

Customer Information Guide

Entrepreneurs' Programme - Innovation Connections

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Disclaimer

The Innovation Connections Facilitation service is undertaken by Innovation Facilitators employed by Delivery Partners. Using the information you supply, the facilitator will make recommendations to you for your business, which may include seeking assistance from a publicly funded research organisation. If you are eligible, your business may choose to address these areas with the assistance of an Innovation Connections Grant.

Innovation Connections relies upon information you provide and may include the views of other parties in providing this service. As such, the Commonwealth is unable to guarantee the accuracy, completeness and relevance of services for your purposes. You should therefore satisfy yourself that it is appropriate for your business needs before taking any action.

The Commonwealth excludes all liability to the maximum extent permitted by law for any loss, damage, cost or expense suffered or incurred arising from the use of, or reliance upon, Innovation Connections or any actions taken by your business in addressing issues or implementing recommendations identified as part of Innovation Connections activities, complementary services or otherwise provided separately by an Innovation Facilitator.

1. Purpose of this guide

This Customer Information Guide (Guide) explains the Innovation Connections element of the Entrepreneurs' Programme and sets out the rules for receiving services and grants under this element.

You should read this Guide in conjunction with the Program Guidelines and any related documents. Please read this Guide carefully before you start filling out an application form.

Definitions for italicised terms can be found in the <u>Glossary</u> and are consistent with those in the Program Guidelines

2. Entrepreneurs' Programme overview

The Entrepreneurs' Programme (the program) drives business growth and competitiveness by supporting business improvement and research collaboration in targeted growth sectors and the commercialisation of novel products, processes and services.

The program has five elements:

- Business Management
- Innovation Connections
- Accelerating Commercialisation
- Incubator Support
- Strengthening Business

The primary focus of the program is on providing access to the best advice and networks to help businesses solve problems, rather than focusing on financial assistance.

2.1 Innovation Connections overview

Innovation Connections encourages and assists small and medium businesses to access knowledge, engage with researchers and foster innovation.

Innovation Facilitators will help you to assess the gaps in your business knowledge and provide specialist support which may include assistance to:

- identify critical and strategic research needs and opportunities for your business
- help your business to find expertise, technology and advice
- find ways for your business to work with the research sector.

To help you work with the research sector, you may also be eligible to apply for a matched funding grant that provides direct access to research capability.

Applicants may apply for one or more of the following Innovation Connections Activities:

- Innovation Connections Facilitation
- Innovation Connections Grant.

3. Innovation Connections Facilitation

Innovation Connections Facilitations provide businesses with expert guidance to address knowledge or research related issues. Innovation Connections Facilitations are delivered by a national network of Innovation Facilitators. Eligible businesses will be matched with an Innovation Facilitator who will work with them to:

- identify business opportunities (i.e. technology, information technology, testing and prototyping facilities, new market opportunities, advanced materials)
- identify critical research areas for improvement (products, processes and/or services)
- identify strategic research opportunities into new or existing markets
- find ways to work with the research sector and/or
- improve access to Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) expertise, including by promoting research organisations' work integrated learning initiatives.

At the end of the engagement the Innovation Facilitator will provide you with an Innovation Facilitation Report, which addresses your enquiry and provides recommendations.

3.1 Who can apply for an Innovation Connections Facilitation?

To be eligible for an Innovation Connections Facilitation, applicants must meet each of the following eligibility criteria:

- be an Eligible Corporation that is non tax-exempt and is registered for GST
- satisfy one of the following:
 - be operating in one or more of the Growth Sectors (See <u>Appendix A</u> for detailed descriptions of these sectors):
 - Advanced Manufacturing;
 - Food and Agribusiness;
 - Medical Technologies and Pharmaceuticals;
 - Mining Equipment, Technology and Services; and
 - Oil, Gas and Energy Resources
 - be providing Enabling Technologies and Services to one or more of the Growth Sectors; or
 - demonstrate they are committed to, and have the skills, capability, intellectual property or expertise to operate in, one or more of the Growth Sectors in the future.
- within the current or previous two financial years; have an annual turnover or operating expenditure between:
 - \$1.5 million and \$100 million: or
 - \$750,000 and \$100 million for applicants from Remote Australia or Northern Australia.
- be solvent.
- have operated in Australia and filed business activity statements showing ongoing trading in at least three consecutive years.
- Applicants may still be able to satisfy this requirement if their business structure, ownership or Australian Company Number has changed within the three consecutive year period. In this case, the applicant would need to satisfy the Program Delegate, an employee of the department who has been authorised by the Minister to administer Innovation Connections that the business activity statements are for the same business. This could include providing evidence that, during this period, the business:
 - carried out essentially the same business activities
 - had essentially the same management staff
 - was operating from the same locations
 - was using essentially the same assets in deriving its revenue
- must not have previously received a Research Connections or Innovation Connections
 Facilitation report within the last 5 years, unless otherwise agreed by the Program Delegate.
- not be named by the Workplace Gender Equality Agency as an organisation that has not complied with the *Workplace Gender Equality Act 2012 (Cth)*.

You are **not** eligible to apply if you are:

- an individual
- a partnership
- a trust (however, an incorporated trustee that meets the trading activity requirements above may apply on behalf of a trust)
- a Commonwealth, State or Local Government agency or body (including government business enterprises)
- listed on the current Workplace Gender Equality Agency list of non-compliant organisations.

3.2 How to apply for an Innovation Connections Facilitation

To apply for an Innovation Connections Facilitation, you must complete the online Innovation Connections Facilitation Application Form at business.gov.au.

You can apply for an Innovation Connections Facilitation at any time during the life of the program.

The application must be completed by an authorised representative of your business, such as your business':

- Chief Executive Officer
- Chief Financial Officer
- Director
- Chair of the Board
- President
- Authorised manager.

Applications that are deemed to be for a business or project that is substantially the same as a previously ineligible or unsuccessful application may be rejected.

3.3 How your application will be assessed

The Program Delegate will decide if an application is eligible under the Program Guidelines. Applicants that meet all the eligibility criteria will be approved by the Program Delegate.

We will contact you with a response within 10 working days of submitting a complete application.

Where appropriate and where your business meets the eligibility criteria, you may be recommended to receive an alternative Entrepreneurs' Programme service. In this case, you may not have to submit a separate application form.

3.4 If your application is successful

When an application is approved, the business will be assigned an Innovation Facilitator who will then provide the Innovation Connections Facilitation service.

The Innovation Facilitator will contact you to arrange a time to start the service and will tailor the Innovation Connections Facilitation to address your business' needs. The time it takes to complete your service will depend on:

- the needs that are identified
- discussions between the Innovation Facilitator and your business.

The Innovation Facilitator will require you to provide access to business information and key personnel that the Innovation Facilitator needs to address knowledge gaps or technical needs.

3.5 If your application is unsuccessful

If you are not approved for an Innovation Connections Facilitation you will receive notification outlining why your application was not successful.

4 Innovation Connections Grant

Innovation Connections Grants provide support for undertaking an Innovation Connections project. An Innovation Connections project must incorporate recommendations from an Innovation Facilitation Report.

4.1 Eligible activities

Innovation Facilitation Report recommendations that can be funded through an Innovation Connections Grant are:

- Researcher Placement: the placement of a Researcher in the business to work collaboratively
 on a specific Innovation Connections project in order to develop and implement a new idea with
 commercial potential (up to a maximum of \$50,000)
- Business Researcher Placement: the placement of a *Participant's* own research employee into a *Publicly Funded Research Organisation* to work collaboratively on a specific Innovation Connections project and to access research infrastructure (up to a maximum of \$50,000)
- **Graduate Placement:** the employment of a graduate or post graduate into the *Participant's business* to undertake a specific Innovation Connections project collaboratively with a *Publicly Funded Research Organisation* (up to a maximum of \$30,000).

4.1.1 Researcher placement

A researcher is a person employed as a researcher or enrolled as a Higher Degree by Research student at a *Publicly Funded Research Organisation*. Innovation Connections can assist to identify and match appropriate researchers through its national network of Innovation Facilitators.

Where the grant supports the placement of a researcher in the business, the placement can involve either a full or part-time appointment for a period of two to twelve12 months. Projects involving part-time placements must have a minimum 30% full-time equivalent commitment from the researcher.

Activities that require the skills of more than one researcher are eligible; however, the total grant funding from Innovation Connections for the project cannot exceed \$50,000 (excluding GST).

The grant may cover the following researcher placement expenditure:

- salary of the researcher(s) salary costs will be assessed against typical research organisation pay scales for equivalent experience
- salary on-costs costs associated with superannuation, workers compensation insurance
- student allowance costs will be assessed against typical allowance for equivalent experience
- travel and accommodation where the research activity requires the researcher to undertake significant domestic travel
- research organisation administrative costs up to 30% of total project costs can be used to cover the administrative costs of the research organisation
- research infrastructure comprises the assets, facilities and services from a Publicly Funded Research Organisation which support the researcher(s) to undertake the Innovation Connections project.

Publicly Funded Research Organisations include all higher education providers listed at Table A and Table B of the Higher Education Support Act 2003 as well as Federal, State and Territory Government departments or agencies which undertake publicly funded research. This includes, but is not limited to, CSIRO, Defence Science and Technology Organisation, Australian Institute of Marine Science and Australian Nuclear Science and Technology Organisation. The Department of Industry, Science, Energy and Resources can provide you with advice about whether an organisation is a Publicly Funded Research Organisation.

4.1.2 Business Researcher placement

A Business Researcher is a person employed by the applicant business and possesses the expertise to undertake a proposed Innovation Connections project.

Where the grant supports the placement of a business researcher in a chosen *Publicly Funded Research Organisation*, the placement can involve either a full or part-time appointment for a period of between two to 12 months. Projects involving part-time placements must have a minimum 30% full-time equivalent commitment from the business researcher.

Activities that require the skills of more than one business researcher are eligible. However, the total grant funding from Innovation Connections for the project cannot exceed \$50,000 (excluding GST).

The grant may cover the following business researcher placement expenditure:

- salary and on-costs of the business researcher salary costs will be assessed against demonstrated existing pay level of nominated business researcher.
- travel and accommodation where the activity requires the business researcher to undertake significant domestic travel
- research infrastructure comprises the assets, facilities and services from a *Publicly Funded* Research Organisation which support the researcher(s) to undertake the Innovation
 Connections project.

4.1.3 Graduate placement

A Graduate is a person who attained a relevant graduate or post graduate degree within two years of the proposed Innovation Connections project.

The placement is a full-time appointment for a period of between six to twelve months.

The grant may cover the following graduate placement expenditure:

 Salary and on-costs of the graduate – salary costs will be assessed against market rate for graduate recruit in the nominated sector. On-costs associated with superannuation, workers compensation insurance.

To be eligible for a Graduate placement, grant applicants must not have received an Innovation Connections *Graduate* placement grant in the last five years. Applications for the Graduate placement may be accepted at any time during an approved Innovation Connections project.

4.1.4 Supplementary Researcher or Business Researcher placement grant

A business may apply for a maximum of two Researcher or Business Researcher placements. Applications for a second researcher placement must be lodged within a 12 week period of the completion of the first Researcher or Business Researcher placement period.

Applicants will need to work with the Innovation Facilitator to define the scope of additional Innovation Connections projects.

4.2 Who can apply for an Innovation Connections Grant?

To be eligible for an Innovation Connections Grant, applicants must meet each of the following eligibility criteria:

- have received a Facilitation Report
- be able to fund the total value of the cost of the Innovation Connections Project before being reimbursed, without using in-kind contributions or other government grants or programs
- apply for an Innovation Connections Grant within 12 months of receiving a Facilitation Report, unless otherwise agreed by the Program Delegate
- must not have previously received a Research Connections Grant or Innovation Connections
 Grant in the last five years, except where a second or third Grant is provided to address the
 same Facilitation Report.

4.3 How to apply for an Innovation Connections Grant

To apply for an Innovation Connections Grant, you must complete the online Innovation Connections Grant Application Form at business.gov.au.

The application must be completed by an authorised representative of your business.

Applicants must ensure all sections of the application form are completed to enable the assessment process to be undertaken.

4.4 How your application will be assessed

The Program Delegate will decide if an application is eligible under the Program Guidelines. Subject to available funding, applicants that meet all the eligibility criteria will be approved by the Program Delegate.

If program funding is not available, information will be published on the <u>business.gov.au</u> website to advise that the Program is closed to new applications.

You will be contacted with a response within 15 working days of submitting a complete application.

4.5 If your application is successful

If your application is successful, we will contact you and provide you with further instructions.

4.5.1 Grant Agreement

If your Researcher or Business Researcher placement grant application is successful, you must enter into a Project Contract with your chosen *Publicly Funded Research Organisation* within 30 days of notification of the grant offer and notify the Department upon its execution. The funding recipient will then be issued with the grant agreement.

- In the case of a Researcher placement either party to the Project Contract, i.e. either the
 business or the research organisation, can enter into a grant agreement with the
 Commonwealth. The chosen party must enter into a grant agreement within 14 days of
 execution of the Project Contract.
- In the case of a Business Researcher placement, the Applicant (business) must enter into a grant agreement with the Department.

If your Graduate placement application is successful, you must notify the Department of the letter of offer outlining the employment conditions and project scope for the nominated graduate within 30 days of notification of grant offer. The funding recipient must be the applicant business and must

enter into a grant agreement within 14 days of notifying the Department of an executed employment contract.

A grant agreement is a legal arrangement with the Australian Government. Among other things, the grant agreement will:

- ensure that the Australian Government can recover grant funds if the grant recipient doesn't meet the terms and conditions set out in the grant agreement
- state the maximum amount of grant funding for your project
- state how and when the grant will be paid
- ensure that your business conducts the correct project and gives evidence of expenditure claimed
- allow for the grant agreement to be changed or terminated, and
- set out dispute resolution procedures.

A sample grant agreement is available on the business.gov.au website.

Once you have received a copy of the signed grant agreement, you must agree on a start date for the research activity.

4.5.2 How the grant will be paid

Grant funds will be paid in arrears following agreed milestones as outlined in the grant agreement and acquittal of associated costs incurred.

4.6 If your application is unsuccessful

If you are not approved for an Innovation Connections Grant you will receive notification outlining why your application was not successful.

4.7 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 you seek independent professional advice on your taxation obligations. We do not provide advice on tax.

5 Other things you should know

5.1 Conflicts of interest

The Department maintains procedures for managing conflicts of interest for departmental staff, Innovation Facilitators, technical experts and other third parties involved in the management, assessment and evaluation of the program, applications and the delivery of activities. Conflicts of interest will be managed in accordance with these procedures. A conflict of interest can arise in situations where a person has an interest or relationship, whether real, perceived or potential, that conflicts with a duty they hold or where they have a role that conflicts with another role. For example, a conflict of interest can exist if there is a conflict between:

- a person's duties, roles and responsibilities under the program; and
- their private interests (where these interests could inappropriately influence the way they manage the program).

A real (or actual) conflict of interest exists when a person's private interests or their program duties, roles and responsibilities **could** improperly influence how they manage, assess and evaluate the program.

An apparent (or perceived) conflict of interest exists where it **appears or is perceived** by a third party that someone's private interests or their program duties, roles and responsibilities could improperly influence how they manage, assess and evaluate the program, even if a real or actual conflict has not, or cannot, be established.

A potential conflict of interest exists when someone has a private interest and an actual conflict of interest **could** arise if they make any decisions related to the program.

5.2 How we manage conflicts of interest

The Department's procedures for managing conflicts of interests by its employees are in accordance with the requirements of the APS Code of Conduct (section 13(7) of the *Public Service Act 1999 (Cth)*), the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013 (Cth)* and the *Public Governance Performance and Accountability Rule 2014*. Our conflict of interest policy is published on the Department's <u>website</u>.

Delivery Partners and Innovation Facilitators must identify to the Department any actual, perceived or potential conflicts of interest they believe will or may arise during the delivery of the program and, where a conflict is identified, specify how that conflict will be addressed and monitored to ensure it does not compromise the outcomes desired of the program.

If the Minister cannot make a decision under the program without a conflict of interest arising, the Parliamentary Secretary will become the final decision maker.

5.3 Use and disclosure of information

Unless the information provided to the Department is Personal Information or Confidential Information the Department may disclose the information to any person for any purpose directly related to the activities and functions of the Australian Government, including but not limited to the purpose of:

- announcing the awarding of grants (where applicable)
- improving the effective administration, monitoring and evaluation of this or other Commonwealth programs
- conducting research within the Department or another Commonwealth agency.

5.4 Protection of information

The use and disclosure of information provided to the Department and Facilitators is regulated by the relevant provisions and penalties of the *Public Service Act 1999 (Cth)*, the Public Service Regulations, the *Archives Act 1983 (Cth)*, the *Privacy Act 1988 (Cth)*, the *Crimes Act 1914 (Cth)*, the *Criminal Code Act 1995 (Cth)* and general law.

5.5 Confidential and Personal Information

The Department will treat your information as 'Confidential Information' if the information is clearly identified as confidential and the information has the necessary quality of confidence (that is, it must be significant information which is private and not already in the public domain).

Information that is, or becomes public knowledge (other than by breach of any confidentiality obligation) will not be considered to be Confidential Information.

The Department is bound by the Australian Privacy Principles (**APPs**) outlined in Schedule 1 of the *Privacy Act 1988 (Cth)*. The APPs regulate how the Department may collect, use, disclose and store Personal Information.

'Personal Information' under the *Privacy Act 1988* means information or an opinion (whether true or false) about a natural person who is reasonably identifiable.

Please read our Privacy Policy on the Department's website for more information on:

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

5.6 When we may reveal or use Confidential and Personal Information

Unless the Department obtains your consent, the Department will not disclose your Confidential or Personal Information other than to:

- the Minister, the Parliamentary Secretary, and their Office
- other Commonwealth Ministers
- Industry Growth Centres
- Delivery Partners and Facilitators
- other Commonwealth, State or Territory government departments and agencies
- technical, financial, economic, and/or industry experts (including auditors)
- Departmental contractors

for the purposes of:

- administering the program and any related purposes, including program and policy evaluation and development
- Departmental research, analysis, monitoring and evaluation
- reporting and consultation with other Commonwealth, State or Territory government agencies
- reviewing applications to provide technical or financial advice on a contract basis
- referring you to Industry Growth Centres
- sectoral analysis by Industry Growth Centres

5.7 Disclosure of information where authorised or required by law

From time to time the Department may be authorised or required by law to disclose information (including Personal Information and Confidential Information) to other persons, including but not limited to:

- a Commonwealth Minister and Ministerial Office
- a House or a Committee of the Parliament of Australia
- the Auditor-General under the Auditor-General Act 1997 (Cth)
- the Australian Information Commissioner under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 (Cth)
 (FOI Act)
- the Commonwealth Ombudsman under the Ombudsman Act 1976 (Cth)
- the Privacy Commissioner under the Privacy Act 1988 (Cth).

5.8 **Protection of information by Innovation Facilitators**

Innovation Facilitators are employed by Delivery Partners and are not employees or agents of the Commonwealth. However, Delivery Partners are bound by agreements with the Commonwealth that require the Delivery Partners to:

- keep (and ensure Innovation Facilitators keep) your Confidential or Personal Information confidential
- not disclose (and ensure Innovation Facilitators do not disclose) Confidential or Personal Information to any parties other than the Commonwealth, as required by law or as strictly necessary in connection with legal proceedings, or with your consent
- not do any act or engage in any practice that would breach an APP and comply with the APPs as if it were an 'agency' under the Privacy Act 1988
- use Personal and Confidential Information provided by the Department only for the purposes of performing its obligations under the agreement with the Commonwealth (and to ensure Innovation Facilitators do the same).

5.9 Freedom of information

All documents created or held by the Department in relation to the program are subject to the FOI Act. Unless information is exempt, it will be made available to the general public if requested under the FOI Act. The Department will consult with you before any documents are released under the FOI Act.

All Freedom of Information (FOI) requests are to be referred to the FOI Coordinator in the Department. Decisions regarding requests for access will be made by an authorised officer in accordance with the requirements of the FOI Act.

5.10 Information storage

Any information obtained will be stored and held in accordance with the Department's obligations under the Archives Act 1983.

Public announcement 6

Successful projects may be publicly announced by the Minister and/or Department and details of the announcement may include:

- the name of your business
- the title of the project
- description of the project and its objectives
- the amount of grant funding awarded (where applicable)
- Details of successful projects will also be published on the GrantConnect¹ website.

7 **Feedback**

The AusIndustry Customer Service Charter is available at business.gov.au. AusIndustry uses customer satisfaction surveys to improve its business operations and service.

If you have a complaint, call the contact centre on 13 28 46 or contact us at business.gov.au. Your complaint will be referred to the appropriate manager.

¹ https://www.grants.gov.au/

If you are not satisfied with the way your complaint is handled, you can contact:

Head of Division AusIndustry – Support for Business GPO Box 9839 CANBERRA ACT 2601

You can also contact the <u>Commonwealth Ombudsman</u>² with your complaint (call 1300 362 072). There is no fee for making a complaint, and the Ombudsman may conduct an independent investigation.

² http://www.ombudsman.gov.au/

Appendix A. Definition of Sectors

For the purposes of the Entrepreneurs' Programme, a business will satisfy the sectoral eligibility criteria where it can demonstrate it:

- is operating in one of the five growth sectors or provides enabling technologies, inputs or services to one of the five growth sectors as defined below; or
- is committed to, and has the skills, capability, intellectual property or expertise to operate in, one or more of the five growth sectors in the future.

Sector	Description
Advanced Manufacturing	Businesses that adopt innovative technologies or business practices to improve or develop manufactured products, processes or services. This includes the adoption of improvements or innovations across any of a range of manufacturing steps, such as concept, research and development, design, production, logistics, marketing and aftersales services, in order to achieve high-value products, services or business outcomes, including improved responses to market demands.
	Businesses that supply integral services, technologies or inputs to the manufacturing processes of businesses described above.
Food and Agribusiness	Businesses that undertake food or beverage production, or supply integral services or technologies to support food or beverage production.
	Businesses that provide integral services, technologies or inputs to support primary production of food and beverages.
	This definition excludes businesses that are food retailers (including restaurants and cafes) or primary producers, except where they can demonstrate they also substantially undertake the above activities.
Medical Technologies and	Businesses that develop or produce therapeutic, medical or pharmaceutical products or technologies, including complementary medicines.
Pharmaceuticals	Businesses that provide integral services, technologies or inputs to the development and production of therapeutic, medical or pharmaceutical products or technologies.
	This definition excludes businesses that are hospitals, medical and other health care services, residential care services, social assistance services and retailers of medical and pharmaceutical goods, except where they can demonstrate they also substantially undertake the above activities.
Mining Equipment, Technology and Services	Businesses in mineral exploration, extraction and mining supply chains, including businesses that provide integral services, technologies and equipment for mining and minerals extraction.

Sector	Description
Oil, Gas and Energy	Businesses engaged in the exploration, development and extraction of energy and fuels from oil, gas, coal and uranium.
Resources	Businesses that provide integral services, technologies and equipment for use in oil, gas and energy resource sectors.
Enabling Technologies and Services	Businesses that provide enabling or supporting technologies, inputs or services to drive business growth or improve business competitiveness in one or more of the five Growth Sectors.
	Enabling technologies and sectors underpinning the five Growth Sectors include: freight and logistics; infrastructure related construction and services; information and communications technologies; digital technologies; and professional services.
	Outside of these key enabling technologies and sectors, this definition includes other businesses that enable or support one of the five Growth Sectors through a direct commercial relationship, but excludes routine business operational activities such as legal advice, financial accounting/bookkeeping services, catering and insurance.

Appendix B. Glossary

The following definitions apply for the purpose of interpreting the *Program Guidelines*. They are not intended to be a substitute for the defined terms in any *Services Agreement* or *grant agreement*.

Term	Definition
Innovation Connections Project	A project which incorporates recommendations from an Innovation Facilitation Report and which may be supported by an Innovation Connections Grant.
Innovation Facilitation Report	A report provided to the business as an outcome of an Innovation Connections Facilitation service.
Northern Australia	All of the Northern Territory and those parts of Western Australia and Queensland above the Tropic of Capricorn.
Remote Australia	As defined by the Australian Bureau of Statistics Remoteness Classification 2006, see the ABS Remoteness Structure for more information.

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