



Australian Government
Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade



AUSTRALIAN NGO GENDER ACTION PLATFORM – APPLICATION GUIDELINES

September 2016

SECTION 1: BACKGROUND AND INTRODUCTION

The GAP is a \$10 million grant process for NGOs accredited under the Australian NGO Cooperation Program (ANCP) to strengthen gender equality programming in developing countries.

These guidelines explain the competitive grant process, which will be run in accordance with the Commonwealth Grant Guidelines, to select NGOs to implement the GAP. The GAP operates as a separate grant round to the ANCP. To ensure a streamlined program management approach, where appropriate, the GAP will operate in line with the ANCP Manual.¹

SECTION 2: ELIGIBILITY

2.1 ORGANISATIONAL ELIGIBILITY

All ANCP accredited NGOs are eligible to submit one project proposal per organisation only. In line with ANCP manual, proposals are required to commit \$1 for every \$5 that DFAT provides under the GAP (1:5 match). Full NGOs may apply for grant funding within the range of \$500,000 and \$3 million. Base NGO may apply for grant funding of \$500,000.

All NGOs are advised to carefully consider organisational capacity to implement the project. It is strongly recommended that NGOs consider collaboration with other ANCP NGOs through a consortium appropriate to the project size, scope, complexity and level of funding. It is expected that as ANCP accredited NGOs, these organisations have the capacity and systems in place to deliver high quality development projects. All applications should contain enough information to demonstrate relevant experience, management capacity and technical expertise to implement the proposed project.

2.2 PROJECT ELIGIBILITY

To be eligible, projects must have a principal or significant focus on gender quality by being gender specific or mainstreaming gender through other sectoral projects.

Proposals must identify their target focus in line with DFAT's Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment Strategy.² As with the ANCP, proposals should align with the overarching goals of the Australian aid policy.³

All project proposals must comply with the principles, policies, eligibility criteria and restrictions on projects as outlined in Section 5 in the ANCP Manual. In addition, please note that no proposals will be considered for delivery in Afghanistan.

DFAT has also identified priority country and/or regional gender equality challenges to help target the work of coalitions around key issues, refer to *Attachment B*. Proposals addressing challenges outside of those nominated by Post that have particular innovative merits will also be assessed.

¹ <http://dfat.gov.au/about-us/publications/Pages/australian-ngo-cooperation-program-manual.aspx>

² <http://dfat.gov.au/about-us/publications/Documents/gender-equality-and-womens-empowerment-strategy.pdf>

³ *Australian aid: promoting prosperity, reducing poverty, enhancing stability* <http://dfat.gov.au/aid/pages/australias-aid-program.aspx>

2.3 WORKING IN CONSORTIUM

NGOs are encouraged to develop and deliver projects in collaboration or partnership with a range of delivery partners. This could include but is not limited to the private sector, governments, other ANCP NGOs or other non-traditional networks.

To be eligible for a grant, an ANCP NGO must be identified as the Lead Organisation. The Lead Organisation in a consortium will manage the grant agreement including accountability of all funds. The Lead Organisation is responsible to DFAT for the performance of the consortium under the grant agreement to achieve the proposed objectives. The grant agreement shall be signed with the Lead Organisation.

Proposals involving multiple ANCP NGO partners must detail all of the delivery partners that will be implementing the project, noting the relationship between the lead organisation and other partners.

An ANCP NGO may be part of more than one consortium for GAP funding but may only be the lead organisation for one project.

2.4 LEARNING

Successful NGOs will be expected to contribute to shared learning on good gender equality practice and lessons from trialling new approaches with GAP NGOs and the broader ANCP. This shared learning will contribute to strengthened NGO projects that enhance gender equality outcomes in developing countries. This may include workshops in Australia or overseas to work with successful NGOs during planning and the broader ANCP to share results following implementation.

2.5 SUBMISSION

Proposals must be submitted via the electronic “Smartygrants” application system and must be completed in accordance with the Smartygrants application form (refer to *Attachment A: Invitation to Submit an Activity Proposal*). The login details will be emailed to ANCP NGO program contacts.

GAP funding is for *projects* addressing gender inequality that are discrete investments in particular countries, contexts and/or sectors, with a specific start and end date and identified funding. *Program* proposals are not eligible for funding under this grant. A project is not restricted to one country, context, sector or year of implementation (within the 3 year implementation timeframe). The terms ‘*Project*’ and ‘*Program*’ are defined in the ANCP Manual in Section 6.

SECTION 3: SELECTION CRITERIA

Project proposals will be assessed against the following selection criteria:

GAP SELECTION CRITERIA		CRITERIA CONSIDERATIONS	Weighting
Mandatory		The project must be a new or existing project that has a principal or significant focus on gender equality and demonstrates alignment to the Australian Aid Program.	Pass/Fail
1	Relevance	Appropriate solution to a development challenge in the social and political context for which it is proposed <i>and</i> Demonstrates alignment to country/regional gender equality challenges <i>and/or</i> Clear explanation of how the new or scaled up project demonstrates innovation by improving the lives of people in developing countries more effectively than existing approaches.	25%
2	Effectiveness (Impact and Results)	Gender equality outcomes are realistic and have a direct and transformative impact. Will provide demonstrated measurable improvements for the conditions of women/girls. High quality gender analysis informs design and implementation, including consideration of do no harm principle, recognition of cultural context and power relations and politics that drive gender inequality.	40%
3	Value for Money	Clearly defines effective, ethical, efficient and economical use of funds.	10%
4	Development approach	Effective Partnerships – the benefit of relationship and the role of each partner is clearly defined. Capability – the NGO and its partners have relevant experience, management capacity and technical expertise to manage the level of funding and implement the project. Sustainability – a sustainable approach is articulated from the outset including a clear exit strategy. Policy Alignment – demonstrated adherence to DFAT policies, including inclusive development, safeguards, fraud and risk.	25%
Total			100%

Please note, selection criteria are broken down into more detail in the *Invitation to Submit an Activity Proposal*, Attachment A.

SECTION 4: APPLICATION PROCESS & INDICATIVE TIMELINE

4.1 INDICATIVE TIMELINE

The indicative timeline for this competitive grants process is summarised in the table below:

Event	Time / Date
Call for proposals	September 2016
Closing date for proposals	8am, 30 November 2016
Expected announcement of successful projects	April 2017
Tranche payment	May 2017
Commence programming	1 July 2017

4.2 SUBMISSION CLOSING DATE

The deadline for proposals is **8am Australian Eastern Daylight Time on Wednesday 30 November 2016**.

4.3 ASSESSMENT

Proposals will be screened by DFAT to ensure they have been submitted correctly and conform to the requirements as set out in these guidelines and the Invitation to Submit an Activity Proposal (ISAP) form, refer to *Attachment A*.

Conforming proposals will be assessed by a Technical Advisory Group (TAG) comprising of DFAT personnel. The TAG will assess proposals against the selection criteria and provide a report to the Selection Panel (consisting of DFAT senior personnel) that summarises the TAG's:

- technical assessment of each proposal against the Selection Criteria; and
- financial assessment of each proposal.

The report will provide recommendations on preferred applicants in ranked groupings (*not suitable; suitable; highly suitable*) for the Selection Panel's consideration. In addition to the TAG's recommendations, the Selection Panel will consider the strategic impact of the overall program in ranking preferred applicants, taking into consideration:

- the risk profile;
- geographic spread;
- sectoral variety; and
- NGO size distribution.

The Selection Panel will then recommend proposals in ranked order to the DFAT delegate, who will make the final decision on successful projects.

A proposal may be selected by the panel as suitable for a grant amount less than the proposed amount in the application. The ANCP NGO will be given the opportunity to revise the project funding to the proposed amount or redesign the project, for example by amending the project scope or the scale to align with the offered grant amount.

The panels are conducted on a confidential basis, and panel members must not discuss matters relating to the assessment of any proposal with any external party. Applicants must not seek contact with any members of the panel, and any such contact will be considered a breach of confidentiality and may result in DFAT rejecting the proposal of the applicant concerned.

The Selection Panel may use other information outside the ISAP in their assessments, including organisational review reports, Partner Performance Assessments or annual reports in their assessments. In line with the ANCP, DFAT Country Programs and/or Posts may review proposals to assess development, financial or reputational risks to DFAT. Other areas within the Department may also provide advice on project proposals, if requested. The Selection Panel will take this advice into consideration during the selection process.

Unsuccessful GAP applications may be forwarded to relevant areas of DFAT for funding consideration.

4.4 DEBRIEFING APPLICANTS

Applicants are entitled to request a written debriefing on the results of the assessment of their proposals once a Grant Agreement has been signed with the successful applicants. This debriefing will provide information on scores achieved against individual criterion and summary comments from the panel. DFAT will not enter into discussion or communications on the content of the assessment once it has been issued.

4.5 COMPLAINTS

DFAT's Complaints Handling Procedures Relating to Procurement will apply.⁴

SECTION 5: PROGRAM MANAGEMENT

5.1 PROJECT CYCLES

GAP project timing will follow the ANCP program cycle:

Requirement	Date
Submission of GAPPlans	30 June
Performance Reports and Financial Acquittals due (from previous financial year's project)	30 September

5.2 GAPPLANS

GAP funding for a project may be distributed over up to three years. The proposal must reflect the details of the project over the whole project period (up to three years). However, in line with the ANCP cycle, NGOs will be required to submit a GAPPlan by 30 June each year with the project details for the coming year to help DFAT assess project progress. GAPPlans will be reviewed in line with the ANCP ADPlan process.

⁴ <http://www.dfat.gov.au/about-us/publications/Pages/complaints-handling-procedures-procurement.aspx>.

5.3 REVISING GAPPLANS

Revisions to GAPPlans are allowed where the project is strengthened, including through learning workshops, to deliver the intentions of the original project proposal. Refer to the ANCP Manual 6.2 under the heading *Revising ADPlans* for advice on the revision of GAPPlans.

5.4 ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REPORTS

NGOs will be required to report on the GAPPlan each year for the duration of the project, in line with the ANCP cycle. NGOs will submit Annual Performance Reports for funding under the GAP in Smartygrants on 30 September annually from 2018. The Performance Report will contain annual achievements and the annual financial acquittal. Performance Reports must be certified by an authorised officer from the NGO. Refer to ANCP Manual Section 6.2. Three year projects will be expected to undertake a commensurate evaluation, in line with the ANCP. Appropriate budgeting should be noted in the proposal.

5.5 FUNDING

Funding for the project will be provided in one tranche payment in May 2017.

In line with Section 4.8 of the ANCP Manual, Australian NGOs will be required to match 20% (or one dollar for every five dollars) that DFAT provides under the GAP over the life of the project. This match can be contributed against the annual budget instead of as an upfront match to the total project amount. For NGOs working in consortium, the match can be split amongst NGOs.

In line with Sections 7.1 and 7.5 of the ANCP Manual, NGOs may use up to 10 per cent of grant funding for Administrative costs and up to 10 per cent on Project Design, Monitoring and Evaluation costs.

SECTION 6: CONTACT DETAILS

6.1 DFAT CONTACT

All correspondence in regards to the GAP must be submitted to: gap@dfat.gov.au

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A: Invitation to Submit an Activity Proposal

Attachment B: Country/regional Gender Equality Challenges