



Applications

open on 02-03-2021

close on 02-04-2021

COVID-SAFE TOURISM CO- INVESTMENT PROGRAM ROUND 1

inside power land

Chief Minister, Treasury and
Economic Development Directorate

FEB-2021

CONTENTS

1.	ABOUT THE COVID-SAFE TOURISM CO-INVESTMENT PROGRAM.....	3
1.1	About VisitCanberra.....	3
1.2	Introduction.....	3
2.	PROGRAM OBJECTIVE	3
3.	PROGRAM OUTCOMES	3
4.	COVID-19 PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCY.....	4
5.	FUNDING PARAMETERS	4
6.	ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS.....	4
6.1	General eligibility	4
6.2	Provision of quotes	5
6.3	Who is <u>not</u> eligible to apply?.....	5
6.4	Projects that may be considered for funding	5
6.5	What will not be considered for funding.....	6
7.	ASSESSMENT.....	6
7.1	Assessment criteria.....	6
7.2	Approvals.....	8
8.	ACCEPTING A GRANT	8
8.1	Grant requirements and payment process.....	8
8.2	Goods and Services Tax (GST)	8
8.3	Publication	9
9.	ACQUITTAL OF FUNDING	9
10.	APPLICATION PROCESS	9
10.1	Grant timelines	9
10.2	How to submit your application.....	10
11.	IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR APPLICANTS	11
11.1	Accessibility	11
11.2	Addendum	11
11.3	Confidentiality	11
11.4	Complaints.....	12
12.	FURTHER INFORMATION	12

1. ABOUT THE COVID-SAFE TOURISM CO-INVESTMENT PROGRAM

1.1 About VisitCanberra

VisitCanberra is part of the Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate (CMTEDD) within ACT Government. VisitCanberra leads the ACT and Canberra region tourism industry by creating and implementing a range of marketing, partnerships and development programs that aim to significantly increase the economic return from domestic and international visitation.

1.2 Introduction

In January 2021, the ACT Government announced establishment of the COVID-Safe Tourism Co-Investment Program (CSTCIP), which will provide funding for the development of COVID-safe tourism products and infrastructure. The CSTCIP will help the tourism industry recover from the combined effects of bushfires and COVID-19.

The CSTCIP has \$1.5 million available in funding, with \$750,000 to be allocated to successful industry-led projects in each financial year of 2020-21 and 2021-22. The fund requires 1:1 matched cash contribution from applicants (this can be through other grant programs as well but does not include in-kind contributions).

These guidelines provide details for businesses applying for financial assistance from the CSTCIP for infrastructure and product and experience projects to be completed by **30 June 2022**. The projects should align with the priority areas in the [ACT Government's Framework for Recovery of the Visitor Economy](#).

The financial support provided through the fund is limited (\$750,00 in 2020-21) and as such, all applications will be assessed on relative merit. Grant funding should not be deemed automatic or anticipated.

2. PROGRAM OBJECTIVE

The objectives of the CSTCIP are to:

- Drive economic growth in the ACT through increased visitor numbers and/or increased visitor expenditure; and
- Support the recovery of the tourism, hospitality and events industry sectors and provide opportunities for job creation through investment in one or more of the following:
 - infrastructure to deliver improved visitor experiences (new experiences or expansion of existing ones);
 - development of new and innovative products and/or experiences; and
 - technology or systems to assist with development and or delivery of COVID-safe practices.

3. PROGRAM OUTCOMES

The intended outcomes of the CSTCIP are to:

- Encourage development of new infrastructure and/or experiences that attract more visitors and/or lead to increased visitor length of stay and increased visitor spend, as well as enhance Canberra's reputation as a destination;

- Encourage enhancement of infrastructure that will expand an existing tourism product;
- Build industry resilience in a COVID-regulated environment;
- Increase the supply of new experiences to fill a gap in the market; and
- Build innovative solutions to support operations through industry collaboration.

4. COVID-19 PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCY

The COVID-19 public health emergency has dramatically affected our community, as well as our visitor economy. How long the emergency will last, and what the ongoing impacts will be, is unclear.

With expected ongoing outbreaks and restrictions on domestic and international travel, applicants should develop their projects acknowledging there is no known end date to this emergency. Businesses must keep up to date and comply with the latest information on restrictions and requirements for their business under the public health guidelines. See www.covid19.act.gov.au for the most current information.

In applying to the CSTCIP, you will be required to acknowledge this uncertain future and demonstrate your ability to be flexible and adaptable to change in the planning and delivery of the project.

5. FUNDING PARAMETERS

The CSTCIP has \$1.5 million available in funding. Round 1 will allocate up to \$750,000.

To apply for funding, all applicants need to be aware of the following:

- Organisations can apply for funding between \$10,000 and \$100,000 (excluding GST);
- Have matched cash funding to support the ACT Government's contribution - funding may be sourced from either private or Commonwealth Government funding, or a combination of both;
- Organisations' financial contribution towards the project must be exclusive of GST;
- Organisations must be able to demonstrate that they have sufficient funds to commence and complete the project;
- In-kind contributions will not be considered as matched funds;
- Projects of greater or lesser value will be considered subject to merit;
- Applications should be for tourism and/or hospitality-related projects; and
- Applicants must provide a plan outlining the proposed project and the funding requested, articulating the benefits to the tourism sector and contribution to recovery of the ACT visitor economy and the tourism and hospitality sector.

6. ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

6.1 General eligibility

Any organisation(s) applying for funding under the CSTCIP must:

1. Have an Australian Business Number (ABN);
2. Have current Public Liability Insurance coverage to a minimum level of \$10,000,000;

3. Be incorporated in the ACT under the *Associations Incorporation Act 1991*, **or** a company registered under the *Corporations Act 2001 (Commonwealth)* with its principal place of business in the ACT;
4. Operate in the tourism and hospitality industry in the ACT;
5. Be registered for the Goods and Services Tax (GST) if applicable (if turnover is greater than \$150,000 per annum);
6. Have compliance requirements under the *Associations Incorporation Act 1991* up to date;
7. Have satisfactorily acquitted all previous grants provided by VisitCanberra (except for current year's funding), including financial acquittals for any other ACT Government agency grant;
8. If more than one organisation or consortium are applying for funding, then a lead organisation must be nominated upon application and this lead organisation must be based in the ACT. If the application is successful, the lead organisation will enter into contractual agreement with the ACT Government for the funding, referred to as the "Agreement" in these guidelines; and
9. Agree to indemnify the Australian Capital Territory, its employees and agents from and against all actions, suits, claims, costs and demands directly or indirectly arising from the operation of the business.

6.2 Provision of quotes

All organisations must submit a **minimum of one itemised quote** (preferably two) for key funding components of the project for the CSTCIP application. Failure to submit this information may jeopardise any offer of funding.

6.3 Who is not eligible to apply?

The following are not eligible to receive funding under the CSTCIP:

- A Commonwealth, state or territory government agency;
- Federal attractions and/or institutions; and
- Construction of public infrastructure (either existing or proposed) that would be funded by ACT Government or Commonwealth Government.

6.4 Projects that may be considered for funding

The following are examples of initiatives and/or projects may be considered for funding:

- New private sector investment in tourism infrastructure (building, technology, online programs);
- Projects that require infrastructure builds or upgrades to create new tourism/hospitality/event experiences;
- Investment in, or the development of, innovative solutions or technology to support the industry recover from the impacts of COVID-19 or manage business operations under ongoing restrictions;
- Investment in, or the development of, Indigenous tourism experiences; and
- Shovel-ready projects that able to commence construction or production within 12 weeks of execution of the Agreement.

Other projects may also be considered.

6.5 What will not be considered for funding

The following activities will not be considered for funding:

- Requests for routine maintenance, replacement or repair work;
- Upgrading or developing facilities that won't deliver on positive economic growth, e.g. landscaping;
- Engaging and/or paying employees;
- Purchasing or leasing of real estate;
- Administrative costs that are normally the responsibility of the business;
- Pre-construction activities, including architect services, design, surveying, planning, environmental or other regulatory approvals;
- Requests for retrospective funding, reimbursements, refunds, offsets or subsidies for works already undertaken;
- A facility where little or no public access is available;
- Projects where the application fails to sufficiently address the relevant planning / development issues;
- Development of playgrounds;
- Development of bikeways / pathways that have the primary purpose of providing a transport route;
- Development of car parks and driveways, unless there is clear indication how such a development will increase participation opportunities;
- Costs associated with voluntary labour and in-kind support;
- Repair of a facility damaged by vandalism, theft, fire, or any natural disaster where that facility should have been covered by the appropriate insurance;
- Marketing and public relations activities (see Tourism Cooperative Marketing Fund for marketing grants); and
- Activities already funded under another ACT Government grants program, e.g. Tourism Cooperative Marketing Fund; Major Event Fund; ACT Events Fund; and ACT Heritage Society Fund.

7. ASSESSMENT

When VisitCanberra receives your application, it will be checked to ensure eligibility for funding (refer to **Item 6** for eligibility requirements). All eligible applications are then provided to an assessment officer and a panel to be rated. The assessment panel is chaired by a senior staff member of VisitCanberra.

Following this assessment, proposed projects will be recommended to the Minister for Tourism for endorsement and final approval. Both successful and unsuccessful applicants will be notified in writing. Feedback will be provided to unsuccessful applications.

Each application will be assessed against the guidelines and selection criteria on the application form. In addition, the assessment panel will consider the application as a whole and make an assessment as to the merit of the application in meeting the objectives of the CSTCIP.

7.1 Assessment criteria

Applications that meet the general eligibility requirements will be assessed against the following criteria in meeting the primary objective and outcomes of the CSTCIP.

You must address each section of the assessment (a, b and c) in your application.

a) Economic benefit of your project (10 points)

- Demonstrate how your project will contribute to economic growth and recovery of the tourism sector in the ACT. Points to consider include how the project will (please address those that apply):
 - Generate additional visitation (day trip or overnight) to the ACT.
 - Provide economic benefits to the tourism industry to assist in mitigating the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.
 - Improve the visitor experience.
 - Increase employment opportunities for locals in the ACT.
 - Support the development of a new revenue stream or increase the production of goods and services in the region.
 - Use local suppliers and goods.
 - Increase the efficiency of service delivery.
 - Increase Indigenous economic participation, including through Indigenous employment and suppliers.
 - Make Canberra a more compelling place to visit by enticing people to Canberra or adding to their experience of Canberra when they visit.
 - Fill a gap in the visitor experience.
 - Align with the ACT Government's Jobs and Economic Recovery Plan (<https://www.act.gov.au/actrecovery/plan/our-recovery-plan>)
 - Build industry resilience, by supporting business to continue in a COVID-regulated environment.
 - Build innovative solutions to operational challenges through industry collaboration.

b) Capacity, capability and resources to deliver the project (5 points)

- Demonstrate your (personal or organisational) capability to deliver the project and describe any previous experience delivering similar projects (if possible).
 - You may consider providing a team structure, information on the skills of personnel involved in the project, or background in delivering similar projects.
- Sound project planning to manage and monitor the project, timeframes, budget and risk management (including addressing and mitigating risks associated with the COVID-19 pandemic). Some information can be found here <https://business.gov.au/risk-management>.
 - If you have a project plan, you may consider including this in your application.
- Demonstrate an understanding of and/or ability to obtain any permission or approvals required to deliver the project (where appropriate) including but not limited to:
 - The authority to undertake the nominated project;
 - Confirmed funding contribution (can be a letter of support indicating commitment to co-fund cash contribution);
 - Have obtained approvals or have submitted for all required regulatory and/or development approvals; and
 - Finalised designs and costings.
- How the implemented project will be managed in the future.
- Projects that are shovel-ready with an ability to commence construction or production within 12 weeks of execution of the Agreement will be considered.

c) Impact of funding on the project (5 points)

- Outline the additional investment into the project, outside of the grant funding, i.e. additional cash contributions (if applicable).
- Demonstrate how the project increases investment and builds partnerships within the ACT.
- Explain how the CSTCIP funding will initiate, enhance or contribute to the completion of the project.
- Explain how the funding will impact the project in terms of size, timing and reach.

Applicants are required to provide evidence to support the assessment claims. The amount of detail and supporting evidence you provide in your application should be relative to the project size, complexity and grant amount requested.

VisitCanberra reserves the right to not assess applications that do not provide all requested information, or do not otherwise comply with the requirements of the CSTCIP.

7.2 Approvals

Even though an application may meet the criteria, approval will depend on the number of applications received, the relative merit of the application and available funds.

Recommendation for funding will then be made to the Minister for Tourism for final approval. Applicants will be advised of the outcome of their application as soon as possible after Ministerial approval has been given. VisitCanberra is unable to provide feedback on the outcome of your application prior to the conclusion of the assessment process.

It is anticipated that the CSTCIP will be a highly contested and competitive fund; therefore, applicants must not assume funding will be granted. The assessment panel may approve funding for projects at a lower amount than what is requested by the applicant.

8. ACCEPTING A GRANT

8.1 Grant requirements and payment process

Successful applicants will be required to enter into a Deed of Agreement (Agreement) with the ACT Government setting out the terms and conditions for which funding will be provided.

Successful applicants will receive a notification from VisitCanberra with an Agreement attached and instructions for the payment process. Payments will be paid upon agreed milestones outlined in the Agreement.

Payments can take up to 30 days to process following the execution of the Agreement and upon receipt of an invoice. The payment amount will be determined per the milestones in the Agreement and may be either a lump-sum or instalment based.

8.2 Goods and Services Tax (GST)

GST is payable to organisations that receive financial assistance under this program if they are GST registered with the Australian Tax Office (ATO) and can provide an Australian Business Number (ABN), i.e. if turnover is greater than \$150,000 per annum.

For successful applicant organisations, VisitCanberra will gross up the grant/s by 10% if registered for GST and after receipt of a Tax Invoice. Organisations that are not registered for the GST will not have their grants grossed up.

8.3 Publication

All successful applicants and the funded amount will be published on the VisitCanberra corporate website (www.tourism.act.gov.au).

9. ACQUITTAL OF FUNDING

All successful applicants/organisations for Round 1 must expend the funds by 30 June 2022, or within the timeframes nominated in the Agreement for the CSTCIP funding.

When you have expended the funds, you are required to log on to SmartyGrants (www.smartygrants.com.au) and complete the acquittal process. Use the same username and password to log in that you used to register with SmartyGrants when you applied for the grant.

Within three months of the termination date of the grant period, the successful recipients must provide VisitCanberra the completed acquittal and expenditure with the following:

1. A copy of the relevant audited financial statement or invoices, receipts, bank statements or other financial documentation that clearly identifies the income and expenditure of the grant, in accordance with the matching funding requirement; or
2. Documentation that clearly identifies the income and expenditure of the grant signed by the official auditor, CPA or accountant of the organisation; and
3. Pictures of the completed project.

VisitCanberra will provide no further financial assistance until all outstanding grants provided by VisitCanberra (except for current year's funding) have been successfully acquitted, including financial acquittals for any other ACT Government agency grant and organisations are compliant under the *Associations Incorporation Act 1991*.

10. APPLICATION PROCESS

10.1 Grant timelines

Applicants are required to submit their application via an online application management system called SmartyGrants. Applications must address the eligibility criteria and requirements for funding. If these are not addressed, the application will not be assessed for funding.

- Applications open **9:00am, Tuesday 02 March 2021**
- Applications close **5:00pm Friday 02 April 2021**

Late applications will not be accepted.

- Assessment of applications – **April 2021**
- Approvals of outcomes of selection process – **start of May 2021**
- Notification to all applicants – **May 2021**
- Negotiations and awarding of grant agreements – **2 weeks**
- Contracts to be finalised by **31 May 2021**
- Earliest start date of project – **from execution of grant agreement**

10.2 How to submit your application

All applications must be submitted via the online Program Application Form at <https://CMTEDD.smartygrants.com.au/CSTCIP2021R1>

Hardcopy or email applications will not be accepted

You will need to create a log in to begin your application and you may begin anywhere in the Program Application Form. Please ensure you save as you go.

SmartyGrants provides an online help guide for applicants. This guide will explain the essential steps you need to take to complete and submit your Program Application Form. The help guide is accessible at: <https://applicanthelp.smartygrants.com.au/help-guide-for-applicants/>. If you have any questions about the guidelines and/or eligibility requirements, please contact the contact officer (**Item 12**) at VisitCanberra via phone or email.

If you are having difficulty in accessing the online application form or if an error occurs, please contact the Business Services Team for assistance on email EconomicDevelopmentBusinessServices@act.gov.au.

Navigating (moving through) the grants application form

On the right-hand side of every screen, there is a box which links directly to every page of the application. Click on any page to jump directly to that page. You can also click 'next page' or 'previous page' on the top or bottom of each page to move forward or backward through the application.

Saving your draft application and returning

You can press 'save' at any point and log out. When you log back in, your draft application will be saved and you can start where you left off.

Submitting your application

The submit button is on the final page. You will not be able to submit your application until all the questions are completed.

Attachments and support documents

You may wish to upload/submit attachments to support your application. For some categories you will have to include attachments. This is very simple but requires you to have the documents saved on your computer, on a portable drive, or similar. If you are not able to upload a document, please contact the Contact Officer for support.

Completing an application in a group/team

A number of people can work on an application using the same log in details provided that only one person is working on the application at any given time. Ensure you save as you go.

Once you have completed your Application Form it will be submitted to the Program Officer.

PLEASE NOTE: The Grants Program Officer is unable to view your application until it is submitted. All supporting documentation must be submitted with the grant application.

You can upload supporting documentation to your Application Form on the page after the declaration and privacy statement.

If you submit your application and then realise you forgot to add an attachment, and it is before the deadline, we can re-open the form for you. If you have any technical difficulties you need to contact the Business Services Team for assistance on (02) 6207 1080 during business hours or email EconomicDevelopmentBusinessServices@act.gov.au before the deadline for applications.

11. IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR APPLICANTS

11.1 Accessibility

The ACT Government is committed to making its information, services, events and venues accessible to as many people as possible.

If you have difficulty reading a standard printed document and would like to receive this publication in an **alternative format** – such as large print or audio – please telephone Access Canberra Contact Centre – **13 22 81**.

If English is not your first language and you require the **translating and interpreting services**, please telephone **131 450**.

If you are deaf or hearing impaired and require the **National Relay Service**, please telephone **131 677** then ask for **133 427**.

11.2 Addendum

Any additional information provided by the Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate as part of the CSTCIP will be posted online at <https://tourism.act.gov.au/funding/>

In addition, all applicants that have started or submitted an online application form will be notified by email to the address that is registered with SmartyGrants.

11.3 Confidentiality

All material submitted to the Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate is provided in confidence. However, the ACT Government may promote successful applicants for the mutual benefit of the Grants Program and the applicant. Details of applications will not be made available to third parties without permission.

However, applicants should be aware that the provisions of the *Freedom of Information Act 2016* apply to documents in the Office's possession.

11.4 Complaints

What you can expect

A complaint is defined as an expression of dissatisfaction in relation to the application process and/or an unsuccessful application for a grant.

You or your representatives have the right to raise your concerns. This information supports us to improve services and supports your right to ask questions about the grant application process as well as decisions made in relation to an unsuccessful application.

You can expect to:

1. be treated respectfully, fairly and in confidence;
2. have your concerns dealt with as soon as possible;
3. be informed of progress; and
4. be told of the outcome.

12. FURTHER INFORMATION

For more information on the CSTCIP, the eligibility requirements or to lodge a complaint, please contact the Contact Officer at VisitCanberra:

Maisi Ahuja
Director, International and Partnerships
manasi.ahuja@act.gov.au
02 6207 0215

If you are having difficulty in accessing the online application form or if an error occurs, please contact the Business Services Team for assistance:

Email: EconomicDevelopmentBusinessServices@act.gov.au.



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