



**Business**

AUSTRALIAN SMALL BUSINESS  
ADVISORY SERVICES PROGRAMME

Delivered by AusIndustry™



Customer Information Guide

# Australian Small Business Advisory Services Programme

## Northern Australia Tourism Initiative

This customer information guide commences on 09 April 2019 and replaces the previous guide that commenced in February 2016

**Closing date: Wednesday 30 March 2016 – 5pm Australian Eastern Daylight Savings Time**

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# 1 Australian Small Business Advisory Services programme (ASBAS) overview and objective

The Australian Government is committed to improving the ability of established not-for-profit small business advisory service providers to deliver low cost small business advisory and information services.

Funding under the Australian Small Business Advisory Services programme (ASBAS) will be provided to eligible, established not-for-profit small business advisory service providers, through competitive, merit based funding rounds. Funding is intended to supplement existing funding arrangements from other sources, rather than replace existing funding.

The ASBAS programme aims to improve the capacity of established not-for profit small business advisory service providers, delivering low cost small business advisory and information services. ASBAS will enable providers to boost their productivity, and allow them to better achieve their goals of supporting small business people to improve their competitiveness and their capacity to commercially deal with corporations.

## 2 Northern Australia Tourism Initiative round

The objective of the Northern Australia Tourism Initiative round is to improve the capacity of established, not-for-profit small business advisory service providers to deliver low cost small business advisory and information services to tourism small businesses and tourism small business intenders in northern Australia, whose products and/or services are or will be used by tourists (ASBAS tourism clients).

This competitive, merit based funding round will focus on the capacity of providers to deliver low cost business advisory services to ASBAS tourism clients.

The round will focus on six tourism streams:

1. Funding avenues and financial analysis
2. Building your business
3. Making the most of your talent and team
4. Management capabilities
5. Digital engagement implementation
6. Tourism ready

The 2016 funding round aims to improve the accessibility, volume and quality of low cost business advisory services across the six tourism streams. Further details are outlined in Section 11 of this Customer Information Guide.

## 3 Grant amount and grant period

In April 2016, the Australian Government committed up to \$1.4 million per year, over three years for the Northern Australia Tourism Initiative round of the ASBAS programme.

In March 2019, the Government committed additional funding of up to \$600,000 in 2019-20 to support the delivery of services by existing grantees for a further six months in each region.

Individual grants in the vicinity of \$200,000 per year will be available to eligible, established not-for-profit small business advisory service providers. The level of grant funding does not limit

expenditure on the specified project. Applicants are encouraged to provide other cash or in-kind contributions to the project through their own or other sources.

Funding is intended to **supplement** and not replace existing funding arrangements from other sources. Activities funded under the proposed project are to be additional to 'business as usual' activities of an organisation.

## 4 Before applying

Before completing an application, please read all other relevant documents relating to the ASBAS Northern Australia Tourism Initiative round.

The relevant programme documentation includes:

- Factsheet
- Customer Information Guide
- Frequently Asked Questions
- Sample Funding Agreement.

All relevant Programme documents are available:

- on [business.gov.au](http://business.gov.au)
- by contacting the contact centre on 13 28 46. The contact centre is open Monday to Friday from 8am to 8pm nationally, excluding Australian National public holidays.

## 5 Who can apply?

The Northern Australia Tourism Initiative round is open to established, not-for-profit small business advisory service providers including eligible Registered Business Organisations with a current physical presence in northern Australia, capable of providing low cost small business advisory and information services to ASBAS tourism clients. A Registered Business Organisation is an incorporated, not-for-profit organisation that provides low cost services to small businesses to help them achieve productivity and/or competitiveness and can include organisations such as:

- Business Enterprise Centres
- Chambers of Commerce
- Industry Associations.

Established, not-for-profit small business advisory service providers are expected to:

- have a demonstrated history of providing small business advisory services to small businesses and intenders for some years
- be well connected with the business community in the region proposed to be serviced by the project
- be well connected to other relevant organisations, information sources and government agencies
- have a demonstrated capability of providing services tailored to ASBAS tourism clients
- have a demonstrated capability of providing services to Indigenous businesses
- have a current physical presence in northern Australia
- be organisationally stable
- be financially viable
- employ sufficient experienced staff to provide services across all six of the tourism streams across the entire region to be serviced by the project.

Applicants need to demonstrate how they can effectively deliver services to ASBAS tourism clients.

## 6 Eligibility requirements

Applicants must meet the following eligibility criteria:

- the organisation must be a constitutional corporation, that is:
  - a business conducted by a corporation within the meaning of [s51\(xx\) of the Australian Constitution](#), or
  - a business whose operations are entirely carried out in a Territory.

The definition of a constitutional corporation for the purposes of section 51(xx) of the Australian Constitution is in Appendix A.

- In addition, at the time of submitting an application for funding, applicants must also meet all of the following eligibility requirements:
  - be a corporation or body formed under Commonwealth law
  - be a not-for-profit organisation
  - have an Australian Business Number (ABN)
  - be a Registered Business Organisation
  - have a current physical presence in northern Australia.

## 7 Partnership applications

Applications from groups of organisations (referred to as 'partnership applications') are encouraged.

Partnerships enable expert collaboration that can address specific areas of need, such as geographical or specific business advisory skills, which meet the six tourism streams.

Examples of organisations forming a partnership could be:

- one not-for-profit organisation physically located in northern Australia partnering with one or more for-profit organisations or specialist advisory service providers or an industry association
- a group of not-for-profit organisations, at least one physically located in northern Australia, working together to service a region
- a not-for-profit organisation physically located in northern Australia partnering with organisations (either not-for-profit or for-profit) physically outside northern Australia to deliver both face-to-face and online services into a region in northern Australia.

A partnership application can only apply for funding of up to \$200,000 per year over three years and must identify one organisation as the 'lead organisation'.

The 'lead organisation' must meet all the eligibility criteria and submit the application on behalf of the partnership.

All other members of the partnership **must** be constitutional corporations.

The lead organisation in a partnership application will be responsible for the conduct and management of the entire project. They will be responsible for completing all progress and financial reporting required by the Commonwealth.

Lead organisations will be expected to formalise the partnership arrangements of the group in an appropriate manner (e.g. by letter of agreement signed by all parties) and to provide evidence of this to the Commonwealth.

Costs of formalising partnership arrangements can be considered as eligible expenditure as part of the 5 per cent of the project budget permitted to be allocated to 'administrative operational and minor infrastructure costs'. For more information see Appendix B.

## 8 Delivery of services

The Northern Australia Tourism Initiative will provide funding to eligible, not-for-profit small business advisory service providers assessed as most able to improve the accessibility, volume and quality of their low cost business advisory services within their defined region. Services are to be provided by small business advisory service providers to ASBAS tourism clients.

Funded projects are expected to support a range of service delivery mechanisms including:

- one-on-one tailored business advisory services
- face-to-face meetings
- virtual/online meetings
- small group training for up to 20 people at a time
- access to mentoring networks in the defined geographical region of the project.

Funded projects are expected to service a defined region in northern Australia consisting of a group of Local Government Areas. Applicants will be required to define the region to be serviced in the application form and must be able to explain how they have determined which Local Government Areas are included in their region, supporting this with evidence of need and demand.

Applicants will be required to cater to the need and demand for ASBAS services among ASBAS tourism clients in their defined region. Therefore, an ability to deliver innovative and flexible services, including mobile delivery, is encouraged. Funded service providers may also be required to implement and maintain the use of business diagnostic/analytical tools (e.g. Business Health Checks) to help tailor business advisory services to the needs of ASBAS tourism clients.

In order to ensure an integrated programme, funded service providers will be required to collaborate, network, share learnings and cross-refer clients to improve the effectiveness of the Tourism Initiative. Funded service providers will also be required to regularly provide feedback to the Australian Government on key issues and/or concerns raised by ASBAS tourism clients in their defined region.

Funded service providers are also expected to work with and through AusIndustry, including acceptance of referrals from the contact centre and, if applicable, to refer clients to other Australian Government programmes or agencies.

## 9 Key Performance Indicators

The Department of Jobs and Small Business will set key performance indicators (KPIs) for each project funded under the Northern Australia Tourism Initiative. Service providers will need to demonstrate they have improved the accessibility, volume and quality of low cost small business advisory services provided to ASBAS tourism clients in the defined region.

KPIs may include, but not necessarily be limited to the following:

- The use of networks to enhance the delivery of the small business advisory and information services.
- The results of the survey of ASBAS tourism clients assisted are utilised to drive the project's continuous improvement.
- The number of additional services to ASBAS tourism clients that are to be provided during the three (3) years of the project.

- 90 per cent of the ASBAS tourism clients accessing the additional services find them beneficial.
- 90 per cent of the ASBAS tourism clients, who find the additional services beneficial, apply the learning to their businesses or modify their business practices.
- 90 per cent of the ASBAS tourism clients, who find the additional services beneficial and apply the learnings, improve their business' confidence, productivity, sustainability and/or growth.
- 90 per cent of ASBAS tourism clients assisted by the project complete a business diagnostic.

## 10 The six tourism streams

Within each of the six tourism streams, there are a number of eligible activities as outlined below.

### 10.1 Funding avenues and financial analysis

The service provider must provide:

- independent information and guidance on available banking and finance products, how to present finance bids, effective cash flow management processes and financial data interpretation and referrals to accounting advice.

### 10.2 Building your business

The service provider must provide:

- diagnostic assessment of current business operations, followed by business planning advice that meets identified needs
- assistance in preparing marketing plans on promotional opportunities and advertising options
- guidance on entering new markets and the feasibility of new business ideas, including exporting products or services
- referrals to other providers that have specific experience in a given industry or business proposition.

### 10.3 Making the most of your talent and team

The service provider must provide:

- guidance on human resource strategies, including recruitment, employment and occupational health and safety (OH&S) requirements
- advisory service meetings and networking opportunities
- talent recruitment and retention tools
- training programmes to inform tourism small businesses and small business tourism intenders whose products and/or services are or will be used by tourists about significant new regulations and/or relevant Australian Government business initiatives.

### 10.4 Management capabilities

The service provider must provide:

- assistance with creating, reviewing and implementing business plans, assessing and improving supply-chain management, succession planning and creating security over leased premises or intellectual property
- assistance to access appropriate legal advice, including on licencing, retail tenancy, intellectual property and credit management.

## 10.5 Digital engagement implementation

The service provider must provide:

- advice and assistance on e-commerce take-up
- advice and assistance with information technology and broadband services issues
- advice on adopting technology concepts to assist with marketing, managing and growing ideas.

## 10.6 Tourism ready

The service provider must provide:

- advice on understanding different tourism markets and the potential of these markets to grow tourism businesses
- advice on developing businesses to target the preferences of tourists, including specific Asian markets
- advice on marketing products or services to tourists
- advice on resources available to improve knowledge on tourism markets
- advice about government assistance available to develop or promote businesses to tourists, including the tourism 2020 Strategy.

Applicants must outline how they will deliver each of the six tourism streams and are encouraged to consider how they might deliver services to audiences such as small business intenders, women, Indigenous people, people of culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds and home-based small and micro businesses.

Applicants will need to demonstrate that their business model for the delivery of services is:

- **relevant** – that is, it provides low cost business advisory services to contribute to maximising the productivity and/or competitiveness of participating ASBAS tourism clients
- **practical** – that is, oriented towards action learning for participating ASBAS tourism clients to build business skills and/or firm capability, and may include mentoring
- **flexible** – delivered in a manner that suits the participating ASBAS tourism clients
- **focused** – improves the business and/or financial management skills of the participating ASBAS tourism clients.

## 11 Eligible expenditure

Grant funding will only be provided for eligible expenditure on an approved project.

Project expenditure is only eligible if it is incurred between the project start and completion dates.

Applicants may start their project from the date they are notified that their application is successful. However, no responsibility will be taken for any expenditure until a funding agreement is in place. If an organisation chooses to start its project before a funding agreement is executed, it does so at its own risk and expense.

- For guidelines on eligible expenditure, see Appendix B.
- For a list of ineligible expenditure, see Appendix C.

## 12 How to apply

Applicants can only submit an application for Northern Australia Tourism Initiative during the funding round. The opening and closing dates for the round are published on [business.gov.au](http://business.gov.au).

## 12.1 Online application form

Applications for funding **must** be submitted online by the specified closing date and time. All information required for assessment must be provided by the specified closing date and time.

The online application form can be found at [business.gov.au](http://business.gov.au).

When applicants submit their online application, they will be provided with a receipt number and a link to a page where they can enter their email address to receive an acknowledgement email which will include a pdf copy of the completed application.

## 12.2 Late applications

Late applications will not be accepted.

## 12.3 Supporting documents

Applications must be final and complete when submitted and address all questions and all aspects of the merit criteria. It will not be possible to incorporate any new material or to make any significant changes to the application after submission.

Applicants should be aware that some questions and a number of attachments are mandatory and applications will not be able to be submitted without completing or attaching these items. The attachments provide important supporting evidence of claims made in the application. The attachments required are detailed in the application form.

The maximum size for each attachment is 2Mb. Where possible, attachments such as letters of support or financial statements should be condensed into a single document as only twenty (20) attachments are able to be uploaded to the form.

## 12.4 Difficulties with the online application form

If applicants experience difficulties completing and/or submitting an application online, they should contact the contact centre immediately by phoning **13 28 46** **before** the closing date and time. The contact centre is open from 8am to 8pm nationally (excluding Australian National public holidays).

Any information provided in an application that is considered intentionally misleading or inaccurate will be investigated.

# 13 The Merit Criteria

In addition to providing background information on the organisation and comprehensively describing the proposed project, including key activities/outputs and proposed use of grant funds, applicants must fully address each merit criterion in their application to be competitive. The prompts listed beneath each merit criterion indicate how applicants might demonstrate merit. All merit criteria are weighted equally.

## 13.1 Merit Criterion 1

**The extent to which the application demonstrates that there is a particular unmet need and/or demand for the proposed service and/or project in the area/sector within which it is intended to be conducted.**

In addressing this criterion, applicants will need to demonstrate:

- the need that the project is seeking to address in the defined region the organisation specifies
- the demand that the project is seeking to address in the defined region the organisation specifies

- how the project relates to, fits into, or will fill a gap in existing small business services in the region the organisation specifies.

## 13.2 Merit Criterion 2

**The extent to which the proposed service and/or projects will meet stated objectives and the level of risk to that success, including how risks will be addressed.**

In addressing this criterion, applicants will need to demonstrate their:

- ability and past track record in the delivery of high quality, low cost business advisory services, as they may relate to the six tourism streams, to small businesses and small business intenders, and provide two independent referees who can comment on the delivery of services
- experience in delivering small business advisory services to ASBAS tourism clients, including indigenous tourism small businesses and intenders
- pricing structure and how they define or determine 'low cost' advisory services for the purpose of the proposed project
- details of Commonwealth or State government funding received for projects delivering services to small businesses and small business intenders over the last three years
- means of ensuring accessibility of the services to ASBAS tourism clients in the defined region
- connections within the regional community, including evidence of how they have worked or will work collaboratively with other organisations in the defined region and relevant letters of support from the community
- means of ensuring visibility of the project across the defined region over the duration of the project
- availability of sufficient resources (such as facilities, equipment, other cash or in-kind funding for overheads and suitably qualified personnel as documented by CVs) to deliver quality services and outline the capacity and capability of key personnel
- means of ensuring continuous improvement in the delivery of services to ASBAS tourism clients through maintaining and updating the knowledge of personnel in their organisation
- organisation's financial situation and how this funding does not replace funding received from other sources and is providing for additional services
- plans to utilise current managerial, administrative and other support from the organisation to support delivery of the project
- governance structure and how the risk management plan for the project will support the appropriate management of the project.

## 13.3 Merit Criterion 3

**The extent to which the applicant demonstrates that the proposed service and/or project represents value for money for the Commonwealth.**

In addressing this criterion, applicants will need to:

- outline the projected outcomes (benefits or effects) of the project for the defined region
- outline how the outcomes will be evaluated or measured
- explain how the delivery of this high quality, low cost business advisory service represents value for money for the Australian Government.

Note: Applicants must provide specific evidence to substantiate their information or claims against the merit criteria where requested. Evidence required may include statistics, financial statements and/or evidence of appropriate corporate governance (e.g. active board oversight of the project and its activities, separation of duties).

## 14 Assessing applications

All applications will be assessed by AusIndustry within the Department of Industry, Innovation and Science.

The process is outlined below.

**Stage 1: Organisation eligibility** – if an organisation (or the lead organisation) meets all eligibility criteria in Section A and B of the application form, the application will proceed to Stage 2 merit criteria assessment.

If an application **does not** meet the eligibility criteria in Section A and B of the application form and is deemed ineligible, they will be advised in writing and the application will not be assessed further.

**Stage 2: Merit criteria assessment** - if the application is eligible, it will then be assessed against each of the three (3) merit criteria.

During the assessment process, AusIndustry reserves the right to:

- contact applicants in relation to their applications
- seek additional expertise, in evaluating the merits of the application
- seek additional references from internal and external sources
- verify information from external sources.

We will undertake a due diligence process on applicants likely to be recommended for funding to the Minister for Small Business. Background checks of recommended applicants may include financial viability, checks for qualifications and past professional conduct.

Applications that meet the objectives and requirements of these guidelines and each of the merit criteria to a high degree will, at the absolute discretion of the Minister for Small Business, be considered for funding support under the Programme.

Meeting the eligibility requirements and meeting the merit criteria does not guarantee that an offer of funding will be made. Only the most meritorious applications will be funded.

## 15 Final decision

The Minister for Small Business has overall responsibility for the ASBAS programme.

The Minister, having considered the advice and recommendations from the Department of Industry, Innovation and Science and the Department of Jobs and Small Business, will make the final decision on which applications will receive funding under the ASBAS programme. The Minister will decide:

- which applicants will be funded
- the level of funding offered
- the conditions of any funding offer.

All decisions are final and there will be no review of decisions.

If an applicant is successful, they will receive a written offer. An offer of funding may be subject to special conditions.

If an applicant is unsuccessful, they will be notified in writing and have the opportunity to discuss their application with AusIndustry and receive feedback.

## 16 If an application is successful

### 16.1 Funding agreement

By lodging an application for the ASBAS programme, applicants agree to accept the terms outlined in the sample funding agreement.

AusIndustry delivers the ASBAS programme on behalf of the Department of Jobs and Small Business.

If an organisation accepts the offer, it must enter into a funding agreement with the Commonwealth.

Successful applicants will have a specified time from the date of offer to execute a funding agreement with the Commonwealth. The Commonwealth may withdraw the offer if the funding agreement is not executed within this time.

The Commonwealth does not have to make any grant payments and is not responsible for any expenses incurred by an organisation in relation to the project until there is an executed funding agreement in place.

### 16.2 Public announcement

Successful projects may be publicly announced by the Minister for Small Business and may include:

- name and contact details of the small business advisory service organisation
- title of the project
- description of the project and its aims
- amount of grant funding awarded.

Details of successful projects will also be published on [business.gov.au](http://business.gov.au) and on the [Department of Treasury's website](#).

### 16.3 How the grant will be paid

The funding agreement will state the:

- maximum grant amount to be paid including GST
- schedule of payments.

Grant funding will be paid as agreed milestones are achieved.

All interest earned on the grant funds held (as a proportion of the total interest earned on the total amount of funds in the account) must be reported on and used only for the purposes of the project. Interest will be counted as part of the payment from the Australian Government during the acquittal of funding. Any unspent funds must be returned to the Australian Government.

The maximum grant amount cannot be exceeded under any circumstances. If additional eligible expenditure is incurred, organisations must meet these costs themselves.

## 16.4 Tax obligations

Grants are subject to the Goods and Services Tax (GST). Grant payments are increased to compensate for GST payments.

Grants are treated as assessable income for taxation purposes, unless exempted by a taxation law. We recommend seeking independent professional advice on taxation obligations. The Commonwealth does not provide advice on tax.

## 16.5 Reporting

Successful organisations must submit regular progress and financial reports as described in the funding agreement. Financial reports may require a statutory declaration regarding expenditure of funds and provision of evidence of expenditure.

Successful organisations will be provided with templates for all reports.

In order for KPI activity to be measured, organisations will be required to maintain a record of basic contact details (such as name, business name, ABN, phone number and email address) for participating ASBAS tourism clients serviced by the funded service provider and to provide these details if requested.

Applicants should be aware that compliance audits **may** be conducted on the grant funding in addition to the required reports.

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

## 16.6 Resources, branding and marketing

The Commonwealth may provide diagnostic/analytical tools and other resources to use in the conduct of the project. Alternatively, the Commonwealth may prescribe minimum capabilities of any diagnostic/analytical tools that may be required to provide/source in order to deliver the funded project.

Successful organisations will be expected to increase the public profile of the ASBAS programme and the Northern Australia Tourism Initiative through the use of specifically branded marketing and communication materials. Successful organisations will be issued with branding guidelines to help implement consistent branding across a variety of communication channels (such as printed collateral and websites). The branding guidelines will overview the appropriate use and placement of any Commonwealth Government logos and/or reference to the ASBAS programme. Successful organisations may be provided with generic marketing communication support material.

## 16.7 Project variations

The Commonwealth recognises that unexpected events may affect project progress. In these circumstances, organisations can request a project variation by writing to AusIndustry.

Each variation is considered on a case by case basis, and it should not be assumed that a variation request will be successful. The Commonwealth will consider the request in the context of impacts on the project outcome.

The ASBAS programme does not allow for an increase to the agreed amount of grant funds.

## 16.8 Monitoring and evaluation

Successful organisations will be required to participate in a broader evaluation of the ASBAS Northern Australia Tourism Initiative, if requested to do so by the Australian Government. An evaluation will seek to identify the degree to which the ASBAS programme and the initiative is

meeting its objectives. As part of an evaluation, the Australian Government may survey stakeholders, including the ASBAS tourism clients that have been assisted as part of the ASBAS programme.

Successful organisations may be required to provide names and contact numbers of the ASBAS tourism clients provided services under the ASBAS programme to enable surveying to be conducted.

## 17 Other things to know

### 17.1 Conflicts of interest declarations

A conflict of interest in the context of the ASBAS programme involves a conflict between the duties and responsibilities of departmental staff, technical experts and other third parties who have a role in the administration of the Programme and their private interests, where the relevant individual's private interests could improperly influence that individual's ability to impartially perform their role under the ASBAS programme. A conflict of interest may be real, apparent or potential.

An apparent (or perceived) conflict of interest exists where it appears that an individual's private interests could improperly influence an individual's ability to impartially assess an application but this is not in fact the case.

A potential conflict of interest arises where an individual has a private interest which is such that an actual conflict of interest would arise if the individual were to be involved in the assessment of an application or other decision in relation to the ASBAS programme.

The Department of Industry, Innovation and Science's procedures for managing disclosure of interest are in accordance with the requirements of the APS Code of Conduct (section 13 (7) of the Public Service Act 1999) and are published on the [Department of Industry, Innovation and Science's](#) website.

### 17.2 Confidentiality

The use and disclosure of information provided to the Department of Industry, Innovation and Science is regulated by legislation and the common law. Without limitation, relevant legislation includes the *Public Service Act 1999 (Cth)*, the Public Service Regulations, the *Privacy Act 1988 (Cth)*, the *Crimes Act 1914 (Cth)* and the *Criminal Code Act 1995 (Cth)*.

Only information which satisfies **all** of the four criteria listed below will be treated by the Commonwealth as confidential information:

- a. The information is clearly identified by the Applicant as confidential and reasons for the confidentiality are provided by the Applicant.
- b. The information is commercially sensitive.
- c. The disclosure of the information would cause unreasonable detriment to the Applicant or another party.
- d. The Applicant provided the information under an understanding that it would remain confidential.

Information which does not satisfy the above requirements will not be treated as confidential.

Even if the information is confidential the Department of Industry, Innovation and Science may disclose the information as follows:

- a. to other Commonwealth employees and contractors for the purposes of administering the Programme

- b. to employees and contractors of the Department of Industry and Science and the Department of Jobs and Small Business for the purposes of research, evaluation, monitoring and analysis of the Programme and its activities
- c. to other Commonwealth, state, territory or local government agencies for the purposes of reporting and consultation
- d. to the Auditor-General, Ombudsman or Privacy Commissioner
- e. to the responsible Minister
- f. to a House or a Committee of the Parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia.

Confidential information may also be disclosed if the Commonwealth is otherwise required or permitted by law to do so, where the consent of the applicant to the release of information is obtained prior to its disclosure, or where the information enters the public domain due to the actions of someone other than the Commonwealth.

### **17.3 Use and disclosure of personal information**

The Department of Industry, Innovation and Science (the Department) and its staff are required to treat Personal Information in accordance with the *Privacy Act 1988* (the 'Privacy Act') as amended from time to time. The Privacy Act, among other things requires the Department to inform individuals of why their Personal Information is being collected and to whom the Department will disclose the Personal Information.

Personal Information means the same as in the *Privacy Act 1988* (Cth).

In the course of administering the ASBAS programme, the Department will collect Personal Information from applicants for the purposes of the administration of the Programme and for the purposes of research, evaluation, monitoring and analysis of the Programme and its activities.

The Department may provide Personal Information collected in the course of administering the Programme to employees and contractors of the Department of Industry and Science and the Department of Jobs and Small Business, and other Commonwealth employees and contractors for the purposes of the administration of the Programme and for the purposes of research, evaluation, monitoring and analysis of the Programme and its activities.

The Departments and/or the Minister for Small Business may announce publicly the names of successful applicants and may include this information on Departmental internet sites.

Please refer to the Department of Industry, Innovation and Science's [Privacy Policy](#) for further information on how the Department collects, uses, stores and discloses applicants' personal information and the way in which an applicant can access and correct its personal information.

### **17.4 Freedom of information**

All documents created or held by the Department of Industry, Innovation and Science with regard to the Programme are subject to the *Freedom of Information Act 1982*. Unless a document falls under an exemption provision, or is conditionally exempt and it is not in the public interest to give access to the document, it will, subject to any obligations of third party consultation, be disclosed in response to a request under the *Freedom of Information Act 1982*.

### **17.5 Feedback – Complaints, compliments and suggestions**

The Department of Industry, Innovation and Science's [Customer Service Charter](#) is available at [business.gov.au](http://business.gov.au). AusIndustry uses customer satisfaction surveys to improve its business operations and service.

Complaints, compliments or suggestions can be lodged by:

- phoning 13 28 46 (within Australia only). The contact centre is open Monday to Friday (8am to 8pm nationally), excluding Australian National public holidays
- [email](#)
- [web chat](#)
- online at [business.gov.au](http://business.gov.au).

All complaints, compliments or suggestions will be referred to the appropriate manager.

If not satisfied with the way a complaint is handled, contact:

Head of Division  
AusIndustry - Business Services  
GPO Box 9839  
CANBERRA ACT 2601

The [Commonwealth Ombudsman](#) can also be contacted with complaints (call 1300 362 072). There is no fee for making a complaint, and the Ombudsman may conduct an independent investigation.

## Appendix A. Definition of key terms

**An ASBAS tourism client** is defined as a tourism small business or tourism small business intender in northern Australia, whose products and/or services are or will be used by tourists, and who is the client of an ASBAS provider.

**A business** is defined as those commercial activities or enterprises undertaken by an entity that has an Australian Business Number (ABN). Also see **Tourism businesses**.

**Business as usual** is defined as those advisory services provided to small businesses either free or charged and the day to day operations of the organisation which are not funded by the Programme or any of the previous or current Australian Small Business Advisory Services Programme initiatives. These business as usual activities may be funded through other Commonwealth, state or local government grants, through fee for service, through sponsorship arrangements, by private sector organisations, or through membership fees.

**Business Enterprise Centres** are defined as incorporated not-for-profit bodies, which provide low cost services to small businesses as part of an existing network of business advisory service providers.

**Constitutional Corporations** are defined as Corporations within the meaning of s 51(xx) of the Australian Constitution. These are further defined as Foreign Corporations, and Trading or Financial Corporations formed within Australia.

A **Foreign Corporation** is a corporation formed outside Australia.

A **Financial Corporation** is a financial corporation that has already been incorporated within Australia. Financial activities include activities such as borrowing or lending money.

A **Trading Corporation** is a corporation that has already been incorporated in Australia whose trading activities make up a substantial or significant portion of their overall activities. Trading activities include the buying and selling of goods and services.

(Note: A not-for-profit organisation can be a trading corporation. If unsure about whether an organisation is a Constitutional Corporation, seek independent legal advice before applying for the Australian Small Business Advisory Services Programme.)

**Customer Information Guide** is a guideline issued by the Programme Delegate relating to specific matters arising out of the administration of the Programme and are in accordance with the Ministerial Guidelines.

**Eligible application** means an application for grant funding under the Australian Small Business Advisory Services Programme that the Programme Delegate has determined is eligible for merit rating in accordance with the Programme's Guidelines.

**Execute a funding agreement** means the organisation and the Commonwealth Government have both signed the agreement.

**Minister for Small Business** means the Australian Government Minister who has portfolio responsibility for small business.

**Northern Australia** is as defined in the [Northern Australia White Paper](#) (NAWP). Currently this means all of the Northern Territory and regions of Western Australia and Queensland north of the Tropic of Capricorn.

**Programme Delegate** means an employee of the Commonwealth who has been empowered by the Minister for Small Business, or who is otherwise duly authorised, to carry out the relevant function in respect of the Australian Small Business Advisory Services Programme.

**Project** for the purposes of this application is defined as the activities proposed to be undertaken with the Programme funding, if the application is successful.

**Registered Business Organisation** is an incorporated, not-for-profit organisation that provides low cost services to small businesses to help them achieve productivity and/or competitiveness.

**Small businesses** unless otherwise stated are defined as businesses having less than 20 full time (or equivalent) employees:

- **An employee** can be defined as a person that a business directly engages, controls and pays a wage for their labour, who does not have a substantial management role in the day to day operations of the business.
- **Full time work** can be defined as those employees who usually work 35 hours or more per week. Businesses with a range of employment arrangements such as casuals and part-time workers, should calculate the number of hours worked by other than full time employees and divide that total by 35. For example 3 casual employees working 12 hours per week work a total of 36 hours per week. This equates to one full time employee.

**Tourism small businesses** are defined as small businesses that must:

- derive a significant portion of their revenue from tourists
- operate in tourism related industries, including accommodation; cafes, restaurants and takeaway food services; clubs, pubs, taverns and bars; passenger transport; tour operator services; cultural services; sports and recreation services; and retail trade (not including intermediaries that resell tickets or vouchers for tourism-related products and services).

**Tourism small business intenders** are defined as a person/s who has/have a business idea and has/have the intention to develop the idea and/or start a new tourism small business or is exploring expanding, or purchasing, an existing tourism small business to operate in tourism related industries.

**Tourist** is defined as a traveller taking a trip to a main destination outside his/her usual environment, for less than a year, for any main purpose (business, leisure or other personal purpose) other than to be employed.

## Appendix B. Guidelines on eligible expenditure

To be considered an eligible expenditure for the grant, the expenditure must:

- be incurred by the recipient of the grant
- be a direct cost of the project
- meet the eligible expenditure guidelines
- have occurred within the grant period.

### How eligible expenditure is verified

If an application is successful, organisations will be asked to reconfirm the project budget provided in your application when negotiating a funding agreement.

If requested, organisations may need to provide evidence of expenditure along with progress or final reports. Evidence could include quotes, invoices, purchase orders or contracts with consultants, bank account statements, details of all employees working on the project, including name, title, function, time spent on the project and salary.

Organisations must also keep records of all eligible expenditure, and must be able to explain how the costs relate to the agreed project and its activities. At any time, organisations may be asked to provide records of paid expenditure. If these records are not provided when requested, the expense may not be accepted as eligible expenditure.

At the end of the project, organisations will be required to provide statutory declaration regarding the expenditure of the grant funds and any interest earned on them.

### Labour expenditure

Eligible labour expenditure for the grant covers the direct labour costs of employees who are working on the agreed project. A person is considered an employee when they are paid a regular salary or wage, out of which regular tax instalment deductions are made.

Eligible salary costs are incurred only when an employee is working directly on agreed project activities during the agreed project period.

Estimated salary costs for applicant organisation staff working on the project must be calculated using the formula below:

$$\text{Estimated salary costs} = \text{Annual salary package} \times \frac{\text{Weeks spent on project in a year}}{52 \text{ weeks}} \times \frac{\text{percentage of time spent on project in a week}}{\text{week}} \times 3 \text{ years}$$

#### Example

Tim, a business advisor, is paid a total annual salary package of \$50,000. Tim is estimated to spend 14 weeks working on the project in a year. During this time, Tim is estimated to work on eligible project activities 60 per cent of the time. The remaining 40 per cent of Tim's time will be spent on other non-project activities. Therefore estimated salary expenditure for Tim over the course of the project is calculated as follows:

$$\$50,000 \times 14/52 \times 0.60 \times 3 = \$24,228$$

Labour costs cannot be based on an estimation of the employee's worth. If no money has been exchanged (either by cash or bank transactions) we will not consider the cost eligible.

Evidence organisations **may** 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, time sheets, pay slips and employment contracts.

## Contract/consultant expenditure

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

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

All contractor/consultant project work must have a written contract prior to the work being started, for example, a formal agreement, letter or purchase order which specifies:

- the nature of the work to be performed
- the applicable fees, charges and other costs payable.

Invoices from contractors/consultants must contain:

- a detailed description of the nature of the work
- the hours and hourly rates involved.

Invoices must directly relate to the agreed project, and the work must qualify as an eligible expense as if it had been claimed directly (that is without engaging a contractor/consultant). The costs must also be reasonable and appropriate for the activities performed.

Evidence that may be required to be provided by services providers as part of progress reports may include:

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

Organisations may be required to obtain and provide a contractor/consultant's records of its costs of doing project work. If such records are not provided when requested, the relevant contract expense may not be accepted as eligible expenditure.

## Motor vehicle lease or rental

Due to the remote nature of large areas of northern Australia and a need, due to cultural preference, to sometimes meet face-to-face rather than use technological solutions, successful applicants will be permitted to lease (long-term) or rent (short-term) a motor vehicle up to **5 per cent** of the value of the total grant (GST exclusive), where justified.

To ensure value for money, a long term lease should only be proposed if there will be significant official use of the vehicle throughout the life of the lease (that is, the vehicle is to be used for the majority of the business week for delivery of ASBAS services in remote areas) and if the lease cost is less than the cost of a short term rent for a comparable number of days per week.

Full justification and costing of any vehicle lease or rental **must** be included in the application.

If the vehicle is to be used to deliver remote area services for another non-ASBAS part of an organisation's services, only a percentage cost of the lease or rent may be charged to ASBAS.

The Commonwealth must not be charged for any private use component of the vehicle. If a provider attributes 100 per cent of use to the Commonwealth, then the vehicle must be garaged at the business address of the organisation.

The successful applicant will be responsible for maintaining the vehicle under the terms of their lease or rental arrangement(s). The Commonwealth will not be liable for:

- any damage to the vehicle or caused by the vehicle to other property
- injuries that may be sustained by occupants of the vehicle, or to third parties, as a result of the use of the vehicle.

Any costs for damage or injury as a result of the use of the lease or rental vehicle must not be charged to the ASBAS programme.

The purchase of motor vehicles or other transportation is not permitted.

### Other eligible expenditure

Administrative operational costs and minor infrastructure costs or expenses directly involved in the delivery of the project up to **5 per cent** of the value of the total grant (GST exclusive) may be supported where justified.

Examples of particular items may be:

- payment of fees associated with formalising the partnership arrangements of a group of organisations submitting and partnership application
- administrative operational costs directly relating to the project
- purchase of minor infrastructure equipment relevant to the delivery of the project such as computers, laptops and phones.

Assets valued over \$2,000 must be specifically itemised in the budget.

Activities to enhance the professional skills of the applicant organisation and the applicant's employees up to an additional **2 per cent** of the value of the total grant (GST exclusive) may be supported.

## Appendix C. Guidelines on ineligible expenditure

The table below lists a number of activities and costs that **will not** be supported by the Programme.

Activity / budget item	Reason for ineligibility
<b>Major infrastructure costs</b>	Funding will not support major infrastructure costs such as new buildings or renovations to buildings or the purchase of vehicles.
<b>Large scale events/training</b>	Funding will not support undertaking events and/or workshops (including webinars) for more than twenty (20) people per session. By limiting attendee numbers to 20 or less face-to-face assistance is maximised and a higher calibre of interaction is achieved.
<b>Counselling services</b>	Funding will not support counselling. There are already services supported by the Australian Government such as <i>BeyondBlue</i> , <i>Red Cross</i> and the <i>Salvation Army</i> . Participants requiring counselling should be referred to these or similar organisations.
<b>Technical and vocational training</b>	Funding will not support providing technical or vocational training to participating tourism small businesses and small business tourism intenders in relation to the conduct of their business activity.
<b>Activities involving school students</b>	Funding will not support activities providing vocational training, or any form of formal education for people still attending an educational institution.
<b>Research activities and feasibility studies</b>	Funding will not support applications that involve the conduct of research or feasibility studies.
<b>The production of study guides or reports</b>	Funding will not support applications which relate only to the development and publication of study guides, manuals, instructional videos/web content and/or reports or information kits. However, this does not preclude the production of publications designed to support the delivery of the project/services.
<b>Participation at other conferences/seminars</b>	Funding will not provide assistance for participating tourism small businesses or small business tourism intenders or groups of participating tourism small businesses or small business tourism intenders to attend conferences or seminars being run independently of the project covered by the funding, either in Australia or overseas. However, this does not preclude the running of project activities in conjunction with a conference or seminar in the organisation's area.
<b>Overseas travel</b>	Funding will not support any requests for overseas travel.
<b>Membership fees</b>	Funding will not support any request for payment of membership fees for the applicant organisation to any other organisation or body.