



Pacific Research Program

Guidelines and Templates

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Section 1: Background and Introduction

1. Research-based evidence contributes to development innovation and high-quality aid policy and programming. Providing access to high-quality research and analysis of the Pacific assists the design of targeted aid programs and effective and efficient policies that are evidence-based. The Australian aid program supports practical, policy-relevant social science research into development challenges and opportunities for sustainable economic growth and poverty reduction in Melanesia and the region.
2. The next phase of Pacific research will need to build on DFAT's twenty-year investment in supporting scholarship and research on the region.
3. The Pacific Research Program will provide \$20 million over four years to fund high-quality, policy-relevant research that is available, accessible and communicated to the policy development and program design community in Australia, the Pacific and from around the world. Research undertaken through the program will focus on the intersection of politics, economy and power with the region's most pressing development challenges. The geographic scope of the program will be the Pacific region as a whole, with Melanesia as an area of particular interest.
4. These Guidelines explain the Competitive Grant Process to select a grantee to implement the Pacific Research Program. The program design document (Annex 3) outlines the rationale and approach of the program.

Section 2: Operational objectives

5. The Pacific Research Program aims to contribute to the goal of economic resilience, poverty reduction, security and stability in the Pacific region. It will support that goal by contributing to sound policy-making and program design by the Government of Australia and its partner governments and organisations, through the provision of relevant evidence, effectively communicated.
6. The following end-of-program outcomes will contribute to that goal through the achievement of a globally pre-eminent centre of excellence for research on the Pacific that:
 - a. Produces high-quality policy relevant research that is available, accessible and communicated to policy makers and program designers in Australia, the Pacific and from around the world
 - b. Plays a central role in fostering and facilitating a strong and vibrant Pacific-Australia-New Zealand-wide network of research on the Pacific
 - c. Is connected to Australia's broader engagement with the Pacific and fosters a greater knowledge and understanding of the Pacific among the Australian community
 - d. Demonstrates through external mid-term peer review a high degree of effectiveness in contributing to evidence-based policy-making and program design primarily in Australia and also the Pacific and around the world.

7. Six intermediate outcomes will underpin those end-of-program outcomes:
 - i. Accessible research products and in-person interactions effectively communicate and make available relevant research findings to Australian and Pacific island policy-makers and program designers
 - ii. Research products are publicly available
 - iii. An international network of researchers is cultivated
 - iv. The next generation of Australian researchers of the Pacific region is developed
 - v. Greater research and communication capacity among Pacific island country researchers
 - vi. Accessible research products and media interactions effectively communicate relevant research findings to the Australian public

Section 3: Eligibility criteria

8. Applications are open to Australian based organisations or consortium with an Australian Based Lead Organisation.
9. Organisations submitting proposals must not have any reason preventing them from operating in Australia and the Pacific.
10. Organisations should note that individuals with conflicting commitments and current and Former DFAT Employees must not be included in the Activity Proposal or as individuals who may be engaged by the applicant if selected through the assessment process described in this Guideline. DFAT may reject any Activity Proposal which does not disclose the fact that a proposed team member has an existing and continuing commitment to another project or activity.
11. Activity Proposals compiled with the assistance of current DFAT employees or Former DFAT Employees will be excluded from consideration.
12. Former DFAT Employee means a person who was previously employed by DFAT, whose employment ceased within the last 9 months, and who was substantially involved in the design, preparation, appraisal, review and or daily management of the program to which this grant program relates.
13. Consortia that include international organisations are eligible as long as there is an Australian Based lead organisation.
14. Consortium proposals must be accompanied by a separate letter from each partner providing information about itself, noting the relationship between the Lead Organisation and partner organisation(s) and expressing the intent to collaborate.
15. The Lead Organisation in a consortium will be accountable for all funds. The Grant Agreement shall be signed with the Lead Organisation, and the Lead Organisation is responsible to DFAT for the performance of the consortium under the Grant Agreement to achieve the objectives as required.
16. Organisations may be involved in several consortia and proposals.

17. DFAT reserves the right to reassess any proposal if, following submission, the membership of the successful consortium proposal changes, including withdrawing consortium member(s).

Proposal eligibility

18. In order to be eligible your proposal must:

- a. Be completed in accordance with the 'Invitation to Submit an Activity Proposal' including:
 - i. Section 3.1
 - ii. Section 3.2
 - iii. Section 3.3
 - iv. Section 3.4
 - v. Section 3.5
 - vi. Section 3.6
 - vii. Section 3.7
- b. In completing the above sections, the applicant must propose how they would work with the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade and Partner Governments.
- c. Proposals may include salaries and costs for staff as well as other costs including office costs, equipment related to community assistance activities, workshop costs and travel costs and allowances for staff and communities.
- d. Proposals must not exceed must not exceed AU\$20 million over 4 years of Australian Government funding (proposals may include additional co-funding amounts)

Section 4: Application process and indicative timeline

4.1 Indicative timeline

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

Event	Time / Date
1 April 2017	Call for proposals issued
30 May 2017 (17:00 Canberra time)	Deadline for proposals to be submitted

June 2017	Proposals assessed
End June 2017	Preferred grantee notified Partnership Workshop Negotiation of funding agreement
1 July 2017	Implementation commences First quarterly Governance Committee meeting approves 2017-18 research plan

4.2 Applicant briefings

20. DFAT will hold one applicant briefing for potential respondents:
10am, Friday 28 April 2017 at DFAT offices, Canberra, ACT
21. DFAT reserves the right to cancel an applicant briefing.
22. The applicant briefings will be an opportunity for interested organisations to ask questions on the Pacific Research Program design, submission process and implementation.
23. All questions, answers, and presentations from the briefings will be published on the DFAT website(<http://dfat.gov.au/about-us/business-opportunities/tenders/Pages/business-notifications.aspx>), so that any organisation unable to attend has equal access to information.
24. Organisations planning to attend either applicant briefing must RSVP to the DFAT Contact Officer (PacificResearchGrant@dfat.gov.au) by 19 April 2017.

4.3 Deadline for proposal submission

25. The deadline for proposal submission is 17:00 (local time, Canberra) on 30 May 2017.
26. Assessment will be a one-step process, so a full proposal must be submitted for assessment.

4.4 Conformance check

27. Proposals received by the deadline will first be checked to be conforming bids by DFAT to ensure the organisation and proposed project meet the eligibility criteria required and detailed in Section 3. At DFAT's sole discretion, those proposals deemed nonconforming will be excluded, and those applicants will be advised by DFAT at this stage.
28. Conforming proposals will be assessed by an expert panel selected by DFAT.
29. The panel will assess proposals against the Selection Criteria given in Section 5.

4.6 Assessment and Past Performance Information

30. The panel will provide the DFAT delegate with a report that:
- a. summarises the panel's assessment of each proposal against the Selection Criteria; and
 - b. recommends a preferred applicant and lists other suitable applicants in ranked order for the DFAT delegate's consideration and approval.
31. The panel is 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.
32. In making its assessment of a proposal, the panel may have regard to other factors relevant to the suitability, capacity and qualifications of an applicant organisation including but not limited to:
- a. checking with nominated referees and with other persons or organisations as DFAT chooses, the accuracy of information and quality of previous work performed including the resourcing of previous work;
 - b. interviewing the Applicant; and
 - c. information obtained from any legitimate, verifiable source, which is relevant to the capacity of the applicants. Such information may be the result of inquiries made by DFAT, and will be raised with the if needed.
33. Previous performance information may only be provided to panel members where it is considered relevant. Panel members may not introduce irrelevant issues or hearsay into the assessment or base their assessment on information that is hearsay and cannot be substantiated.

4.7 Debriefing of applicants

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

4.8 Complaints

36. DFAT's Complaints Handling Procedures Relating to Procurement will apply. <http://www.dfat.gov.au/about-us/publications/Pages/complaints-handling-procedures-procurement.aspx>

Section 5: Assessment

5.1 Assessment outcome

37. Through this process, DFAT shall select one proposal to receive funding to implement the Pacific Research Program.

5.2 Selection Criteria

38. Proposals will be assessed based on the following Selection Criteria:

No.	Selection Criteria	Leading questions
Organisational Effectiveness		Weighting: 55%
1	Delivery of a high-quality program of research, including developing the capacity of up-and-coming Australian and Pacific Islander researchers (Weighting 40%)	How will the research program be organised? What staffing profile is required? Describe the suite of research activities to be undertaken. What is the proposed research agenda, for Year One and in broad terms for the life of the program? What outreach and network building will be conducted? How will the capacity of researchers and partner research institutions be built? What else is required to deliver the end-of-program outcomes?
2	Exercising influence through outstanding leadership (Weighting 15%)	Who will lead the program? Who will be the leading figures associated with the program? How will this person/people exercise influence in the Australian policy-making community? How will they exercise influence in the policy-making communities in the Pacific region? How will they influence public discourse in Australia?
Activity Effectiveness		Weighting 37.5%
3	Communicating research findings to the Australian and Pacific region policy-making community, and the broader public (Weighting 15%)	What is the program's strategy for proactively communicating with influence? Who will be the target audiences? What products will communicate research findings to the various audiences? What interactions will facilitate discussion about research findings with policy-makers? What networks will be cultivated and/or utilised? How will the program engage with the Australian public?
4	Monitoring and evaluating research-driven policy influence (Weighting 15%)	How will the program capture and present data on policy influence? How will the program demonstrate progress towards and achievement of the end-of-program outcomes?
5	Delivering on DFAT's cross-cutting priorities (Weighting 7.5%)	How will gender equality and disability inclusiveness be addressed through the research agenda? How will the program advance gender equality and promote empowerment of women and girls in the way it is conducted? How will the program consider and promote disability inclusiveness in the way it is conducted? How will the program strengthen links with and involvement of the Australian research community working on indigenous issues in Australia? What linkages to the private sector will be created, in Australia and overseas?
Achieving Value with Relevant Money		Weighting 7.5%
6	Co-funding and/or co-contribution	Will the bidder provide co-funding to the program? What (if any) in-kind contributions will be provided by the bidder? Are there opportunities to leverage other funding (for example, from the private sector) to support achievement of the end-of-program outcomes? How will the bidder provide value-for-money?

Section 6: Safeguards and cross-cutting issues

39. All organisations (including all partners in a consortium) *must* comply with DFAT's safeguards policies including *Child Protection Policy*.

Section 7: Activity proposal format

40. Proposals must be submitted using the Pacific Research Program Invitation to Submit an Activity Proposal template at Annex 1.

Section 8: Contractual, reporting and acquittal requirements

41. The successful applicant will be engaged via a Grant Agreement/Funding Order with the Organisation and DFAT. Terms and conditions of the Grant Agreement/Funding Order are included in Annex 2 to these Guidelines.

Section 9: Contact Person

42. The contact person for this competitive grants process is:

PacificResearchGrant@dfat.gov.au

Annex 1: Invitation to Submit an Activity Proposal template

Annex 2: Draft Grant Agreement/Funding order

Annex 3: Program Design Document