



Regional Food Producers Innovation and Productivity Program Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) (Updated 19 January 2009)

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You say these are competitive grants. What is the priority for the assessment criteria? How do I make my application more competitive?

I cannot fit all my information into the space provided in the Expression-of-Interest form. Can I attach more detail?

I am requesting less than \$50 000. Am I eligible?

I need more than \$2 million. Am I eligible?

Can I use 'in-kind' (non-financial) contributions as part of my matched-funding requirements?

If I am awarded funding, will my grant be paid up-front, when I sign my funding agreement?

Can a start-up company apply? What financials would we have to supply?

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My project is designed to improve my competitiveness with respect to other domestic producers. Will I be eligible for a grant?

What about labour costs and salaries—can I include them in my project costings?

If I receive funding, is there a time limit for when I must complete my project?

I work in the pet food industry. Can I submit an application?

I would like to trial a new species of plant for use in Australia. Is this eligible for funding?

If my project generates intellectual property (IP), am I required to make it available to the wider food industry?

Can I submit my financials in hard copy, as I do not have them electronically and I do not want to retype them?

We are proposing very new ideas. How can I be sure the information that I provide to you will not land in my competitor's hands?

I think I am going to miss the deadline. Can I get an extension?

How long will assessment of my application take?

How will I know if you received my application?

Why do I need to register my interest?

Registering your interest is a time-saving exercise—both for you and the department. It prevents prospective applicants from expending unnecessary time and effort preparing an expression-of-interest when they, or their project, may not be eligible for funding. It also allows the department to gauge the number of applications that are likely to be submitted and plan accordingly to ensure they are processed as quickly and efficiently as possible, enabling funding decisions to be made more rapidly.

My business is located in, or very close to, a capital city—am I eligible to apply for funding?

Yes, you may be located anywhere in Australia. However, your project will be assessed on the benefits that it will deliver to the regional food industry. Projects that are based in capital cities will need to clearly demonstrate strong flow-on benefits for regional food producers in order to be competitive with projects based in non-metropolitan areas.

I'm a farmer/fisher—am I eligible to apply?

Yes, provided your project is based around eligible activities such as the design, application or adoption of new food processing or value-adding technologies. The program does not fund farming or fishing activities, such as planting, growing, fertilising, irrigating, breeding and genetics, or catching.

For the purpose of the program, what is the definition of 'food'?

Food is defined as any substance, whether processed, semi-processed or raw, that is intended for human consumption and is sold to a consumer for immediate consumption, or with minimal preparation. This includes drink, chewing gum and any substance that has been used in the manufacture, preparation or treatment of 'food', but does not include cosmetics or tobacco or substances used only as pharmaceuticals.

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Do I need to submit quotes for project expenditure to support my application?

Yes. If you are invited to submit an application, we will expect you to substantiate the expenditure figures. There is no need to submit quotes with your expression-of-interest, but your estimated budget should be realistic.

If you are invited to submit a full application, ensure that you provide sufficient detail on each item you will purchase or activity you will undertake. Refer to the Supplementary Information document for further detail on eligible expenditure.

Are there taxation implications associated with receiving grant funding?

Yes, in most instances grant funding will have taxation implications for your business. Before applying, you are advised to consult a tax professional about the taxation implications associated with receiving grant funding.

Are research and development (R&D) activities eligible for funding?

Yes, projects based around the design of new food processing/production technologies to proof-of-concept through to implementation and commercialisation are eligible for funding. Broad scale, 'blue sky' R&D, however, is not eligible.

I'm seeking funding to help commercialise a new food product—would that be eligible?

Sorry, projects based around the development of new product lines that do not involve the development or adoption of new technologies are not eligible for funding.

I have more than one project proposal. Can I make multiple applications?

Yes. If you wish to apply for two or more projects, each will need to be on separate expression-of-interest forms and each will be assessed on its merit against all the other applications in the round.

If your projects are 'linked', that is, the outcomes of each project would be used in combination, but you would be happy for either to be funded in isolation if funding of the larger, combined project is not favoured, you should:

- Put in two separate expressions-of-interest
- Indicate the linkage in a covering email with each expression-of-interest

We will assess linked projects as a combined project in the first instance and then as two separate projects, if necessary.

My business has received government funding in the past for a different project—will this affect my eligibility for funding under this program?

No, previous grant application success will not affect the eligibility of your project, provided there is no funding 'overlap' between the projects. Please be aware that no other sources of government funding can account for any expenditure within a project.

You say these are competitive grants. What is the priority for the assessment criteria? How do I make my application more competitive?

The merit criteria against which all applications will be assessed are listed in the Program Guidelines. The over-arching objective of the program is to assist the regional food producing industry to improve productivity and profitability through innovation. Accordingly, regional food industry benefits will be given the highest priority in the assessment of applications.

Refer to the Supplementary Information document for specific examples of expected outcomes.

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I cannot fit all my information into the space provided in the Expression-of-Interest form. Can I attach more detail?

Your Expression-of-Interest should be clear, concise and convincing and, as such, we request that you don't attach additional information. All applicants are given the same amount of space to present an overview of their proposed projects and this space is fixed; you should be able to present a convincing argument in the allowable space.

I am requesting less than \$50 000. Am I eligible?

Yes. While it is anticipated that most grants will generally be between \$50 000 and \$2 million, smaller grant requests will be considered on their merits.

I need more than \$2 million. Am I eligible?

Yes. While it is anticipated that most grants will generally be between \$50 000 and \$2 million, larger projects will be considered on their merits. Bear in mind, however, that the Advisory Panel will consider the value for money that projects represent, particularly in terms of the outcomes they stand to deliver to the regional food industry.

Can I use 'in-kind' (non-financial) contributions as part of my matched-funding requirements?

No, grantees are required to match program funding with cash contributions.

If I am awarded funding, will my grant be paid up-front, when I sign my funding agreement?

No, the funding is paid retrospectively i.e. you are required to fund the up-front costs of the project until an agreed milestone is achieved. On acquittal of the milestone, you will receive a pro-rata payment for that milestone.

Can a start-up company apply? What financials would we have to supply?

Yes, a start-up company can apply, but your ability to fund your share of the project will be very carefully scrutinised. You will have to demonstrate, without relying on loans against personal assets, that you have, or will be able to acquire, the cash required. Reliance on future sales will not be acceptable.

My project is designed to improve my competitiveness with respect to other domestic producers. Will I be eligible for a grant?

The Australian Government is unlikely to provide grant funding for projects with the sole intent of gaining a competitive edge over local, domestic competitors. You should be able to demonstrate an advantage for the regional food industry, the nation or both.

What about labour costs and salaries—can I include them in my project costings?

Yes, but only those labour costs directly linked to the project can be included; program funding cannot be used to fund your usual, day-to-day activities. Please refer to the Supplementary Information document for more details on eligible staff labour costs.

If I receive funding, is there a time limit for when I must complete my project?

Yes, the maximum project length is three years. Regardless of your project's commencement date, all projects must be completed by 30 April 2012. Maximum project lengths will necessarily decrease from round to round. We will advise the maximum project length for each round.

I work in the pet food industry. Can I submit an application?

Sorry, no. The program's definition of 'food' is limited to items for human consumption only.

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I would like to trial a new species of plant for use in Australia. Is this eligible for funding?

Sorry, no. While the program covers food and food processing, it does not cover plant and animal species used to make food.

If my project generates intellectual property (IP), am I required to make it available to the wider food industry?

No, not necessarily. If your project involves the design of new technologies or the innovative re-design of existing production/processing lines, you are not required to disseminate the resulting IP to the wider food industry. However, it may strengthen your application if you are willing to do so.

If your project is based around the adoption of technology, where there is little or no intellectual property generated, it will be a requirement of the project that you disseminate any lessons learned to the wider food industry.

In all cases, you retain ownership and control of all IP generated from the project.

Can I submit my financials in hard copy, as I do not have them electronically and I do not want to retype them?

At the expression-of-interest stage, the data required is minimal and shouldn't represent too much difficulty in entering it. At the application stage, we will require hard copies to verify the information, however, for ease of assessment, it would be appreciated if you could submit the data in the format requested.

We are proposing very new ideas. How can I be sure the information that I provide to you will not land in my competitor's hands?

All expressions-of-interest and applications will be handled in strict confidence. Information will only be shared with those necessary for us to assess and make a decision about the merits of your application. If it is necessary to share some or all of your application with people external to the department, (for example, technical experts or financial consultants) this will only be done with your permission and under conditions of confidentiality. All members of the program's Independent Advisory Panel will be bound by confidentiality agreements and will only have access to information where no conflict-of-interest exists.

I think I am going to miss the deadline. Can I get an extension?

In most cases, no. For each round, we would expect, as a minimum, to receive your expression-of-interest prior to close-of-business on the closing date. Applications are due in their entirety on the date given in your letter of invitation.

Any expression-of-interest or application received after the nominated cut-off dates will automatically be considered in the next round.

How long will assessment of my application take?

We will contact you within 21 days of the closing of each expression of interest round to advise you whether you will be invited to submit an application, or whether there are any unforeseen delays in assessment. If there are delays, we will advise you of our best estimate for completion of the assessment.

Consideration of applications is expected to take approximately 90 calendar days from the closing date, again, depending on the volume of applications received.

How will I know if you received my application?

We will be acknowledging receipt of all expressions-of-interest and applications, either when we receive them or a few days after the closing date of the round. If you submit your application close to the closing date of a round, and we have not acknowledged receipt within

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one week, please contact program staff on 1800 631 715. If you submit your application early in a round and you have not heard from us within two weeks, please contact program staff.