
AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT GRANTS AND ASSISTANCE
AGRICULTURAL TRADE AND MARKET ACCESS COOPERATION

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Paper 014-053
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1. Introduction

Grants are available for projects aimed at promoting cooperation in accessing international markets, through the Agricultural Trade and Market Access Cooperation (ATMAC) programme.

The ATMAC programme is administered by the Department of Agriculture and Water Resources to support Australian agricultural industry:

- open, improve and maintain access to overseas markets for Australian agricultural products;
- build stronger relationships with trading partners, neighbouring countries and international organisations.

2. Programme Objective

The programme objective is to open, improve and/or maintain access to overseas markets for Australian agricultural products by building stronger relationships with trading partners, neighbouring countries and international organisations.

The focus of the ATMAC programme is to support projects that aim to achieve the programme objective by:

- undertaking research and development in collaboration with trading partners to help identify, use, open or improve mutually beneficial agricultural trade opportunities;
- working with overseas governments and international organisations to develop common regulatory and technical requirements and standards;
- building evidence to inform Australia's position on international agricultural trade policy and advocacy of standards;
- sharing technical expertise and research to increase trading partners' knowledge of Australia's biosecurity, food safety and compliance regimes and practices and to increase their preparedness to respond to exotic pest and disease incursions;
- promoting good biosecurity risk management practices, improving scientific capabilities and strengthening surveillance efforts in trading partner and neighbouring countries;
- helping Australia meet its international obligations, such as commitments made under the World Trade Organization Sanitary and Phytosanitary Agreement.

3. Funding

Total grant programme funding of \$3.1 million (GST exclusive) is available over four years from 1 July 2015 to 30 June 2019.

Individual grants are available in the range of \$55,000 to \$1.65 million (GST inclusive) and are allocated until the total funding available for each financial year has been filled.

Funding available for each financial year:

- 2015–16: \$55,000
- 2016–17: \$1.65 million
- 2017–18: \$1.65 million
- 2018–19: \$55,000

4. Programme Dates

The Department of Agriculture and Water Resources (the department) will accept applications for programme funding at any time until **31 December 2018** or until all funds have been allocated.

The department will advise on the Agricultural Trade and Market Access Cooperation programme web page when funding is no longer available for that financial year.

All agreements, payments and project activities should be finalised before **30 June 2019**.

5. Eligibility

To be eligible for funding under the ATMAC programme, applicants whether an individual or an organisation must:

- have an Australian Business Number (ABN);
- be capable of entering into a legally binding agreement with the Commonwealth;
- seek project funding of at least \$55,000 (GST inclusive).

This includes:

- individuals
- companies incorporated under the *Corporation Act 2001*;
- incorporated associations incorporated under state or territory association incorporation legislation;
- Indigenous corporations incorporated under the *Corporations (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island) Act 2006*;
- body corporates created under state or territory legislation, including local governments and universities;
- legal constituted partnerships (all partners must sign or authorise the signing of the agreement);
- industry bodies;
- education, research and academic institutions;
- rural and regional associations;
- state and territory and local governments and their agencies;

Location of eligible project activities can be in Australia or overseas.

6. Eligible Projects

Project activities that are likely to meet the programme objective and attract funding include:

- research and development projects;
- training programmes;
- practical demonstration activities;
- supporting delegation visits, missions or technical exchanges;
- attending relevant conferences or workshops;
- working groups.

Projects may occur in Australia or overseas.

Applicants may apply for funding for projects that benefit partner organisations based overseas, provided they meet all other programme criteria.

7. Ineligible Project Activities and Costs

Programme funding will not be provided for:

- activities undertaken before an application is approved under the ATMAC programme or before an agreement is signed by both the department and the successful applicant;
- activities that support or promote the benefit of a single commercial enterprise;
- activities that duplicate or are very similar to those funded under other Australian or state and territory government programmes;
- activities that may distort trade or disadvantage Australian agricultural industries;
- administrative costs incurred by the applicant in making an application;
- costs associated with protecting or patenting intellectual property;
- costs associated with projects of a solely commercial nature;
- costs not directly incurred in carrying out the project (including overhead costs).

Funding co-contributions, including in-kind contributions by the applicant or a third party, are not required, but will be looked upon favourably, particularly where such contributions are likely to improve project outcomes.

The amount of funding or resources to be contributed by the applicant, industry sector or a third party should be detailed, agreed in writing, signed and attached to the application form.

8. Applications

Applications can be downloaded from the [ATMAC Programme web page](#).

Will be accepted on an ongoing, non-competitive basis and assessed against approved ATMAC grant programme guidelines and identified funding priorities on their own merit.

Applications may be sought by the department for projects that target and address identified gaps or challenges, or respond to an urgent trade need.

Applications accepted on an ongoing, non-competitive basis will be considered in the order they are received. If funds are not available, applications will not be considered. If funding for the year has been allocated, the application may be considered in the next financial year unless the ATMAC programme is in its final year.

The department may seek an application for a project where a trade issue arises that needs urgent resolution and no applications have been already submitted for a project that would address the issue. The department may also decide to seek an application where, for example, none of the applications received to date address an identified gap or a challenge that the department considers needs to be addressed.

Any applications sought by the department will be considered in isolation of the applications accepted on an ongoing, non-competitive basis and will take precedence. An invitation to submit an application is no guarantee that funding will be provided.

If less than \$55,000 (GST inclusive) remains in the programme budget near the end of a financial year or the end of the ATMAC programme, the department may award less than \$55,000 to an applicant.

Completed applications and supporting documentation or attachments should be emailed to the programme manager or signed and posted in hard copy to:

Programme Manager
Agricultural Trade and Market Access Cooperation programme
Trade and Market Access Division
Department of Agriculture and Water Resources
GPO Box 858
Canberra ACT 2601

Successful applicants will be required to enter into an agreement with the Commonwealth before receiving any funding. Funded projects must not start until an agreement is in place.

Payment details will be negotiated as part of each agreement. The department may make payments on entering into the agreement or as milestone payments. Grant payments will be paid on delivery of milestone/s outlined in the agreement.

9. Assessment and Selection Criteria

All applications will be registered and treated securely. Access will only be provided to the programme manager, assessment panel and other individuals authorised to assess applications.

The department will acknowledge receipt of applications within ten working days.

The assessment of applications will follow a three-stage process involving evaluation against:

1. Eligibility criteria
2. Assessment criteria
3. Other assessment considerations.

To be recommended for funding, an application must pass each stage of the assessment process.

Stage 1 - Eligibility Criteria

The applicant (an individual or an organisation) must:

- have an Australian Business Number (ABN) and be capable of entering into a legally binding agreement with the Commonwealth;
- seek project funding of at least \$55,000 (GST inclusive).

The programme manager will examine all applications to ensure they meet the eligibility criteria.

Eligible applications and applications with incomplete information will be forwarded to the assessment panel for assessment. If all elements of the application form are not addressed, the assessment panel may not recommend the application for funding.

Ineligible applicants will be advised of the reasons for their ineligibility.

Stage 2 - Assessment Criteria

Each eligible application will be assessed individually by each assessment panel member before being considered by the panel as a whole. The assessment panel will assess eligible applications on their own merit against the weighted assessment criteria, as per the scoring regime and in accordance with the assessment plan.

Assessment Criteria

Weightings will be applied to each criterion as follows:

- Assessment Criterion 1: 30%
- Assessment Criterion 2: 30%
- Assessment Criterion 3: 30%
- Assessment Criterion 4: 10%

Assessment Criterion 1 - Suitability

Assessment of the suitability of the application will be based on how well the application:

- articulates the project and identifies the activities, activity providers, other parties involved in the project, beneficiaries, outputs and outcomes;
- demonstrates that the applicant and/or the intended activity provider has the relevant qualifications and experience to deliver the project effectively;
- describes how the project will contribute to achieving the programme objective (see Programme objective) and one or more of the funding priorities.

Assessment Criterion 2 - Feasibility

Assessment of whether the application is realistic, reasonable and achievable will be based on how well it demonstrates that:

- the methodology or approach to undertaking the project is technically, logistically or otherwise feasible
- the time frame in which the project will occur is realistic for achieving intended objectives and milestones (where relevant)
- the applicant and/or the intended activity provider has the capacity (for example, resources and competency) to deliver the project on time and to budget and to manage any associated risks
- it is supported by stakeholders in Australia and/or the relevant target market.

Assessment Criterion 3 – Value For Money

Assessment of whether the application represents good value for money will be based on:

- the quality of the detailed budget plan and justifications for the level of funding requested;
- details of sources of in-kind or third-party contributions (where applicable) and how this will increase the likelihood of the intended outcome;
- the outline of risks associated with the budget plan and details of any risk mitigation strategies;
- evidence that it does not duplicate grants or funding provided to the applicant under this or any other Australian, state and territory government programme over the past five years.

Assessment Criterion 4 – Monitoring And Evaluation

Assessment of whether the project can be monitored, evaluated and reported will be based on the applicant's ability to:

- outline how they will monitor, evaluate and report on the project;
- provide clear and meaningful performance indicators for the project;
- outline the types of evidence they will use to measure the project's success.

Scoring Regime

Applications must receive at least a 50% score for each criterion plus an overall score of at least 70% from the assessment panel to progress to Stage 3 (other assessment considerations). The assessment panel must use the scoring regime in Table 2 when assessing applications.

Table 2 Scoring Regime To Be Used By The Assessment Panel

Rating	Description	Score
Excellent	Exceeds requirements in all ways	9–10
Good	Meets requirements in all ways and exceeds them in some ways	7–8
Satisfactory	Meets requirements and is feasible	5–6
Marginal	Nearly meets requirements and is feasible but may be deficient in some areas	3–4
Poor	Does not meet requirements, has provided insufficient information or is inconsistent with the programme objective	0–2

There is no direct correlation between a high score and the amount of funding that the assessment panel might recommend be awarded for a project. The amount of funding will be dependent on factors such as the availability of ATMAC programme funds and the amount sought in the application. As such, a project with a higher score than a similar project already considered by the assessment panel may be offered a lesser amount or no funding.

Stage 3 Other Assessment Considerations

For those applications that the assessment panel gives at least a 50% score for each criterion plus an overall score of at least 70%, the assessment panel will consider whether approval of an application, in the context of projects already approved for funding under the ATMAC programme, would help ensure the programme achieves a reasonable:

- focus on funding priorities;
- distribution of projects across Australia, its agricultural sectors or industries;
- distribution of project types or activities;
- balance across trading partners being targeted by applicants.

This is to ensure that, to the extent possible, projects funded under the ATMAC programme are spread across regions, industries, activities and/or trading partners. For example, an eligible application that has scored highly in Stage 2 but is very similar to a project that has already been approved for funding may be refused funding. This helps to mitigate the risk that one industry in one region benefits from the ATMAC programme at the expense of others only because it has submitted several applications before others.

At the end of Stage 3, recommendations on the applications will be provided to the minister or delegate of the department for decision.

Applicants may be asked for clarification if their application contains insufficient information to support their claims. To ensure these applicants do not have an unfair advantage, the probity officer will review the clarification to ensure it does not provide additional information to that requested. On the probity officer's advice, the programme manager will forward the applicant's clarification to the assessment panel for consideration.

The assessment panel may consult subject matter experts when selecting applications. This will be done in association with the probity officer.

Procedures for decision-making take into account potential conflicts of interest and confidentiality to ensure impartial selection, on their own merit, of applications according to the three-stage assessment process.

The assessment panel will document its reasons for not recommending applications be funded, including why applications are not recommended for approval following consideration under Stage 3 (other assessment considerations).

10. Grant Agreement

Successful applicants will be required to sign a Funding Agreement with the Commonwealth, based on the Commonwealth low-risk Grant Agreement or a format determined by risk analysis.

The draft Funding Agreement contains the terms and conditions of the grant. Applicants should read the draft Funding Agreement before submitting an application and should seek independent legal advice before entering into a Funding Agreement. No legally binding relationship exists until a Funding Agreement is signed by all parties.

If a successful applicant fails to comply with any requirements in the Funding Agreement, they may have to repay some or all of the funding received.

Reporting requirements will reflect the length and complexity of the project. For projects undertaken within the same financial year, applicants may only be required to submit an end-of-project report.

Applicants may also be required to submit milestone reports for projects undertaken across multiple financial years, or for more complex projects and/or higher funding undertaken in single years. Reports will cover project outputs, outcomes and all other evidence required to measure success.

AN IMPORTANT MESSAGE

The forms and commentaries contained in this paper are provided as a guide only and should not form the sole basis for any advice in relation to the particular situation of any person without first obtaining proper professional advice.

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