



Questions and Answers (Q&As) – Industry Growth – Industry Partner Organisation Program

This document records outlines Q&As from applicants following the original launch of the grant opportunity on 5 February 2024 (Questions 1 to 21 on pages 1 to 5). Questions that have been received about the reopening of Stage 2 on 11 September 2024 start at Question 22 on page 6 with regular updates being made as questions arise.

1) It states that an eligible entity is a not-for-profit organisation and an entity incorporated in Australia. Does this criteria completely exclude a proprietary limited company?

A proprietary limited company is generally structured for businesses that operate for-profit businesses which, if for-profit, are not eligible entities.

To meet eligibility requirements an organisation must meet the eligibility criteria under section 4.1 of the Grant Opportunity Guidelines, to be eligible you must:

- have an Australian Business Number (ABN)
- be registered for the Goods and Services Tax (GST), and
- be a not-for-profit organisation, and
- an entity incorporated in Australia.

2) Can I partner with an NFP?

Under section 7.2 of the Grant Opportunity Guidelines 'Joint (consortia) applications' we recognise that some organisations may want to join as a group or partnership to deliver a project. In these circumstances, you must appoint a lead not-for-profit (NFP) organisation that is an eligible entity. Only the lead organisation can submit the application form and enter into the grant agreement with the Commonwealth. The application must identify all other members of the proposed group and include a letter of support from each of the project partners.

If a partnership with an NFP is created, the NFP would be required to become the lead organisation and would need to meet all the eligibility criteria as set out in section 4 of the grant guidelines.

3) If an organisation is registered as both a charity and a tax-exempt entity, would that exclude the organisation from applying?

Being a tax-exempt entity does not exclude you from applying. We have edited the wording on business.gov.au to clarify the eligibility of tax-exempt entities.

You do however need to meet eligibility requirements under the eligibility criteria, Section 4.1 of the Grant Opportunity Guidelines. To be eligible you must:

- have an Australian Business Number (ABN)
- be registered for the Goods and Services Tax (GST), and
- be a not-for-profit organisation, and
- an entity incorporated in Australia.

4) Can you please confirm that PFROs are ineligible as per section 4.3 of the grant opportunity guidelines?

Publicly Funded Research Organisations (PFROs) are not eligible to apply, however joint applications (consortia) including PFROs may be acceptable provided you have a lead not-for-profit organisation that is an eligible entity, and who is the main driver of the project and is eligible to apply. For further information on joint applications, refer to section 7.2 of the Grant Opportunity Guidelines.

5) Is there a co-investment/matched funding requirement for the IPO grant opportunity?

No, there is no requirement for co-investment or matched funding for this grant opportunity.

Refer to Section 3.1 of the Grant Opportunity Guidelines which says the grant amount will be up to 100 per cent of eligible expenditure.

6) Does this grant include the development of software platforms?

Under Section 2.1 of the Grant Opportunity Guidelines 'About the Industry Partner Organisation grant opportunity' successful applicants of the Industry Partner Organisation (IPO) grant opportunity will receive funding to **provide specialised advisory services**.

7) Do I have time to register as a not-for-profit?

Applications for Stage One EOI of the Industry Partner Organisation grant opportunity close 5pm Australian Eastern Daylight Savings Time (AEDT) on Friday, 16 February 2024. To be eligible to apply for the grant opportunity you need to meet the eligibility requirements at the time you submit your application.

Under Section 4.1 of the Grant Opportunity Guidelines, to be eligible you must:

- have an Australian Business Number (ABN)
- be registered for the Goods and Services Tax (GST), and
- be a not-for-profit organisation, and
- an entity incorporated in Australia.

8) The information on limits for the two criteria are measured differently – 1,000 words and 5,000 characters. Can you please inform which measurement will be used in the application process via the online portal.

The online portal will limit your response to 5,000 characters (approximately 1,000 words) for each criterion as set out in Section 6.1 of the Grant Opportunity Guidelines.

9) Our organisation is a company limited by guarantee with Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission (ACNC) status. Are we eligible for this program?

To be eligible, under Section Under Section 4.1 of the Grant Opportunity Guidelines, you must:

- have an Australian Business Number (ABN)
- be registered for the Goods and Services Tax (GST), and
- be a not-for-profit organisation, and
- an entity incorporated in Australia.

We undertake an eligibility check once you have submitted your application. If you are ineligible, we will identify this at that time and you will be notified.

10) We are a for-profit organisation – are we still eligible?

For-profit organisations are not eligible.

Under Section 4.1 of the Grant Opportunity Guidelines, to be eligible you must:

- have an Australian Business Number (ABN)
- be registered for the Goods and Services Tax (GST), and
- be a not-for-profit organisation, and
- an entity incorporated in Australia.

Joint applications (consortia) are acceptable, provided you have a lead not-for-profit organisation that is an eligible entity, and who is the main driver of the project and is eligible to apply. For further information on joint applications, refer to section 7.2 of the Grant Opportunity Guidelines.

We undertake an eligibility check once you have submitted your application. If you are ineligible, we will identify this at that time and you will be notified.

11) Our organisation falls in to the PPRO category, would it be allowable for our organisation to join a consortia as a member of the group? Our organisation would not be the lead applicant but would provide services as part of the program.

Public Funded Research Organisations are not eligible to apply, however joint applications (consortia) are acceptable, provided you have a lead not-for-profit organisation that is an eligible entity, and who is the main driver of the project and is eligible to apply. For further information on joint applications, refer to section 7.2 of the Grant Opportunity Guidelines.

12) Can you give any indication of:

- **the number of SMEs the Industry Growth Program will support**
- **whether there are any targets for the number of SMEs supported in each of the National Reconstruction Priority areas.**

We anticipate approximately 2,000 SMEs per year may apply and be eligible for advice under the Industry Growth Program. However, the number of SMEs that will be supported by the Industry Partner Organisations is dependent on the number of applicants to the program and the number of referrals from Industry Growth Program Advisers or the department.

There are no set targets for the number of SMEs supported in each of the National Reconstruction Priority areas.

13) We are in the process of being incorporated but unsure if it will be completed by the closing date for EOI applications, can we still apply?

The Industry Growth Program – Industry Partner Organisation Grant Opportunity Guidelines state in Section 4.2 Eligibility criteria that we cannot waive the eligibility criteria under any circumstances. You must be eligible to apply at the time you submit your application for the Stage One: EOI.

14) Will the IGP-IPO funding be able to be used to benefit applicant's existing &/or potential members, as long as it includes IGP program participants, or will it be limited to only being used to service IGP Program participants?

IPO grant funding must be used exclusively to provide specialised advisory services to SMEs referred by Industry Growth Program Advisers or the department.

15) How are SMEs transitioned from the initial advice and assessment phase to specialised support provided by an IPO?

Industry Growth program participants will be referred by Industry Growth Program Advisers or the department for specialised advisory services provided by industry partner organisations. Please refer to Section 2.1 of the Grant Opportunity Guidelines for further information.

16) How does the relationship between an IPO and Industry Growth Program Adviser work in practice? Additionally, how are responsibilities and advisory roles delineated between the IPO and the advisers?

This is determined by the parties involved and may be influenced by the needs of the program participants. The Advisers and IPOs offer different services to program participants which will influence their responsibilities. Please refer to Section 2.1 of the Grant Opportunity Guidelines for further information.

17) If we're already supporting NRF priority areas, is our current work eligible for IPO funding?

IPO grant funding must be used exclusively to provide specialised advisory services to SMEs referred by Industry Growth Program Advisers. Therefore, even if your current work is supporting NRF priority areas, program funding can only be used for the specialised advisory services you provide to referred IGP program participants.

Please refer to sections 2.1 and 5.1 of the guidelines for further information relating to the above.

18) Does the assessment preference national or regional-specific (e.g. Western Australia) respondents, or would it consider them on an equal footing if the responses are otherwise comparable? Would an otherwise comparable sector specific respondent be assessed on equal terms to one addressing all sectors focused under the NRF?

If your application is eligible, an internal panel (see section 8.2 of the Grant Opportunity Guidelines) will assess your application against the EOI assessment criteria (see section 6 of the Grant Opportunity Guidelines) and against other eligible applications. The panel will consider your application on its merits, based on:

- how well it meets the criteria
- how it compares to other applications
- the distribution of meritorious EOIs across NRF priority areas.

The panel recommendations will inform which EOIs will proceed to Stage Two.

In Stage Two, under the assessment criterion 2 (capacity, capability, and resources to deliver the project), the panel will consider, amongst other things, your ability to provide access to equipment, resources, services and/or support to diverse businesses located across Australia, including in regional and remote areas (see section 6.2.2 of the Grant Opportunity Guidelines).

19) Can you confirm when the Stage 1 EOI is due as I downloaded the Sample Application form on the day the grant opportunity opened and on page 3 it says 5pm AEDT on 1 March 2024 however the grant opportunity guidelines say 5pm AEDT on 16 February 2024.

The Stage One EOI closes for applications at 5pm AEDT on Friday, 16 February 2024. We have edited the wording on the Sample Application form to clarify this.

20) The grant opportunity guidelines say that you are not eligible to apply for the grant if you are a publicly funded research organisation (PFRO) as defined in section 14 of the guidelines. Does this mean that Universities are not eligible to apply for the grant?

Public Funded Research Organisations (PFRO) are not eligible to apply for this grant opportunity.

Section 14 of the Grant Opportunity Guidelines contains the definition of a PFRO as:

All higher education providers listed at [Table A](#) and [Table B](#) of the *Higher Education Support Act 2003* (Cth) and corporate Commonwealth entities, and state and territory business enterprises which undertake publicly funded research.

If your university is listed in either of these tables, they are not eligible to apply; however joint applications (consortia) are acceptable, provided you have a lead not-for-profit organisation that is an eligible entity, and who is the main driver of the project and is eligible to apply. For further information on joint applications, refer to section 7.2 of the Grant Opportunity Guidelines.

21) Are Regional Development Australia and Co-operative Research Centres eligible to apply for the IPO program?

As Regional Development Australia and Co-operative Research Centres are not Government Business Enterprises, they are eligible to apply for this grant opportunity. A list of [Government Business Enterprises](#) is available.

22) Our organisation intends to submit an application for the reopened Stage 2, but we want a not-for-profit affiliate of the previous applicant to submit the application instead of the original organisation.

Only organisations that have been invited to submit an application for the reopened Stage 2 may apply for a grant as part of this grant opportunity (see section 7 of the updated Grant Opportunity Guidelines). The invitation code is not transferable to an affiliate or any other organisation.

23) Is it possible for someone to give me a call to discuss my application as I want to make sure it is worthwhile applying for the reopened Stage 2?

It is a priority for the department that consistent and uniform information be provided to all potential grant recipients to make sure that no party receives an unfair advantage over another. To manage this, we are unable to answer specific questions about proposed projects that you may wish to put forward.

The assessment criteria in section 6 of the updated Grant Opportunity Guidelines provides guidance on how your application will be assessed. If you can put forward an application that can deliver the outcomes the grant opportunity is seeking, we encourage you to apply.

24) Our organisation has been invited to apply for the reopened Stage 2. Another organisation that we know has also been invited to apply. As both of our organisations have been invited to apply for the reopened Stage 2 are there any restrictions on us putting together a joint application?

As long as the applicant that submits the application for the reopened Stage 2 was invited to apply for the grant opportunity, there is no restriction on joint applications (see section 7.2 of the Updated Grant Opportunity Guidelines).

25) What is the total amount available to all Industry Partner Organisations (IPOs)?

The total amount of grant funding available for the reopened Stage 2 is \$1.92 million.

26) Does the Stage 2 application need to be identical to the Stage 1 Expression of Interest (EOI) that we submitted in February 2024?

The Stage 2 application does not need to propose an identical project to the one that was submitted for the Stage 1 EOI. As long as the entity submitting the application for the grant program has been invited to apply for the reopened Stage 2 and otherwise meets the eligibility requirements (see section 4 of the updated Grant Opportunity Guidelines), the application will proceed to be assessed.

For a project to be considered eligible it must:

- be consistent with the objectives and outcomes outlined in section 2.1 of the Grant Opportunity Guidelines
- be tailored to support the specific needs of SMEs and enable them to expand and grow
- include activities to benefit SMEs who are recommended or referred to the Industry Partner Organisation specialist advisory service by the Industry Growth Program Advisers or the department.

27) Can you give us an estimate of the number of clients the Industry Partner Organisation (IPO) will need to service?

The number of clients (or participants of the Industry Growth Program) an Industry Partner Organisation will need to service depends on a few things, including the specialist services they offer, the geographical spread of their service offering and the individual needs of Industry Growth participants, such as their commercial and technological readiness levels and industry sector. The department works closely with all Industry Partner Organisations on the referral process at the time of entering into a grant agreement with successful applicants, and throughout the term of the project.

28) Is the extent of the updates to the Grant Opportunity Guidelines limited to the yellow highlighted sections of the document?

The updates are not limited to the yellow highlighted sections of the document. There are other minor updates such as the need for applicants to attach evidence they are a not-for-profit organisation at the time of submitting their application. The updated guidelines also make it clearer that part of the assessment criteria is the applicant's ability to work with other Industry Partner Organisations to complement the needs of Advisory Services for the Industry Growth Program. This includes the need to demonstrate specific opportunities for collaboration, particularly in advanced manufacturing, with the primary aim of adding value to Industry Growth Program participants and avoiding duplication.

29) Our organisation intends to submit an application for the reopened Stage 2 but we want to apply using a different entity. Is this going to be an issue?

Only organisations that have been invited to submit an application for the reopened Stage 2 may apply for a grant as part of this grant opportunity (see section 7 of the updated Grant Opportunity Guidelines). The invitation code is not transferable to any other organisation.

30) Are you able to share examples of collaboration opportunities with existing IPOs and the Advisory program? Is there any way to have visibility of current projects or advice provided by IPO recipients so current applicants can complement what is already available?

We are unable to provide specific advice on how applicants can demonstrate collaboration opportunities. However, we can share that there are currently five Industry Partner Organisations that have received grants. Details can be found on [our website](#) and further information about grant opportunities can be found at [GrantConnect](#). Applicants can view the websites of the Industry Partner Organisation recipients to consider the activities those Industry Partner Organisations currently offer, noting that services must be tailored to support the specific needs of Industry Growth Program participants with the aim of adding value and avoiding duplication.

31) Can successful applicants charge for events they provide?

Industry Partner Organisations cannot charge Industry Growth Program participants for services they provide as part of this grant opportunity, as the activities are funded by the grant funds received from the Federal Government.

Industry Partner Organisations must not charge for any events they provide as per Section 4.2. of the Grant Opportunity Guidelines: “We can only accept applications from: entities who do not profit from or intend to invest in SMEs participating in the Industry Growth Program, this includes any fees for service.” This applies to the applicant and their project partners. The intent is that the Commonwealth is funding organisations who, as Industry Participation Organisations, will provide free services to startups and SMEs that have been referred to them as part of the Industry Growth Program.

32) What do you mean by horizontal support on advanced manufacturing across National Reconstruction Fund priority areas?

This is your ability to demonstrate you can provide specialist sectorial advice in the advanced manufacturing sector in one or more of the Government’s priority areas for the [National Reconstruction Fund \(NRF\)](#).

The department is looking to enhance Industry Growth Program Advisory Services to embed greater sectorial knowledge and expertise in advanced manufacturing across the priority areas for the NRF that are not already delivered by the existing Industry Partner Organisations. This could include highly specialised advice or access to physical spaces or equipment that are not already available via existing pathways (government and non-government).

As a guide only, applicants may wish to consider the [CSIRO Advanced Manufacturing Roadmap Report \(2021\)](#) definition for advanced manufacturing in your response:

- Set of technology-based offerings, systems and processes that will be used to transition the current manufacturing sector into one that is centred on adding value across entire supply chains.
- Advanced manufacturing can be applied equally to traditional manufacturing industries and those that are being continually discovered through the expansion and evolution of the sector.

At point 2.1, the Grant Opportunity Guidelines note the Industry Growth Program provides expert advice on commercialisation and early-stage business growth to startups and high-growth SMEs operating within NRF priority areas. This advice is provided by the department's [Industry Growth Program Advisers](#), and is complemented by sectoral expertise from the Industry Partner Organisations engaged through this grant opportunity.

33) Can you please clarify the requirements for the required National security plan in Question F11 and the extent/level the department sees as appropriate or expected for this project?

Specifically, what is the department's expectation of the level of certification in each of these areas:

1. IT / cyber security related (from simple Essential-8 to DISP, and preferred Maturity Level)
2. document classifications (from simple MS based processes to department compatible Janus Seal)
3. personnel (from simple police clearance to security clearances by AGSVA?).

Section 13.6 of the Grant Opportunity Guidelines states that it is your responsibility to identify and manage any risks that may have national security implications. Production of a national security plan may be necessary depending on the nature of your business and the projects in which you are involved.

The applicant should present information that it has a plan and measures in place that are appropriate. The start-ups and SMEs participating in the Industry Growth Program will be businesses with novel and innovative projects at various technology readiness level stages and will be protective of their information, and the applicant should keep this in mind regarding the assistance they intend to offer.

More information can be found at the following sites regarding [international collaboration](#) and [cybersecurity](#), including the Australian Signals Directorate [essential eight maturity model](#) which is a mitigation strategy designed to help organisations protect themselves against various cyber threats.

34) How will IPOs generate clientele? Will they have to self-recruit or with the department or IGP assist?

Industry Partner Organisations cannot generate or recruit their own clients, or start-ups and SMEs to engage in services. These start-ups and SMEs must have been found eligible for the Industry Growth Program, and the department or the Industry Growth Program Advisers refer these participants to a suitable Industry Partner Organisations based on their business or individual needs.

For more information on the Industry Growth Program service, see the program's [industry.gov.au](#) or [business.gov.au](#) webpages.

35) Applications are due in less than 2 weeks. This is a very late-stage information session. Is there any chance of extending the due date?

There is no opportunity to extend the due date as applicants that are offered a grant through this program will be contracted through a grant agreement to commence in November 2024.

36) With only \$1.92m available, how many grants are you expecting to award in this round?

With the minimum grant amount of \$500,000 the most grants that we can award is three. Depending on the applications the department receives that are assessed to be meritorious to receive a grant, the number of grants awarded will either be one, two or three.

37) Would you be able to give some context as to why this has been reopened and the background to the changes to the guidelines, please?

The increased demand from SMEs that are in the advanced manufacturing space is great enough to warrant having more specialised services available to them.

38) You already rejected our proposal once, what has changed this time around?

The original EOI Stage 1 applications were not rejected. This is a competitive process and in the previous round other applications were assessed to be more competitive and were invited to apply for Stage 2. The Grant Opportunity Guidelines for this re-opened grant are more targeted, and applicants from the original EOI Stage 1 are invited to re-apply with these updated guidelines considered.

39) In relation to collaborations between organisations, can a secondary/partner organisation (ie. not the primary applicant) be an investor and/or get fees for service?

The cost of providing agreed project activities by your project partners are contract expenditure, refer to section A.4 (Contract expenditure) of the Grant Opportunity Guidelines. This expenditure must relate directly to the project activities and be evidenced. The costs must be reasonable and appropriate for the activities performed.

The Grantee and project partners must not seek to gain any commercial advantage when providing industry-led specialised and sectoral focussed advisory services at no cost to participating start-ups and SMEs throughout the term of the grant agreement. This includes charging fees for service or investing in start-ups and SMEs participating in the Industry Growth Program.

40) Can we still seek feedback on our previous submission?

Yes, please email the team at IPOGGrants@industry.gov.au and they will arrange a suitable time with you.

41) The guidelines says that \$10.8M is available. Why is there only \$1.92m for this round?

\$10.8 million is the budget allocated to the Industry Partner Organisation grant opportunity in its entirety. Five grants have already been awarded. This reopened round is to award the remaining \$1.92 million.

42) How long do you anticipate the contracting process to take?

Based on the experience from the previous round for the Industry Partner Organisation grant opportunity, we expect grant agreements to be finalised within approximately one month from the point an offer is made. However, this can differ from project to project, depending on the complexity of the project and if any additional information is required.

43) Who are the Industry Growth Program Advisers?

Information about the Industry Growth Program's national network of Advisers can be viewed on the [department's website](#).

44) Are group-styled project activities favourable (eg. workshops, group training)?

This is dependent on the project and the services the applicant intends to offer as well as the applicant's understanding of the needs of the start-ups and SMEs they are targeting. As this is a competitive grants process, applicants need to demonstrate how well their project will meet the objectives and outcomes of the program to support SMEs and advanced manufacturing. This can be via a range of delivery mechanisms, including group and individual activities.