referring to the Australia or the target country?

- This refers to the population of the town or city in Australia.

My organisation does not have a specific head office as we have volunteers across Australia. How should I answer the question, ‘What is the population (to the nearest thousand) of the town/city in which your organisation is located?’

- Please provide the population size of the town or city or where your organisation is registered or where your main base of operations is.

How do you calculate volunteer hours as the in-kind contribution?

- An in-kind contribution to the budget of an Activity proposed for a Friendship Grant can include a dollar value of the hours or days that the organisation’s volunteers anticipate working to implement the Activity.
- As part of a Friendship Grant application, the organisation should provide a total dollar value of this contribution and include the basis on which it makes that calculation (i.e. hourly or daily rate for a specific skill set that a volunteer or volunteers are providing and the number of input hours or days anticipated).
- Organisations that are successful in receiving a Friendship Grant must keep a record of these inputs as they will be required for reporting and may be requested by DFAT.

The application asks me to demonstrate support from an ‘in-country authority’. What does this mean?

- An in-country authority is a competent authority in the country where the Activity will be carried out.
- This will most likely be a government authority at either the local, provincial, or national level.
- We are looking for assurance that the government in the country you will be operating in does not object to your organisation working with your partner organisation(s) in its area of jurisdiction.
- You may wish to ask your partner organisation(s) to seek this written assurance on your behalf.

Does the letter of support from an in-country authority need to be in English?

- Yes. If the letter of support from an in-country authority is in a language other than English, DFAT requires that an English translation be provided, as well as the original.
- While DFAT does not insist on the translation being undertaken by an accredited translator, organisations are responsible for ensuring the accuracy of any information provided in their application as applications need to be certified at the end of the online form.

The Application asks me to provide a referee from in-country. Does the referee need to be able to speak English?

- Yes. The referee from in-country must be able to speak English and must have current knowledge and understanding of the organisation’s work in the community where the proposed Activity is to take place.

Australian community organisations are required to provide evidence of registration with the ACNC, a state or territory regulator, or ORIC. What is meant by evidence and what is a state or territory regulator?

- If you are registered with the [ACNC](#), you should attach your charity certificate.
- A state or territory regulator is the relevant authority in your state or territory that is responsible for the incorporation of associations. State a territory regulators are:

State/Territory	Website	Phone
ACT	Access Canberra	13 22 81
NSW	NSW Fair Trading	13 32 20
NT	Licensing NT	(08) 8999 5511
SA	Consumer and Business Services	131 882
QLD	Office for Fair Trading	13 74 68
TAS	Consumer, Buildings and Occupational Services	1300 65 44 99
VIC	Consumer Affairs Victoria	1300 55 81 81
WA	Department of Commerce	1300 136 237

- If you are registered with a state or territory regulator, you should attach your confirmation of incorporation as your evidence.
- Please note, a fundraising certificate is different to the confirmation of registration and as such should not be attached.
- If you are registered with [ORIC](#), you should attach your certificate of registration.

What evidence do local governments (councils) need to submit with their application (in lieu of evidence of registration with the ACNC, a state or territory regulator or ORIC)?

- To show they are compliant with relevant regulations and therefore eligible for a Friendship Grant, councils should provide a letter signed by their mayor stating that they are not under administration or investigation by the relevant state or territory government.

My organisation does not have 'members'. What should I put for our response to 'Number of members and supporters in your organisation'?

- The number of members and supporters should show the level of support you receive from members of the public for your organisation.
- An approximate number for supporters could include the amount of people on mailing lists and social media followers.

What does my organisation's 'Code of Conduct' need to contain?

- A Code of Conduct should be tailored to the values and principles of an organisation.
- The Code of Conduct applies to the behaviour of your staff and volunteers in Australia and in any other country where your organisation operates.
- The types of areas addressed within a Code of Conduct might include responsible stewardship of resources, fraud and corruption prevention, occupational health and safety, conflict of interest, privacy, professional relationships, child protection, protecting confidential information, record keeping, and intellectual property.
- The Code of Conduct should be succinct.
- The Code of Conduct does not need to be in any specific file format.

If my Activity involves some construction work, what sort of environmental safeguards do I need to consider?

- Please take note of DFAT's [Environmental and Social Safeguard Policy for the Aid Program](#) (policy pages 8-9).

I have made a mistake in my application / I would like to add more information to my application but I have already submitted it. Can I go back and change it?

- Yes. Provided applications have not yet closed (i.e. before 2:00pm AEST, 27 August 2018), you can ask to reopen and revise your application by emailing FriendshipGrants@dfat.gov.au.
- If you reopen your application, please ensure you submit your revised application before the application deadline (2:00pm AEST, 27 August 2018).

Who do I contact if I am having trouble using or submitting the Application Form?

- If you are having trouble completing or submitting the application form, contact the Friendship Grants team at FriendshipGrants@dfat.gov.au or on +61 2 5104 0633 between 9:00am and 5:00pm AEST, Monday to Friday.

Selection Process

How will grants be selected?

- The Selection Criteria is outlined in the Friendship Grants Guidelines, section 8.3.

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- Grants will be awarded through a merit-based selection process by an independent Evaluation Committee.
 - Funding will only go to Australian community organisations with a proven track-record of effective international development.
 - Organisations will need to meet specific requirements to participate in this program, such as complying with child protection and safeguard policies.
 - Applications will be assessed through a holistic approach drawing on all information provided.
 - The program will aim to reflect the geographic and cultural diversity of Australia.

When will the grants be awarded?

- The first grants will be awarded from November 2018.

Can I appeal the decision in relation to the outcome of the selection process?

- Decisions made about funding in a Government selection process are final and there is no mechanism for appeal.
- General feedback will be provided following the announcement of successful applicants.
- Due to the anticipated volume of applications, DFAT will not be able to provide individualised feedback to unsuccessful applications.

Will DFAT cover the cost of attending the proposed Friendship Grants Bootcamp in December 2018 and the proposed Learning Forum in December 2019, including travel and accommodation?

- If your organisation is successful, Friendship Grant funding can be used to pay travel and accommodation costs for one representative from your organisation to attend the Bootcamp and Learning Forum.
- Please note that up to two representatives can attend the Bootcamp and Learning Forum, but only one can be paid for from Friendship Grant funds.
- This expense would be included under Administration costs in the Application Form.

Where can I find more information?

- For more information, visit www.dfat.gov.au/FriendshipGrants, email FriendshipGrants@dfat.gov.au or call our hotline at +61 2 5104 0633 between 9:00am and 5:00pm (AEST), Monday to Friday.
- The Friendship Grants team will aim to respond to all enquiries within five working days.

Clarification

The last sentence on Page 9 of the Friendship Grants Guidelines (*Applications from consortia are welcome, provided there is a lead applicant who is the main driver and the other entities are eligible as per the list above*) has been removed.

Reminders

- All applicants are reminded to carefully review their applications for accuracy and completeness before submitting. As described in the Friendship Grants Guidelines and these FAQs, all Friendship Grant applications must:
 - be submitted through the online grants management system (SmartyGrants);
 - correctly address all Eligibility Criteria questions; and
 - correctly attach the required Eligibility Criteria documents including your organisation's:
 - registration document (*not Fundraising Certificate*);
 - bank statement or bank letter from last three months stating registered address;
 - letter of support from an in-country authority; and
 - financial report (i.e. annual report) showing audited accounts for last financial year.
- An organisation can only submit one Friendship Grant application per round. An organisation is identified by its Australian Business Number (ABN). This means DFAT can only accept one application per ABN. Different branches or affiliates of the same organisation are welcome to apply but must use separate ABNs.
- If you have already submitted your application, you are encouraged to review it to ensure that the application is complete, the eligibility questions are correct and the right documents have been attached. If you believe you have made a mistake in your application you may email the Friendship Grant Unit at FriendshipGrants@dfat.gov.au and ask for your application to be re-opened so you can make any necessary revisions.
- To resume or review your application, please log in with your registered email address and password on the online grants management page.