



TOURISM PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT FUND

FUNDING GUIDELINES
2021-22 ROUND

Applications:

Open on 29 April 2022

Close 5pm on 31 May 2022



Chief Minister, Treasury and
Economic Development Directorate

April 2022

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1. ABOUT THE TOURISM PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT FUND (TPDF)

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 to the TPDF (formerly the COVID-Safe Tourism Co-Investment Program)

In January 2021, the ACT Government announced the establishment of the COVID Safe Tourism Co-Investment Program (CSTCIP), which provided funding support for the development of COVID safe tourism products and infrastructure. The CSTCIP sought to help the tourism industry recover from the significant impacts of COVID-19.

The CSTCIP had \$1.5 million in funding available, with \$750,000 to be allocated to successful industry-led projects in each financial year of 2020-21 and 2021-22.

A new name has been developed for the program in 2021-22 – the Tourism Product Development Fund (TPDF).

The program will again require a 1:1 matched cash contribution from applicants (this matched contribution can be secured through other grant programs, but cannot include in-kind contributions).

These guidelines provide details for businesses applying for financial assistance from the TPDF for infrastructure and product and experience projects that are to be completed by **30 June 2023**.

The financial support provided through the TPDF is limited (\$750,000 in 2021-22) 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 TPDF are to:

- Drive economic growth in the ACT through increased visitor numbers and/or increased visitor expenditure.
- 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.
 - technology or systems to assist with development and or delivery of COVID-safe practices.

3. PROGRAM OUTCOMES

The intended outcomes of the TPDF 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, while also enhancing Canberra's reputation as a destination.
- Encourage enhancement of infrastructure that will expand an existing tourism product.
- Build industry resilience in a COVID environment.
- Increase the supply of new experiences to fill a gap in the market.
- Build innovative solutions to support operations through industry collaboration.

4. COVID-19

The COVID-19 situation has dramatically affected our community, as well as our visitor economy. 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 further information.

In applying to the TPDF, and in acknowledging the ongoing impacts of COVID-19, you will be required to demonstrate your ability to be flexible and adaptable to change in the planning and delivery of the project.

5. FUNDING PARAMETERS

For 2021-22, the TPDF has \$750,000 in funding available. This will be offered under a single funding round.

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).
- Applicants must have matched cash funding to support the ACT Government's contribution. This matched funding may be sourced from either private funds or Commonwealth Government funding, or a combination of both.
- An organisation's 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.
- Applications should be for tourism and/or hospitality-related projects.
- Applicants must provide a plan outlining the proposed project and the funding requested, articulating the benefits to the tourism sector and the associated contribution to the 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 TPDF 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 an ACT-based tourism or hospitality business, that is:
 - a) incorporated in the ACT under the *Associations Incorporation Act 1991*, or
 - b) a company registered under the *Corporations Act 2001 (Commonwealth)* with its principal place of business in the ACT, or
 - c) operating in the ACT with an address in the ACT.
4. Be registered for the Goods and Services Tax (GST) if applicable (if turnover is greater than \$150,000 per annum).
5. Have compliance requirements under the *Associations Incorporation Act 1991* up to date.
6. Have satisfactorily acquitted all previous grants provided by VisitCanberra, including financial acquittals for any other ACT Government agency grant (except for current year's funding, 2020-21 Tourism Cooperative Marketing Fund projects granted an extension, and ongoing 2020-21 CSTCIP and Amp it up! grants).
7. In cases where more than one organisation or consortium are applying for funding, nominate a lead organisation upon application that must be based in the ACT. If the application is successful, the lead organisation will enter into a contractual agreement with the ACT Government for the funding, referred to as the "Agreement" in these guidelines.
8. 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 TPDF 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 TPDF:

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

6.4 Projects that may be considered for funding

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

- New private sector investment in tourism infrastructure (e.g. 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 to manage business operations under ongoing restrictions.
- Investment in, or the development of, Indigenous tourism experiences.
- Shovel-ready projects that are able to commence construction or production within 12 weeks of execution of the Agreement.

Other projects may also be considered. Note, receipt of TPDF funding does not exempt the project from other relevant ACT Government approvals such as building approvals etc. Applicants are responsible for being aware of, and seeking all approvals required for the project where applicable.

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 or operational 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 of 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.
- Hosting and event, or marketing and public relations activities.
- Activities already funded under another ACT Government grants program (e.g. Tourism Cooperative Marketing Fund; Major Event Fund; ACT Event Fund; Amp it up! 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 VisitCanberra representative.

Following this assessment phase, 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 TPDF.

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 TPDF.

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, provide a new experience or expand an existing 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 ([ACT-Recovery-Plan-2021-22](#))
 - Build industry resilience by supporting business to continue in a COVID 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>.
 - A project implementation plan should be uploaded as part of your application using the [template](#) provided.
- 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.
 - A confirmed funding contribution (can be a letter of support indicating commitment to co-fund a cash contribution).
 - Having obtained approvals or submitted all required regulatory and/or development approvals.
 - 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.
- Demonstrate how the project increases investment and builds partnerships within the ACT.
- Explain how the TPDF 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 TPDF.

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 TPDF 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 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 must expend the funds by **30 June 2023**, or within the timeframes nominated in the Agreement for the TPDF grant.

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 **Friday 29 April 2022**
- Applications close **5:00pm Tuesday 31 May 2022**

Late applications will not be accepted.

- Assessment of applications – **June 2022**
- Approvals of outcomes of selection process – **July 2022**
- Notification to all applicants – **July/August 2022**
- Agreements to be finalised by **August/September 2022**
- Earliest start date of project – **from execution of deed of grant**

10.2 How to submit your application

All applications must be submitted via the online Program Application Form at <https://CMTEDD.smartygrants.com.au/2021-22TPDF>

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 via email at 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. For any technical difficulties, you need to contact the Business Services Team for assistance on (02) 6207 1080 during business hours or via email at 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 phone the Access Canberra Contact Centre on **13 22 81**.

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

If you are deaf or hearing impaired and require the **National Relay Service**, please phone **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 TPDF will be posted online at <https://tourism.act.gov.au/funding/tourism-product-development-fund/>

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.
4. be told of the outcome.

12. FURTHER INFORMATION

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

Justin Lalor
Senior Director, VisitCanberra
justin.lalor@act.gov.au
02 6207 2884

Sarah Staruszkiewicz
Director, International and Partnerships
sarah.staruszkiewicz@act.gov.au
02 6205 0506

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



**Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic
Development Directorate**

April 2022