

Social Enterprise Growth Grants

Frequently asked questions

The frequently asked questions contain key information regarding the Social Enterprise Growth Grants program and should be read in conjunction with the program funding guidelines. This program is administered by the Queensland Department of Employment, Small Business and Training (DESBT).

Why has the Queensland Government extended this program?

Building on the success of the Queensland Social Enterprise Strategy, the Social Enterprise Growth Grants (SEGG) program has been designed to support the development and growth of established Queensland social enterprises.

In 2021, the Queensland Government committed \$8 million for the Social Enterprise Jobs Fund (SEJF) to support social enterprises to scale-up activities and create training and employment opportunities.

As part of the Queensland Small Business Strategy 2024–27, additional funding of \$1.9 million has been committed in 2024–25 to continue the Social Enterprise Jobs Fund and support the Queensland Social Enterprise Council as the peak body for social enterprise in the state.

The SEJF will continue to deliver on the Government's commitment under the Queensland Social Enterprise Strategy (QSES) released in 2019 to support the growth and development of a sustainable sector in Queensland.

In 2024–25, \$1 million will be available under the SEGG program to provide grants of between \$5,000 and \$25,000 for eligible social enterprises to scale-up or adapt their business operations to extend their reach and mission and increase sustainability or employment outcomes.

What is a Social Enterprise?

Consistent with the nationally accepted definition, a social enterprise is a business that:

- is led by an economic, social, cultural or environmental mission consistent with a public or community benefit
- trades to fulfil their mission and derives a substantial portion of their income from trade, and
- reinvests the majority of their profit/surplus into the fulfilment of their mission.

Am I eligible to apply for a grant?

To be eligible for the SEGG program, small to medium sized Queensland businesses must be able to demonstrate they:

- meet the agreed program definition of a Social Enterprise by providing certification offered through Social Traders or People and Planet First (PPF) via the Queensland Social Enterprise Council (QSEC), and
- have commercially traded for a minimum of one year in Queensland at the time of application, and



- have a social mission/purpose aligned with Queensland Government priorities, such as supporting jobs, investing in skills, growing regions, protecting the environment, and safeguarding our health, and
- have growth potential within the next two years to extend its reach and mission and increase employees.

It is preferred that applicants hold current People and Planet First verification. QSEC operate a PPF verification service to support businesses seeking verification of their Social Enterprise status. Social Traders Certified social enterprises can also apply to QSEC for verification of their business through QSEC.

What supporting documentation will I need to supply to confirm my business is a social enterprise?

Acceptable forms of evidence will be listed in the application form and include:

- Current evidence of People and Planet First (PPF) Social Enterprise verification.
PPF Social Enterprise verification can be applied for via the QSEC website at <https://www.qsec.org.au/verification>, OR
Current certification of your social enterprise offered through Social Traders.

What do I have to do to get People and Planet First verification as a Social Enterprise?

The Queensland Social Enterprise Council (QSEC) operate a PPF verification service to support businesses seeking verification of their Social Enterprise status.

Social Enterprise verification can be applied for via the QSEC website at <https://www.qsec.org.au/verification>.

Verification of Social Enterprise status is assessed against the PPF global standards.

What are the People and Planet First verification standards?

The five global standards are:

1. **Purpose:** Exists to solve a social and/or environmental problem.
2. **Operations:** Prioritises purpose, people, and planet over profit in operational decisions.
3. **Revenue:** Has a self-sustaining revenue model.
4. **Use of Surplus:** Reinvests the majority of any surplus towards its purpose.
5. **Structure:** Chooses legal structures and financing that protect and lock in purpose long term.

How long does it take to get my social enterprise's status verified?

Contact QSEC for details on the timing and cost of gaining PPF verification.

Do I require a certain business structure to be eligible to apply?

This program is seeking to assist eligible social enterprises and is not limited to a specific type of business or company structure. Eligible business structures may include:

- Company limited by guarantee

- Cooperative
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander corporation
- Incorporated association
- For-profit company, or
- Sole trader.

Do I have to be located in Queensland?

Yes. The applicant business must operate as a social enterprise in Queensland (i.e. have a Queensland headquarters or main business location in Queensland).

Do I need to be registered for GST?

Yes. The applicant business must be registered for GST at the time of application to be eligible for funding under this program.

Do I have to be trading as an existing social enterprise?

Yes. In addition to meeting all other eligibility criteria, the applicant must provide documented evidence that they have been operating and trading as a social enterprise in Queensland for a minimum of one year at the time of application.

How much funding is available under the program?

In 2024–25, \$1 million will be available for grants under the SEGG program. The minimum and maximum amounts of funding are \$5,000 and \$25,000 respectively.

Your application will not be considered if the grant amount is below \$5,000. If the grant amount is above \$25,000, your application may still be assessed but will be capped at \$25,000.

What can I use the grant funds for?

Grants will be provided for activities and/or expenditure that directly build business capability, capacity, or adaptability, and support the business to move to the next stage of growth, including:

- purchase of production equipment (e.g. catering, manufacturing) and digital equipment or systems (e.g. point of sale, 3D printers)
- buying consumables, resources or materials (e.g. goods or stock/inventory) directly related to a growth opportunity
- training or coaching programs to develop business skills and knowledge (e.g. corporate governance, financial management, social impact measurement, investment readiness, expanding to new markets or products)
- engaging professional business and strategic planning advice (e.g. legal, accounting or financial services and industry advisors)
- developing marketing strategies including branding and market research (content or implementation activities are permitted, but no advertising costs)
- website development and/or upgrades.

What can't I spend the grant funding on?

Projects will not be considered if funds are requested for the following activities and/or expenses (but not limited to):

- purchase of significant assets such as building or vehicles
- staff wages including remuneration of executive officers
- overseas and/or interstate travel
- day to day business operating expenses or ongoing business costs (such as payments for water, gas, electricity, rent, insurance, and loans)
- other recurrent costs such as established positions within the business or core functions of the business
- services delivered in-kind
- general fundraising requests
- retrospective payments for expenses incurred, or for work undertaken, prior to funding approval (including projects that have already commenced or are completed at the time of application)
- fees for any activities or equipment provided by related parties (such as companies with common shareholdings or directorship with the applicant, and employees or immediate family of the applicant)
- direct-selling businesses (where the sale of goods or services from another business are made in the customer's home, work, or other meeting place through methods such as party plans and network marketing).

When will applications open?

Applications for 2024–25 of the SEGG program open on **Monday 12 August 2024**.

Can I apply again if I received a SEGG before?

Yes. As long as you meet all eligibility requirements, being in receipt of a SEGG in 2021–22 or 2022–23 does not preclude you from applying in 2024–25.

Where can I get an application form?

The application is an online form and is available [here](#).

Where do I submit my application?

All applications and supporting documentation must be submitted to DESBT via the online application form [here](#).

When will applications close?

All applications for 2024–25 must be submitted by **5pm, Thursday 3 October 2024**. Incomplete applications and applications received after the closing date will not be considered.

Note: DESBT may at its sole discretion decide to extend the closing date for applications.

Can I submit more than one application?

No. Eligible businesses can only submit one application per individual ABN.

How will my application be assessed?

Applications will be assessed against the published criteria on page four (4) of the funding guidelines. Applications determined as ineligible in accordance with the criteria will not advance to the assessment stage.

Applicants should note that the list of assessment criteria is not necessarily exhaustive, and DESBT may also consider other criteria it considers appropriate.

Grants will be awarded on merit to projects that demonstrate the best value for money and potential to deliver benefits and outcomes that address the priorities of the program.

Applicant businesses that are prepared to co-contribute (either in-kind and/or financially) to their projects or have secured complementary funding for the project will also be viewed favourably. However, alternative funding sources are not a mandatory requirement.

How will I find out if I've been successful?

It is anticipated the assessment and approvals process will take up to eight weeks. All applicant businesses will be advised of the outcome in writing.

Please note that there may be delays experienced due to the 2024 State General Election and the caretaker period.

How will grant funding be paid?

Successful applicants must enter into a formal Services Agreement with DESBT.

An upfront payment will be made upon execution of the Services Agreement, but no sooner than 30 days prior to the project commencement date. DESBT may decide to vary the payment arrangements to match the risk profile of a project or to support a project delivered in separate stages.

Projects must be acquitted after completion and any unexpended or surplus funds returned to DESBT. Any projects not acquitted after completion or funds not used for the purposes of the project may require repayment of the funds to DESBT.

Further information

For further information about the program, please refer to the *Social Enterprise Growth Grants Funding Guidelines*.

For further queries, please email seif@desbt.qld.gov.au.