

# Aboriginal Business Development Program

## Guidelines

Version 1.1 July 2024

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## 1. Program overview

The Aboriginal Business Development program seeks to help support the start-up and development of Northern Territory Aboriginal businesses.

The program provides majority Aboriginal owned businesses in the Northern Territory access to funds during the start-up (operating between 0 - 24 months) and growth stages (operating over 24 months) of business development.

A capped, non-competitive funding pool is available for activities that meet the program objectives to support the creation and development of Aboriginal enterprises across industries, including those that address community needs through:

- Supporting Aboriginal business development, growth and sustainability.
- Increasing the number of Aboriginal owned and operated businesses.
- Increasing the knowledge and skills of emerging Aboriginal business owners and employees.
- Creating new employment, economic opportunities and or community benefits for Aboriginal people.

Funding up to a total of \$30,000 (exclusive of GST) is available for eligible applicants to access once in a 36 month period, beginning from the opening date of their last successful application round for this program. A 20% co-contribution will be required when a business accesses the program again after this period.

## 2. Eligible applicants

Eligible applicants must:

- a. Meet the Northern Territory Government definition of an Aboriginal Business Enterprise. Refer to [Appendix A](#).
- b. Meet the NTG definition of a Territory Enterprise. Refer to [Appendix A](#).
- c. Have an annual turnover less than \$10 million.
- d. Hold a valid Australian Business Number (ABN) that has been active for a minimum of three months.

Applicants are required to have a GrantsNT account, including an 'Individual Profile' related to the applicant and an 'Organisation Profile' related to the business applying. More information on GrantsNT profiles can be found [here](#).

## 3. Ineligible applicants

If one or more of the following applies to an applicant or enterprise, they are ineligible:

- a. Has an annual turnover greater than \$10 Million.
- b. Operating as a casual, hobby or temporary business.
- c. Has outstanding grant acquittals or unmet obligations from previous Department of Industry, Tourism and Trade or the Northern Territory Government funding.
- d. Applicant or owners/directors that are insolvent or have an undischarged bankruptcy.

- e. Are within a 36 months period from the opening date of their last successful funding round of the Aboriginal Business Development Program.
- f. Has an Australian Business Number (ABN) that has been active for less than three months.

## 4. Eligible activities

Eligible activities must align with the program objectives and be directly related to the commercial operation of the business. Eligible activities can be for procuring goods, services or works\*, as a guide these could include:

- Securing tangible assets essential to commence operating a business or act on new opportunities.
- Engaging in professional development for business owners or staff (accredited, non-accredited training and other qualifications).
- Engaging professional or specialised services and advice.

\*Refer to [Appendix B](#) for details on what this program will fund and will not fund.

## 5. Grant schedule

The Aboriginal Business Development Program is planned to be held across four rounds in each financial year. The number of rounds is dependent on allocated funding. If funding is exhausted, no further rounds will be held in the financial year.

Information on the estimated dates for rounds can be found [here](#).

## 6. Application process and requirements

This program supports a wide range of complex and diverse activities across different stages of a business's development. Your application must align with the assessment requirements to be successful.

To help your application, it is recommended that you discuss your application and seek feedback from a Department of Industry, Tourism and Trade's Small Business Champion or from one of the programs business support partners. Contact details can be found [here](#).

### Before Applying:

Before you apply you should confirm your eligibility by completing the **Eligibility Checklist** ([Appendix C](#)). Ensure you have all relevant documents required to submit an application by completing an **Application Checklist** ([Appendix D](#)).

### GrantsNT Application Process:

**Step 1. Register for a GrantsNT account and set up an 'Individual Profile' and 'Organisation Profile' on GrantsNT.** If you already have the required account you can proceed to step 2.

Register an account [here](#).

**Step 2. Go to [GrantsNT](#) to submit your online application.** Applications will not be accepted through other methods such as email, or paper.

**Step 3. Complete an online application and attach all of the following:**

- a. **Business plan or Funding Proposal.** Clearly linking funding to defined business goals, objectives or activities.
- b. **Bank Statement.** A recent bank statement of the account associated with your GrantsNT 'Organisation Profile'
- c. **Financial Statement.** Either a:
  - i. Cash Flow Forecast supported by assumptions or,
  - ii. Accountant prepared financial statement
- d. **Funded items list.** Provide an itemised list of items including a rationale linking each requested item to business goals and objectives. Each item should be supported by a quote. This could be in the form of a budget using the provided template.
- e. **Quotes.** All requested items in your budget should be supported by a quote. Quotes must be from Northern Territory businesses unless a service or product cannot be sourced within the Northern Territory.
- f. **Relevant support documents and evidence.** Certification or provisional certification as an Aboriginal Business Enterprise. Evidence of any claims made in your application, letters of support and other important documents relevant to your business, such as a Section 19.

**Step 4. Review and submit your online application.** Ensuring that you have accurately provided all of the required information.

## 7. Assessment process

**Step 1. Application received.** Application received by a Department of Industry, Tourism and Trade officer through GrantsNT.

**Step 2. Applicant and proposal eligibility checked.** An applicant eligibility assessment and application review will be conducted by Department Industry, Tourism and Trade Officers to confirm proposal eligibility as applications are received.

Applications that do not meet eligibility requirements will be returned to the applicant for further information or considered unsuccessful.

A Grants Officer or Small Business Champion will provide feedback and recommendations on steps you can take to improve your application for returned or unsuccessful applications.

**Step 3. Panel assessment.** Applications will be reviewed by the program's Assessment Panel using the assessment criteria.

**Step 4. Recommendations for funding.** The program's assessment panel will make a final funding recommendation based on their assessment of the application.

**Step 5. Application outcome.** Applicants will receive a notification of the outcome of their application within an estimated five weeks after round closure.

## 8. Assessment criteria

When assessing applications the panel will consider the following to determine recommendations for funding:

Relevance to program objectives	Funding need
Level of impact	Financial viability and risk
Capability and capacity of applicant	Value for Territory

Assessment will include the following tests to expenditure items listed in the application budget:

**Test 1:** Are the goods, assets, services or works directly relevant and related to the ordinary course of operations for the business? And;

**Test 2:** Will the requested funding for goods, assets, services or works help the business improve **one or more** of these measures:

Turnover	Profit
Employee numbers	Social or community outcomes

## 9. Funding agreement

Before receiving funds, successful applicants will be required to enter into a legally binding funding agreement with the Northern Territory Government.

Unsuccessful applicants will receive a notification from GrantsNT notifying them of an unsuccessful application. A Small Business Champion will be in contact to provide feedback and context to this decision.

An example of the funding agreement can be found in [Appendix E](#).

## 10. Payment of funds

Funding will be paid through two payments:

### First payment

Successful applicants will have 14 days from notification to accept a funding offer. 80 percent of the total funding amount will be paid on execution of a signed funding agreement.

### Second payment

The remaining 20 percent of the total funding amount will be paid on receipt of an accepted acquittal.

**Note:** The Department of Industry, Tourism and Trade might choose to include special conditions in the funding agreement which may change the schedule of payments.

## 11. Acquittals, reporting and evaluation

All successful applicants will be required to comply with program acquittal, reporting and evaluation requirements. Generally, acquittal will be 6 months after funding agreement execution. Specific dates and details relevant to successful applications will be included in the funding agreement.

Acquittals will be completed through GrantsNT. Details regarding acquittal timings can be found in individual agreements.

Successful applicants will also be required to participate in project reports. With notice, a Department of Industry, Tourism and Trade officer may request an update on your project, or a site visit to physically inspect assets purchased.

Applicants may be contacted to gather feedback on their experience with the program, this information will help to improve the program and ensure it is meeting its intended objectives and outcomes.

## 12. Further information

For further information please contact a Departmental Officer in your region. Contact details for each of the Department's offices can be found through our webpage: [\[webpage\]](#)

Business NT's corporate website [Territory Business Centre](#) is a valuable resource for accessing information to support applications, including business research, strategies, and templates.

## 13. General Terms and Conditions

In this section, a reference to "you" is a reference to a participant.

### 13.1. Privacy

The Department is bound by the Information Act 2002 (NT) and will only ever use information in accordance with the Northern Territory Government's Information Privacy Principles. These principles are available at [www.infocomm.nt.gov.au/privacy/information-privacy-principles](http://www.infocomm.nt.gov.au/privacy/information-privacy-principles) or by contacting the Information Commissioner Northern Territory on 1800 005 610. You should read the Department's Privacy Policy<sup>1</sup> and by providing information to the Department under the Program, you agree to the following Privacy Statement:

Information collected as part of the Program application process is collected in accordance with the Program's terms and conditions and for the purposes of assessing eligibility, audit; monitoring; evaluation; and reporting.

By applying to participate in the Program, you consent to the Northern Territory Government:

- a) Storing information, including personal information (such as names and personal contact details);
- b) Using the information, including personal information for the purposes mentioned under the paragraph above;
- c) transferring some of this information, including personal information, outside of the Northern Territory (but not outside Australia) for the purpose storing it; and
- d) Releasing non-sensitive information, de-identified data in accordance with the Northern Territory Government's open data policy. If you have provided personal information of another individual to

the Northern Territory Government, you warrant that you have informed the person to whom the personal information relates that the personal information will be provided to the Northern Territory Government, and of the Northern Territory Government's intended use of this personal information, and that you have obtained consent from all such persons to allow the Northern Territory Government to use and disclose their personal information in this manner.

## 13.2. Due Diligence, Audit and Compliance with Law

All participants in the Program acknowledge:

- a) That the Department will conduct such due diligence enquiries as it sees fit in order to ensure the integrity of the Program and that the allocated funding is used strictly in accordance with the intent of the relevant government policy. Such enquiries may include (but are not necessarily limited to) company, association and business name searches on a business, title and other searches for the Premises, searches of the courts and / or the trustee in bankruptcy and enquiries of private businesses or institutions as the Department sees fit; and
- b) that it is a condition of participation in the Program that providers and Recipients comply with all relevant laws, including the Payroll Tax Act 2009 and Taxation Administration Act 2007 and, without limitation, that participants ensure they are aware of their obligations under the Independent Commissioner Against Corruption Act 2017 (the Act) and that none of their officers, employees, and/or members engage in improper conduct as that term is defined in the Act; and
- c) Participants must exercise utmost integrity and honesty in all their dealings with the Department. Misleading and/or deceptive conduct in relation to any aspect of a participant's activity under the Program may result in cancellation of the right to participate (including an obligation to repay any monies not already committed).
- d) All participants in the Program acknowledge and expressly agree to the Department seeking from and sharing information with other NT Government agencies, as well as such external professional advisers as it may need to do in order to assess eligibility, such as conveyancers / solicitors.
- e) Participants must present, upon request by the Department within 10 working days of the request, any documentation required by the Department that is related to its eligibility to participate in the Program and expenditure of any grant made.
- f) The Department reserves the right to conduct an Audit at any time before or after the completion of the Eligible Services or the attempted redemption of a Voucher, or within 12 months after the Program's End Date.
- g) By applying to participate in the Program, Providers and Recipients declare that they expressly agree to the Department having access to any private register of information in relation to the Provider or Recipient, and to the Department using, storing, and releasing for lawful purposes, their information, including personal information.
- h) Eligible Recipients must provide a statutory declaration in the form and as to the matters as required by the Department from time to time and published on the Website. Persons who cannot make the declaration truthfully of their own personal knowledge will not have their business admitted participating in the Program.

## 13.3. Release of Indemnity

By applying to participate and as a continuing obligation throughout any period of participation in the Program, you declare and warrant to the Department that you have read, understood and fully accept these terms and conditions and fully release and indemnify the Department against any loss or damage



he/she/it/they may suffer of any nature whatsoever (including without limitation personal injury or death) caused or contributed to by participation in the Program.

## 13.4. Feedback

Disputes and complaints relating to applications for this Program, or other complaints involving the Department during the currency of the Program can be made at Feedback | Department of Industry, Tourism and Trade [Feedback | Department of Industry, Tourism and Trade](#)

## 14. Duration of the Program

### 14.1. Changes to the Program

The Department reserves the right to:

- a) Vary these terms and conditions, the eligibility criteria or any other documented rule or procedure relating to the Program at any time; and
- b) Accept or reject any application for participation in the Program in its absolute discretion; and
- c) Cease the Program at any time should Northern Territory Government's policy change.

### 14.2. Termination of the Program

This Program is ongoing and will end at such time as is determined by the Northern Territory Government.

## 15. Disputes and Complaints

The Department is not responsible for resolving any disputes between Recipients and Providers. Recipients and Providers must conduct their own due diligence regarding their contract to carry out Eligible Services.

Consumer Affairs can be contacted on 1800 019 319 or go to <https://consumeraffairs.nt.gov.au/> to find information on [dispute resolution](#).

The Department gives no warranty that these Recipients will be able to resolve disputes. If a dispute cannot be resolved in these forums the parties to the dispute will need to take independent legal advice.

For disputes and complaints relating to applications for registration, applications for Grant Funding and/or Voucher redemption, the Eligible Service Provider or the Eligible Recipient can [contact the Department](#).

This Program is ongoing and will end as determined by the Northern Territory Government.

## Appendix A – Key Definitions

### Aboriginal Business Enterprise

[Northern Territory Government - Aboriginal Procurement Policy \(July 2022\)](#)

An Aboriginal Business Enterprise is a business or community organisation that meets all of the following criteria:

- 51% or more Aboriginal owned.
- Is operating as a business, including companies, incorporated associations, sole traders, partnerships, trusts and social enterprises or registered charities if they are operating as a business.
- Can demonstrate that the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are involved in the daily operation of the enterprise and have effective control at least equal to the degree of ownership.
- Is registered with a **certifying authority\*** as meeting the definition.

A **certifying authority** is an organisation that provides services to confirm the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ownership and control of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander enterprises. The certifying authority's processes are recognised by the NT Government as suitably robust to assure the Territory of the integrity of its certified Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander enterprise list.

The [NT Indigenous Business Network](#) is recognised by the NT Government as the peak body for Aboriginal Business Enterprises in the Northern Territory and the primary certifying body.

Other approved certify authorities are:

- [Supply Nation](#).
- [Office of the Registrar of Indigenous Corporations \(ORIC\)](#).

Sole Traders can provide supporting documents that verify Aboriginal status. More info on the [AIATSIS website](#).

### Territory Enterprise

[Northern Territory Government - Buy Local Plan \(April 2018\)](#)

Territory enterprises must satisfy all three elements of the definition:

- Operating in the NT – the enterprise is currently engaged in productive activities (for example, production of goods or delivery of services) within the NT.
- Significant permanent presence – the enterprise maintains an office, manufacturing facilities or other permanent base within the NT.
- Employing NT residents – the enterprise employs Territorians. An enterprise which relies exclusively on transient, interstate/international labour or a fly-in fly-out workforce will not satisfy this element.

## General Terms

### **Operating as a business:**

A business is considered operating under the Aboriginal Business Development Program if they show the following characteristics:

- **Active involvement:** The business is working towards its goals. Includes start up activities.
- **Revenue generation:** The business has a plan to generate revenue, either through sales of goods or services, grants, or donations. While a start-up might not be profitable yet, it should have a clear path to eventual financial sustainability. Social enterprises may reinvest their profits back into their social mission, alongside other revenue streams.
- **Day-to-day operations:** The business is undertaking the ongoing tasks required to function. For a start-up, this might involve securing funding.

### **GST**

Goods and Services Tax.

### **NT**

Northern Territory.

### **NTG**

Northern Territory Government.

## Appendix B – Eligible and ineligible expenditure examples

### Examples of eligible expenditure

Assets that are used 100% for the business and are required in the business's ordinary course of activities.

Plant and equipment, machinery, work health and safety equipment, uniforms with the businesses logo. Building extensions on commercial premises such as demountable, storage containers.

Commercial fit-outs and equipment.

Consultants or professional services and advice.

Accredited or non-accredited training, Courses to upskill and train employees to grow the business.

### Examples of ineligible expenditure

Assets that are not used 100% for the business and are not required in the business's ordinary course of activities.

Non-commercial use appliances: Vacuum cleaners, microwaves, fridges, freezers, washing machines, dishwashers, dryers, coffee machines, vending machines or range hoods.

Personal use assets: Cars, boats, wireless headphones, mobile phones and furniture with no commercial purpose (for example lounges, dining tables, sofas).

Intangible assets: Leases, trademarks, copyrights, patents, licenses, goodwill and contractual rights.

Operating costs: Trading stock, working capital, feasibility studies, repairs and maintenance to existing assets or infrastructure, wages and salaries, compliance costs incurred in the business normal course of undertaking (for example accounting, tax, legal fees for court cases), rent, insurances, financial audits, and Territory administrative or local council fees.

Collectables: Artwork, jewellery, antiques, coins or medallions, rare folios, manuscripts, books, postage stamps.

Goods and services from related parties.

Goods, services or works purchased before funding is approved.

Sitting fees for community or stakeholder consultations.

Goods, services or works that are already being funded through another program. Funding for goods, services or works if it has already received or is entitled to receive funding for the works under a current grant or budgetary arrangement with a Northern Territory or Commonwealth Government Department.

## Appendix C – Eligibility Checklist

A business meets the eligibility criteria if **all** of the following can be demonstrated:

- Registered as a certified Aboriginal Enterprise with a recognised certifying authority. Sole Traders can provide supporting documents that verify Aboriginal status.
- Located and operating in the Northern Territory.
- Have a valid Australian Business Number (ABN) that has been active for at least three months.
- Have an active GrantsNT 'Individual Profile' related to the applicant.
- Have an active GrantsNT 'Organisation Profile' related to the business applying.
- Are not operating as a casual, hobby or temporary business.
- Does not have outstanding grant acquittals or unmet obligations from previous Department of Industry, Tourism and Trade or the Northern Territory Government funding.
- The applicant, organisation and its owners/directors are not insolvent or have an undischarged bankruptcy.
- Have not received \$30,000 (exclusive of GST) and are not within a 36 month period from the opening date of their last successful funding round of the Aboriginal Business Development Program.
- Have a turnover less than \$10 million.

## Appendix D – Application Checklist

Before applying, applicants should prepare the following documents, plans, information and evidence:

**GrantsNT ‘Organisation Profile’ and ‘Applicant Profile’**

Information on how to set up these profiles can be found [here](#).

**Certification or Provisional Certification as an Aboriginal Business Enterprise or Proof of Aboriginality for sole traders**

Approved certifying authorities are:

- [NT Indigenous Business Network](#),
- [Supply Nation](#)
- [Office of the Registrar of Indigenous Corporations \(ORIC\)](#).

**Project name**

Provide a name for your project. This could be your business name, or a specific project name.

**Brief description of your business**

A brief (50-200 words) describing your business. How long have you been operating? Where do you operate? What products or services do you offer? Who is your target audience?

**Funding proposal summary**

Provide a description (50-200 words) of how what you will use the funding to do.

**Business Plan or Funding Proposal**

A business plan template can be found on the Australian Government’s Business website [here](#).

**Funded items list.** Provide an itemised list of items including a rationale linking each requested item to business goals and objectives. Each item should be supported by a quote. This could be in the form of a budget using the provided template [here](#).

**Quotes**

Quotes must be from Northern Territory businesses unless a service or product cannot be sourced within the Northern Territory. If not using a Northern Territory business, evidence may be required.

**A recent bank statement from account associated with GrantsNT ‘Organisation Profile’**

**12 month Cash flow Forecast Supported by assumptions or Accountant prepared Financial Statement for previous 12-24 months.**

A Cash Flow Forecast template can be found on the Australian Government’s Business website [here](#).

**Supporting documents**

This might be a contract, letter of support or other document that provides further context, evidence or justification for your application. Including Section 19 leases.