

Strategic Industry Partnership Program - COVID-19 Resilience and Recovery

Guidelines

September 2020

I. Background

I.1. Program Description

The Agricultural Workforce Resilience package supports agricultural employers and industry to attract and retain local workers to help meet immediate labour needs for the coming harvest season. It will also position agricultural businesses to adapt and respond to the impacts of COVID-19 and associated labour force and market disruption for the upcoming and subsequent planting, production and harvest seasons.

As one component of the package, a two-year extension of the Strategic Industry Partnerships Program (SIPP) is specifically focused on COVID-19 Resilience and Recovery within the agricultural sector. Up to \$1 million is available over two years from SIPP to invest with agricultural peak industry bodies in collaborative projects.

SIPP provides targeted small grants on a co-investment basis to peak industry bodies and organisations as they play a critical role in supporting agri-food industry sectors.

Priorities for this two-year extension include:

- Business resilience, recovery and growth.
- Promotion of jobs and careers in Tasmanian agriculture.
- Skills, training, and workforce development meeting identified industry needs.
- An industry-sponsored boost to regional transport.

Projects supported will have a particular focus on addressing barriers to growth created by COVID-19. Projects that address priorities identified in the Tasmanian Sustainable Agri-Food Plan 2019-23, the Competitiveness of Agriculture for 2050 White Paper and the Premiers Economic and Social Recovery Advisory Council Interim Report will also be well regarded.

The program is being administered by AgriGrowth Tasmania within the Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water and Environment (DPIPWE).

I.2. Grants

A total of \$750 000 is available over two years for industry-led projects. A further \$250 000 over two years is available to co-invest in industry sponsored regional transport solutions to support seasonal labour needs. The minimum government investment is \$10 000 with most projects expected to be less than \$100 000 in year one. Exceptions may be considered for collaborative projects across multiple agricultural industries or with broad member benefit demonstrated.

Applications will be subject to merit assessment with the assessment panel considering:

- Strategic alignment.
- Expected outputs and outcomes.
- Value for money.
- Identified need.
- Co-contribution (co-investment) and leverage.

1.3. Project conditions

The following are conditions of application:

- You must use the template provided to complete your submission.
- The grant submissions must include a project plan outlining activities proposed and milestones.
- Any funded activity must take a whole of industry, market or value-chain approach and not just focus on specifics of an individual enterprise.
- The project plan must include the monitoring and evaluation activity that will be undertaken as part of the project.
- Cash and in-kind co-contributions are required.
- A breakdown of service delivery costs will be requested if your proposal is successful; and
- The instalment schedule for payment of the Grants will be agreed with the successful recipient/s based on the activities proposed.

1.4. Eligibility

The assessment panel will make a decision on the application presented and the eligibility of expense items. An organisation is eligible to apply for funding under the Program if it:

- Is a representative, membership-based peak industry body in the agriculture sector with individual businesses as members.
- Is capable of entering into a legally binding and enforceable agreement with the Tasmanian Government.
- Has an ABN and is registered for the purposes of GST.
- Has an account with an Australian financial institution.

Complying with the eligibility criteria is only part of the application assessment process (refer to the Evaluation Methodology) and does not automatically mean an application to the Program will be approved.

Applicants are encouraged to consider working with new partners (such as those along the value-chain, and those outside of agriculture).

1.5. Ineligible expenditure

Ineligible organisations and expenditure includes:

- Unincorporated associations.
- Applications from individual businesses, or projects that have a private benefit for an individual business.
- Any government body including councils, government agency, publicly listed companies, government business enterprises, absentee landlords, forest activities and recreational activities.
- Retrospective expenditure. Applicants must receive grant approval prior to the Project for which funding is sought takes place.
- Any entity that is under external administration or bankruptcy.
- Expenditure on similar Projects or activities that have been, or will be, supported through other government assistance schemes will generally be ineligible.
- Operating expenses, such as funding of an ongoing employee or related-party wages and salaries, utilities, rent, insurance and vehicle expenditure will generally be considered ineligible.
- Funding cannot be spent on purchasing stock, maintenance and upkeep of facilities and equipment, capital expenditure, development of intellectual property (IP), research, subsidies for commercial operations, business start-ups or where the primary activity is for commercial gain, or activities designed to raise revenue for an organisation or individual, business as usual activities for the participants or beneficiaries of the project, overseas travel, or costs incurred in preparation of the grant application.

2. Evaluation Methodology

Grants will be evaluated by the Fund Steering Committee against a set of weighted criteria. The criteria for assessment include:

1. Strategic alignment
2. Expected outputs and outcomes (including assessment of feasibility and timeliness)
3. Value for money
4. Identified need
5. Co-contribution (co-investment) and leverage.

In-kind contributions should reflect reasonable costs for goods and services. The resulting normalised scores for each criterion will be added to deliver an overall ranking of successful applications to be funded. The scoring scale used is:

0 = criteria not met 1 = criteria not met, but a few elements present 2 = criteria not met, but very close
3 = criteria met 4 = criteria met to a high standard 5 = criteria met to a very high standard

AgriGrowth Tasmania is not bound to accept any application and reserves the right to change the application and selection process and vary the selection criteria.

AgriGrowth Tasmania may seek to negotiate with you before awarding a grant if the Assessment Panel requires changes to your project plan.

3. Reporting Requirements

Reporting the Project's progress and outcomes is an important component of the program. It provides evidence on the effectiveness of projects, and learnings on innovative delivery methods. Reporting is mandatory.

Successful applicants are required to submit a:

- Mid-project report outlining:
 - What results have been achieved to date?
- Final report and evaluation including:
 - What were the successes?
 - What were the challenges?
 - How successful was the Project in meeting and addressing its objectives?
 - How did the Project meet the Program priorities?
- financial acquittal of the grant monies, and
- a minimum of one (1) case study for use by DPIPWE during or at the end of the Project.

4. Definitions

Activity or Project means the activity (ies) which are the subject of a funding application under the Program.

Eligible Expenditure is expenditure presented in an application and approved by the Department.

Funding Agreement means a Funding Agreement entered into between an approved applicant and the Crown in the Right of Tasmania.

Peak Body means a representative, membership based peak industry body in the agriculture sector with individual businesses as members.

Program means this Strategic Industry Partnership Program - COVID-19 Resilience and Recovery.

5. Taxation and financial implications

Grants under the Program attract GST. Grant payments to successful applicants are generally increased to compensate for the amount of GST payable. The receipt of funding from this Program may be treated as income by the Australian Taxation Office (ATO). While grants are typically treated as assessable income for taxation purposes, how they are treated will depend on the recipient's particular circumstances. It is strongly recommended that potential applicants consider seeking independent advice about the possible tax implications for receiving the Grant under the Program from a tax advisor, financial advisor and/or the ATO, prior to submitting an application.

6. Confidentiality

The relevant parties will use and disclose the information provided by applicants for the purposes of discharging their respective functions under the Program Guidelines and otherwise for the purposes of the Program and related uses. The Department may also:

1. Use information received in applications in other related Departmental business.
2. Use information received in applications and during the performance of the Project for reporting.

7. Disclaimer

Although care has been taken in the preparation of this document, no warranty, express or implied, is given by the Crown in the Right of Tasmania, as to the accuracy or completeness of the information it contains. The Crown in the Right of Tasmania accepts no responsibility for any loss or damage that may arise from anything contained in or omitted from or that may arise from the use of this document, and any person relying on this document and the information it contains does so at their own risk absolutely. The Crown in the Right of Tasmania does not accept liability or responsibility for any loss incurred by an applicant that are in any way related to the Program. The Program will be reviewed in 12 months and these Guidelines may be adjusted accordingly.

8. How to make a Grant submission

All applicants are encouraged to contact FarmPoint to register their interest in the Program and determine their eligibility.

The Grant Guidelines and standard project template to be used for submissions are available on line at <https://dpiwwe.tas.gov.au/> or by phoning FarmPoint 1300 292 292.

The first round of the Program closes on **Wednesday 16 September 2020**.

All submissions will be treated as confidential.

Forward your submission to:

The Project Team: Strategic Industry Partnership Program
AGRIGROWTH TASMANIA,
GPO Box 44
HOBART TAS 7001
Email: agrigrowth@dpiwwe.tas.gov.au

The successful recipients and the project summary will be announced on the www.farmpoint.tas.gov.au website.

For further information, and advice please contact: FarmPoint 1300 292 292