



Australian Government
Department of Education

Australia's Economic Accelerator Program

Program Administrative Guidelines

2023 Seed Tranche 3

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1. About the grant program

These Guidelines apply to Australia's Economic Accelerator Seed (AEA Seed) Tranche 3 grant proposals. The purpose of the Guidelines is to set out the rules that govern the department's administration of AEA Seed, including the requirements for proposals, eligibility selection processes to be followed and the selection criteria that will be used to recommend grant funding.

Defined terms used in these Guidelines are listed in the Glossary.

The Australia's Economic Accelerator (AEA) supports collaboration between university research teams and industry, to take research results closer to translation and commercial reality. It is administered by the Department of Education (department) and will focus on university-led projects with translation and commercial potential. Projects must be aligned with the Australian Government's National Reconstruction Fund.¹

The AEA Seed is different from most university research grant schemes. It is exclusively targeted at the experimental development end of the research and development spectrum, and growing university-industry collaboration. The AEA Seed is designed to shift the research and development dial by supporting translation and commercialisation of Australia's world-class university research.

The AEA has 2 stages, Ignite and Innovate, and AEA Seed is the pilot version of AEA Ignite.

A completed AEA Seed project is not automatically eligible or required for AEA Ignite, or AEA Innovate.

AEA Ignite supports early-stage research commercialisation through competitive grants of up to \$500,000 and up to 12 months, for universities to complete laboratory testing to establish proof of concept. This is after completion of basic research and testing has verified the concept or process in an industrially relevant environment that simulates the intended commercial use of the technology.

AEA Innovate provides mid-stage research commercialisation grants of up to \$5 million and up to 24 months, for universities, in partnership with businesses, to build prototypes and pilot systems to establish proof of scale. Proof of scale is the point at which a prototype has been demonstrated to work, at a pre-commercial scale, in an operational environment.

Ignite and Innovate are independent streams. Funding for Innovate is not dependent on having received funding for Ignite.

Prior to Ignite and Innovate opening, AEA Seed grants are available to support proof-of-concept projects between Technology Readiness Levels (TRLs) 3 to 5. AEA Seed initially opened across 2 tranches, between February and May 2023, supported by a \$10 million investment by the Australian Government.

¹ Australian Department of Industry, Science and Resources, 'National Reconstruction Fund: diversifying and transforming Australia's industry and economy' [online]. Available from National Reconstruction Fund: diversifying and transforming Australia's industry and economy | Department of Industry, Science and Resources [Accessed 24 January 2023].

AEA Seed Tranche 3 will seek to support projects for research commercialisation activity in the following three priority areas (listed below) identified in the National Reconstruction Fund, with a special emphasis on projects that focus on advanced and additive manufacturing technologies:

- transport,
- defence capability, and
- enabling capabilities.

Projects outside of these priorities may be considered if funding allocations are not fully utilised.

These Program Administrative Guidelines reflect the Other Grant Guidelines (Research) 2017 (OGG) made under the *Higher Education Support Act 2003* (HESA). Program Administrative Guidelines as articulated in this document may be updated to ensure consistency with the OGG. Amendments to, or clarification of, these guidelines may be made by the Department of Education (the Department) at any time.

1.1 Australia's Economic Accelerator - AEA Seed grant process

Australia's Economic Accelerator is designed to achieve the Australian Government's objectives for translation and commercialisation of university research.

This competitive grant opportunity is part of the AEA which contributes to the department's Program 2.6: Research Capacity:

Increase production, use and awareness of research knowledge and to improve collaboration between government, industry and the research sector in the production of research knowledge.

The department works with stakeholders to plan and design the grant program.

The AEA will be available in 2 stages, AEA Ignite (Stage 1) and AEA Innovate (Stage 2) grants. AEA Seed is the pilot version of AEA Ignite. AEA Seed is expected to test feasibility and implementation procedures prior to roll-out of the full AEA.

Grants awarded under AEA Seed are solely for the purpose of translating research activity into commercial outcomes, including to demonstrate proof of concept, validate research in a laboratory or real-world environment, and develop and test prototypes.

If the Lead Organisation's project is at a later phase of technological/commercial readiness (with established proof of concept), they should consider applying for an AEA Innovate grant instead.



The grant opportunity opens

The department will publish the Program Administrative Guidelines (Guidelines) on the AEA [website](#).

AEA Seed Tranche 3 will be open for approximately 8 weeks and assessments of proposals will be made after the round closes.



The Lead Organisation completes and submits a grant proposal

The Lead Organisation completes the proposal and addresses all the eligibility and selection criteria to be considered for a grant. Proposals are submitted online through the [Research Management System](#) (RMS)



The department undertakes an eligibility assessment

The department assesses the proposals against the eligibility criteria. Proposals that do not meet the eligibility criteria will not proceed to further assessment.



Expert Advisors undertake merit assessment of eligible proposals and make grant recommendations

The AEA Executive Director and Expert Advisors consider eligible proposals against the full selection criteria as per section 4.1 of these Guidelines. This assessment will include an overall consideration of value for money and making recommendations on the merits of each proposal (including the level and duration of funding for each project) to the Program Delegate, who is the final decision maker.



Grant decisions are made

The Program Delegate decides which proposals are successful, and the level of funding and duration of funding for each approved project.

The Program Delegate will consider the recommendations and risks regarding the proposal identified during the assessment processes, including but not limited to national interest, national security, financial viability, or any other risks identified.



The department notifies the Lead Organisation of the outcome

The Lead Organisation will receive notification of the outcome of their proposal through RMS. The department may not notify unsuccessful Lead Organisations until Conditions of Grant have been finalised with successful Lead Organisations.



The department imposes conditions on the grant

The Program Delegate will impose Conditions of Grant that cover, among other requirements, the size and duration of the grant, the participants involved, reporting requirements, and how the project is to be conducted.

Grants under AEA Seed may be approved by the Program Delegate in stages, and the approval of the next stage of grant funding may be subject to the achievement of milestones set out in the Conditions of Grant.



Delivery of grant

If the Lead Organisation accepts the Conditions of Grant, the successful Lead Organisation undertakes the grant activity as agreed. The department manages the grant by working with the successful Lead Organisation, monitoring their progress, and making milestone payments accordingly.



Evaluation of AEA Seed

The department will periodically evaluate AEA Seed in terms of its efficiency and impact. The department bases this evaluation on information the Lead Organisation provides to the department, as well as what the department collects from various sources such as the Australian Bureau of Statistics.



1.2 Program objectives

The objectives of the AEA are to:

- support higher education providers to bridge the divide between basic research activities, and commercialisation outcomes, through closer engagement with industry partners
- support research activities aligned to national priority areas, undertaken by higher education providers
- boost the research capability of higher education providers to conduct research with high commercialisation potential
- foster a culture of collaboration between universities and industry, including greater job mobility and career development opportunities within both sectors; and
- encourage industry engagement with university research, boosting research capability in areas with the greatest potential for economic impact.

1.3 Program outcomes

The AEA is expected to realise the following outcomes.

Short-to-medium term:

- increased confidence in the university and industry sectors to collaborate and invest in research and development, and commercialisation
- an increased uptake in applied research pathways and career opportunities, with researchers gaining commercial and entrepreneurial skills in addition to building strong commercial and industry relationships
- increased numbers of research projects proceeding towards commercialisation
- increased job mobility between the university and private sectors.

Medium-to-long term:

- an uplift in commercial outputs from Australian university research, increasing Australia's sovereign capability
- increased collaboration between universities and industry, leading to better-targeted innovation
- increased business investment in research and development, and competitiveness in the identified priority areas
- an Australian economy which is stronger, more complex, and more resilient.

1.4 About the AEA Seed grant opportunity

AEA Seed grants support early-stage proof-of-concept projects through competitive grants of up to \$500,000 and up to 12 months, for universities to undertake prototype testing of a technology, product, or service to establish proof of concept. This is after completion of basic research and testing has verified the concept or process in an industrially relevant environment that simulates the intended translational and commercial use of the technology. AEA Seed is the pilot version of AEA Ignite, and Ignite and Innovate are independent streams. Funding for Innovate is not dependent on having received funding for Seed or Ignite.

AEA Seed grants are available to support proof of concept projects that commence at Technology Readiness Levels (TRL) 3 to 5. There is no requirement for AEA Seed proposals to increase the anticipated TRL of a project by completion. However, if it does not expect to increase the anticipated TRL, the project must demonstrate progress within the TRL.

AEA Seed grants are made by the Program Delegate. The final grant amount will be determined by the Program Delegate. The grant amounts available are:

- a minimum grant amount of \$50,000 per project
- a maximum grant amount of \$500,000 per project
- multiple grants may be awarded to a single project up to a maximum amount of \$500,000 per project, provided the project progresses within a TRL or to a higher TRL when applying for subsequent proposals. Where projects are above TRL 5, subject to meeting the eligibility criteria, Lead Organisations may consider applying for an AEA Innovate grant opportunity.

Previous AEA Seed funding will count towards the \$500,000 project cap on AEA Ignite grants.

Funding awarded under AEA Seed is eligible for inclusion as research income in the Higher Education Research Data Collection.

1.5 Important dates

The opening and closing dates for proposals for AEA Seed tranches will be published on the [AEA website](#). Proposals must be submitted between the designated opening and closing dates. Late submissions will not be accepted. Unless otherwise specified, grant rounds will open at 9am AEST or AEDT and close at 5pm AEST or AEDT.

Lead organisations that have commenced but did not submit a proposal for an AEA Seed round before that round closes will need to begin their proposals again when the next relevant round opens.

1.6 Grant period

Projects should commence as soon as the department has signed and issued the Conditions of Grant, and no later than 6 weeks after the Conditions of Grant are issued. Projects that have a delayed start date of more than 6 weeks must contact the department as this may affect the amount of funding available to be fully awarded. Projects must be completed between 3 to 12 months from the project's agreed start date.

After this period, the successful Lead Organisation will be expected to report on the outcomes of the grant and may be required to provide a response to a short survey for a further 7 years.

2. Eligibility criteria

The department cannot consider a proposal if the Lead Organisation does not satisfy all eligibility criteria. The department cannot waive the eligibility criteria under any circumstances. The Program Delegate makes the final decision about whether a proposal meets the eligibility criteria.

To be eligible, proposals must, at a minimum:

- include one, and only one, Lead Organisation from the Table A and Table B providers listed in the *Higher Education Support Act 2003* (HESA)
- nominate one, and only one, Lead Entrepreneur employed by the Lead Organisation that commits to work on the project for a minimum of 0.5 FTE over the grant period
- demonstrate how the project aligns with one of the following national priority areas:
 - value-add in resources
 - value-add in agriculture, forestry and fisheries sectors
 - transport
 - medical science
 - renewables and low emissions technology
 - defence capability, or
 - enabling capabilities
- demonstrate that, at the time the grant will be made, all actual or perceived conflicts of interest, both within and outside Australia, that exist in relation to the conduct of the proposed project have been disclosed to the department, and the Lead Organisation has demonstrated that they have taken steps required by the department to resolve or address the conflict
- demonstrate alignment to TRL 3, 4 or 5 and must demonstrate some progress within the TRL or to a higher TRL during the life of the project. There is no expectation that all projects will progress to a higher TRL by completion
- demonstrate some level of industry engagement. Projects with relevant and substantive industry engagement and/or investors will be prioritised
- where a Partner Organisation is included in the proposal, provide their Australian Business Number and submit a signed Partner Organisation Declaration (Appendix C) as part of the online RMS application
- make a minimum contribution of at least 10 per cent of the total budget in cash and/or in-kind- support from the combined participating organisations included in the proposal
- proposals seeking \$200,000 or more in grant funding must identify and cost at least 2 phases of work and provide a description in the Budget Explanation of the online RMS application form (further information on this can be found in section C1 of the [Applicant's Guide](#))
- commit to complete their project within 3 to 12 months of the project's commencement date.

Note: Proposals will not be considered if they do not meet all the eligibility criteria.

The department cannot provide a grant if the Lead Organisation has received funding from another Commonwealth Government source for the same stages of development as in the Lead Organisation's Seed Program proposal.

2.1 Who is eligible to apply for a grant?

Only the Lead Organisation is eligible to apply for grants under AEA Seed. A Lead Organisation must be a Table A or Table B provider listed in HESA. Researchers must be affiliated with one of these providers to apply for AEA Seed grant funding on behalf of one of these providers.

There is no limit to the number of proposals submitted per Lead Organisation.

2.2 Lead Organisations and Collaborating Organisations

The organisation that submits the proposal is the Lead Organisation. The Program Delegate will approve grants to, and impose grant conditions on, the Lead Organisation.

All other Table A and Table B providers, named on the proposal will be considered Collaborating Organisations. Proposals may include multiple Collaborating Organisations. Collaborating Organisations are not required, but their inclusion may improve a proposal's performance against the selection criteria. Collaborating Organisations may, and are encouraged to, contribute at least one Collaborating Entrepreneur to carry out the responsibilities specified in the proposal.

Proposals must be submitted by an office bearer of the Lead Organisation who is authorised to do so on behalf of the Lead Organisation – for example, a Bursar, senior officer of a Research Office, senior officer of a Technology Transfer Office, or senior officer of an Office of the Deputy Vice Chancellor (Research). Prior to submitting their proposal, the Lead Organisation must ensure that they have sought relevant research commercialisation advice and review from their organisation.

2.3 Partner Organisations

A Partner Organisation is any participating and contributing organisation that does not fit the criteria of a Lead or Collaborating Organisation. For example, a Partner Organisation could be a business, body, or agency with an interest in the success of the project. Multiple Partner Organisations may be included in a proposal. Partner Organisations may, and are encouraged to, contribute at least one Partner Entrepreneur to carry out the responsibilities specified in the proposal.

Partnerships are encouraged to ensure the proposed research is of relevance to industry and end users, and to support translation and commercialisation of research outcomes into practice. Inclusion of Partner Organisations should be used to strengthen the translation and commercialisation potential of the project and be clearly explained in the proposal. Partner Organisations are not mandatory, however, proposals with established investment partners will be prioritised.

Each Partner Organisation must:

- be an Australian business entity that is a corporation; a company proprietary limited; or a non-profit organisation with an Australian Business Number (ABN) or Australian Company Number (ACN) and operate in Australia
- participate in the project within the grant period
- provide evidence of new or on-going collaboration directly with the Lead Organisation and Collaborating Organisations, where appropriate
- include a signed letter of support in the proposal (using the Partner Organisation Declaration in Appendix C)
- demonstrate that they are not part of the excluded category listed below by providing relevant ASIC or equivalent documents for each Partner Organisation, namely:
 - current and historical company information, and
 - roles and relationship extract, and
 - current Capitalisation (CAP) table showing, as a minimum, a list of shareholders and percentage of shares held.

An organisation cannot be a Partner Organisation if it is:

- a Lead or Collaborating Organisation
- an intellectual property (IP) holding company or university Technology Transfer Office (or equivalent)

Partner Organisation cash contributions cannot be sourced from funds awarded or appropriated by the Commonwealth for the purposes of research, including the Research and Development Tax Incentive (R&D Tax Incentive or R&DTI), nor from funds previously used to leverage government research or research infrastructure funding.

Where a Partner Organisation is a start-up and/or spin-out company controlled by any of the organisations or participants listed in the proposal, those involved in the proposed activities must act with the highest standards of probity in disclosing and managing conflicts of interest in this area. Each individual or organisation with an actual, potential, or perceived financial or non-financial interest or role in the spin-out or start-up company must disclose their conflict of interest and provide strategies on how this conflict will be managed in the proposal.

2.4 Who is eligible to be a named participant?

Named participants are the individuals nominated for key roles identified in the AEA Seed proposal. These are:

- Lead Entrepreneurs (LE)
- Collaborating Entrepreneurs (CE), and
- Partner Entrepreneurs (PE).

Lead Organisations must nominate one, and only one, LE to lead the project. Other participating Entrepreneurs from the Lead Organisation must be nominated as CEs.

All named participants in a proposal must satisfy the eligibility criteria for the role they are to perform and take responsibility for the authorship and intellectual content of the proposal.

Limits on the number of proposals and projects per named participant

This section only applies to LE, CE and PE involved in a project and is designed to ensure that named participants have the capacity to undertake each project in which they are involved.

It is the responsibility of the Lead Organisation to determine if applying for funding for a project under AEA Seed will affect the named participants' ability to carry out their duties under an AEA Seed grant, should the Lead Organisation's proposal be successful.

The Program Delegate may decide not to provide a grant to Lead Organisations in circumstances where the department assesses that the named participants in the project will be unable to carry out their duties as specified in the proposal.

Lead Entrepreneurs (LEs) must:

- make a commitment to work on the project for a minimum of 0.5 FTE over the grant period, which can be funded from AEA Seed grant funds
- take significant intellectual responsibility for the conception and implementation of the project and for any strategic decisions required in its pursuit and the communication of results
- ensure effective supervision, support and mentoring at all times of project personnel, and
- be engaged by the Lead Organisation at the commencement date of the grant and for its duration. Individuals engaged by the Lead Organisation may be employees, contractors, PhD students, or hold another position such as a statutory appointment or honorary position. If the Lead Organisation intends for the Lead Entrepreneur to be a PhD student, it is essential for the Lead Organisation to ensure that they remain compliant with other requirements relating to PhD students, such as those in the guidelines made for the purposes of Part 2-4 of HESA, currently the *Commonwealth Scholarship Guidelines (Research) 2017*, and the Lead Organisation's RTP Scholarship Policy if one exists.

LEs are not required to be engaged by the Lead Organisation at the point of submission of the proposal. However, they must have a contractual or other formal relationship (that meets the requirements listed above) with the Lead Organisation by the commencement of the project. The LE cannot be a PE or CE or sign letters of support on behalf of Partner Organisations or Collaborating Organisations.

Collaborating Entrepreneurs (CEs) must:

- take significant intellectual responsibility for the conception and conduct of the project and for any strategic decisions required in its pursuit and the communication of results
- ensure effective supervision, support and mentoring at all times of project personnel, and
- be engaged by a Lead or Collaborating Organisation at the commencement date of the grant and for its duration.

Partner Entrepreneurs (PEs) must:

- take significant intellectual responsibility for the conception and conduct of the project and for any strategic decisions required in its pursuit and the communication of results, and
- be employed by a Partner Organisation.

2.5 Who is not eligible?

A proposal will not be eligible to be considered for an AEA Seed grant if any of the following apply to any participating organisation – including Lead Organisation, Collaborating Organisation or Partner Organisation – mentioned in the proposal:

- the organisation is named as a person or entity on the following list: <https://www.dfat.gov.au/international-relations/security/sanctions/consolidated-list>
- the organisation is included on the National Redress Scheme’s website on the list of ‘Institutions that have not joined or signified their intent to join the Scheme’ (www.nationalredress.gov.au),
- the organisation is named as an organisation that has not complied with the *Workplace Gender Equality Act 2012* (Cth), or
- the organisation does not comply with all relevant legislation, policies or industry standards listed in section 8.3.

The department cannot provide a grant if the Lead Organisation has funding from another Commonwealth source for the same stages of development as in their AEA Seed proposal. The proposal must specify the government funding the proposal has or will receive, and the TRL stage of development to which this funding contributes.

2.6 Technology Readiness Level (TRL)

Proposals for AEA Seed must aim to show proof of concept for a new technology and to work towards developing and testing a prototype of the technology/product in an operational environment, which may include integrating components to develop a working system and trying that out in a simulated context that represents the intended commercial use of the technology.

Proposals for AEA Seed must demonstrate alignment to TRL 3, 4 or 5. As a guide, applicants can use the descriptions of TRLs in Appendix A. Projects, which anticipate going beyond TRL 5 by the end of the grant period will be eligible if they are between TRL 3 to 5 at the commencement of the project.

2.7 Alignment with National Reconstruction Fund (NRF) priorities

Projects must be aligned to the priorities of the [National Reconstruction Fund](#) (as defined in the Glossary at section 13 of these Guidelines). The Lead Organisation will be expected to articulate how their proposal would contribute towards achieving that priority.

2.8 Intellectual Property (IP)

Lead Organisations must provide details of IP arrangements in their proposals. This includes both the use of IP in the project and the proposed ownership rights to IP created by the project.

The Lead Organisation must offer to use the [Higher Education Research Commercialisation Intellectual Property Framework](#) (HERC IP) when entering into agreements with third parties for activities related to the project funded by the AEA Seed grant and indicate to such third parties the successful Lead Organisation's preference to use the HERC IP Framework.

The Lead Organisation and their project partners must negotiate arrangements and procedures for using and handling all IP created through the project, in a manner that maximises the benefits to Australia and the partners. These arrangements may include the allocation of IP rights, or of the income from IP, between the Lead Organisation and their partners.

The Lead Organisation must warrant their ownership of and access to, or the beneficial use of, any IP necessary to carry out the project. The department does not claim ownership of any IP in a proposal or in any research arising from a project.

3. What the grant money can be used for

3.1 Eligible expenditure

The Lead Organisation can only spend the grant on eligible expenditure incurred on an agreed project as defined in its Conditions of Grant. Not all expenditure spent on the Lead Organisation's project may be eligible for grant funding. The Program Delegate makes the final decision on what is eligible expenditure and may provide additional guidance on eligible expenditure where required.

Budgets should be realistic, accurate and feasible in relation to the nature of the project. To be eligible, expenditure must be:

- a direct cost of the project, or
- incurred for required project audit activities.

Eligible expenditure items may include:

- a. **Personnel**, including:
 - salaries and on-costs for personnel directly employed for the project activities (this should be calculated on a pro-rata basis relative to their time commitment using the formula detailed below). The Lead Organisation may increase eligible salary costs by an additional 30 per cent allowance to cover on-costs such as employer paid superannuation, payroll tax, workers compensation insurance, and overheads such as office rent and the provision of computers
 - paying assistance to research students for the duration of the grant
 - backfilling (teaching relief) costs for academic staff who are assigned to the project
 - Lead Organisations should calculate eligible salary costs using the formula below:

$$\text{Eligible Salary Costs} = \text{Annual Salary Package} \times \frac{\text{Weeks Spent on Project}}{52 \text{ Weeks}} \times \text{Percentage of Time Spent on Project}$$

- b. **Expert services** of a third party directly related to and essential for the project, but only where it is not reasonable for similar services to be provided by inhouse capability of the participating organisation, for example:
 - business development and knowledge transfer costs
 - design costs associated with constructing, assembling, installing and/or commissioning plants or prototypes
 - advice required to obtain relevant regulatory approvals
 - access to and use of specialist equipment
 - use of manufacturing facilities to manufacture prototypes or components.
- c. **Travel** costs essential to the project, including economy travel costs for domestic and/or international travel and accommodation is limited to 10 per cent of the total eligible expenditure.
- d. **Verifiable Plant and Equipment** costs, proportional to the time used for the project:
 - running costs for new or pre-existing plant
 - hire, rental, or leasing costs

- where new equipment is purchased, the eligible costs claimed must be proportional to the time used for the project. Disposal (i.e., sale) of the equipment should be at a fair market value, unless it is fully depreciated.
- e. **Other** costs directly relevant to the project, which may include:
 - staff development and training that supports the achievement of project outcomes
 - IP protection expenditure, such as costs associated with patenting
 - acquisition of new and leading-edge technology where adaptation to that technology will contribute directly to the success of the project. Where new technology is purchased, the eligible costs claimed must be proportional to the time used for the project. Disposal (i.e., sale) of technology (equipment) should be at a fair market value, unless it is fully depreciated
 - participation of lead or named participants in business or research Accelerator or Incubator programs available in Australia
 - costs of materials and consumables used to develop the project that were fully utilised during the project period
 - costs of independent audit of project expenditure.

The successful Lead Organisation must incur the expenditure on their grant activities between the start and end dates of their grant period for it to be eligible.

For guidance on in-kind contributions, see Appendix B.

3.2 Eligible locations

It is expected the vast majority of the project activities and funding expenditure will occur in Australia. There may be some rare cases where components of a project may be undertaken overseas if the activity cannot be undertaken in Australia and is critical to the successful completion of the project.

3.3 Ineligible expenditure

The grant cannot be used for the following activities:

- a. basic research or research activity that is not conducted for the purpose of showing or validating a function of the technology that will be important for the commercial outcome
- b. activities unaligned to a priority of the NRF
- c. basic facilities that should normally be provided by a Lead Organisation, Collaborating Organisation, or Partner Organisation
- d. costs associated with research undertaken at TRLs 1 and 2
- e. capital works and general infrastructure costs
- f. attendance at conferences
- g. costs not directly related to the project, including but not limited to visas, relocation costs, insurance, mobile phones (purchase or call charges), and other indirect costs
- h. paying fines or penalties
- i. overseas expenditure beyond that described in section 3.1
- j. depreciation costs of the plant and equipment used for the project.

Grants cannot be used to cover costs incurred outside of the project timeline. These include retrospective costs and assistance to PhD students beyond 12 months.

The department may update this guidance on eligible and ineligible expenditure and in-kind contributions from time to time. If the Lead Organisation's proposal is successful, the version in place when the Lead Organisation submitted their proposal applies to their project and is what will be included in the successful Lead Organisation's Conditions of Grant.

The successful Lead Organisation must ensure they have adequate funds to meet the costs of any ineligible expenditure associated with the project.

4. Selection criteria

The Lead Organisation must address all the selection criteria in their proposal. The selection criteria will be assessed in their entirety.

The online RMS application form includes character, word, and page limits.

The Lead Organisation should provide evidence to support their answers. The amount of detail and supporting evidence provided in the proposal should be relative to the scale, complexity and requested grant amount. It is important to note that claims made by Lead Organisations, specifically claims made regarding potential impact or benefit of the project, should be quantified (where possible) to strengthen the proposal.

4.1 AEA Seed Selection Criteria

Proposals for AEA Seed will be assessed against the following weighted criteria:

Criterion 1: Impact of AEA Project grant and project outcomes (30 per cent)

Demonstrated through identifying:

- 1.1 Alignment with at least one of the National Reconstruction Fund priority areas
- 1.2 Extent to which the proposal builds on and supports other Whole-of-Government initiatives, if applicable
- 1.3 The impact of the AEA grant funding regarding scale and timing of the project, and the likelihood it would proceed without the grant
- 1.4 Where the solution aims to be at the project endpoint if successful, including the Technology Readiness level and description of next steps (technical and commercial) upon project completion.

Criterion 2: Capacity, capability, and resources to deliver project (20 per cent)

Demonstrated through identifying:

- 2.1 Achievable and realistic overview of steps in project, including risks and appropriate risk management
- 2.2 Adequate time dedicated to project, including overview of time commitments from team members across functional areas
- 2.3 Excellent composition and strength of team – skills/experience required for the project other than research commercialisation
- 2.4 Sound project budget with overview of required and/or currently available resources.

Criterion 3: Commercial potential and market opportunity (25 per cent)

Demonstrated through identifying and referencing the Lead Organisation source information:

- 3.1 What are the addressable and serviceable target markets (or quantifiable public good equivalent), both domestic and international, that the solution seeks to address including their estimated size and value?
- 3.2 What is the novelty and unique selling point of the project outcome, along with its competitive advantage?
- 3.3 Overview of the research and development completed to date, project momentum and substantiation of current Technology Readiness Level
- 3.4 Likelihood of a successful project outcome, including why the potential solution will move towards commercial success.

Criterion 4: Commercialisation pathway and engagement with industry and/or commercial partners (25 per cent)

Demonstrated through identifying:

- 4.1 Strength of commercial partner engagement OR commercialisation pathway with needs from end users
- 4.2 Overview of resources and/or support which partner/s will provide
- 4.3 Evidence of fit for purpose intellectual property (IP) management, include existing intellectual property (IP) or new IP expected to be developed
- 4.4 Team experience in commercialisation accelerator programs or hands-on activities.

5. How to apply

Before applying, Lead Organisations must read and understand these Guidelines, and all AEA Seed supporting material on the AEA [website](#).

To apply, the Lead Organisation must:

Complete an online AEA Seed application form on the Research Management System (https://aea_education.researchgrants.gov.au/):

- provide all the information requested
- meet all eligibility criteria and address all selection criteria
- include all requested and necessary attachments
- submit the proposal/s by the closing date and time outlined on the AEA [website](#).

Lead Organisations are responsible for ensuring proposals are complete and accurate. Giving false or misleading information is a serious offence under the *Criminal Code Act 1995*. The department will investigate any false or misleading information, which may exclude the Lead Organisation's proposal from further consideration.

If the Lead Organisation finds an error in their proposal after submitting it, the Lead Organisation should contact the department immediately via accelerator@education.gov.au. The department does not have to accept any additional information, nor requests from the Lead Organisation, to correct their proposal after the closing time.

If the department finds an error or information that is missing, they may ask for clarification or additional information from the Lead Organisation that will not change the nature of the Lead Organisation's proposal. Once the Lead Organisation's proposal is submitted through the RMS, the Lead Organisation may be invited to interview with the Expert Advisors regarding their project. However, the department can refuse to accept any additional information from the Lead Organisation that would change the submission after the closing date.

The Lead Organisation should keep a copy of their proposal and any supporting documents.

The department will acknowledge receipt of the Lead Organisation's proposal through a system-generated email.

The same Lead Organisation may choose to submit more than one AEA Seed proposal at the same time, provided they are substantively different.

If Lead Organisations need further guidance on the AEA Seed grant process or are unable to submit a proposal, they may contact the department at accelerator@education.gov.au.

If Lead Organisations need technical support for RMS, they may contact the Australian Research Council (ARC), which manages RMS:

- RMS Support Desk Phone: (02) 6287 6789
- RMS Support Desk Email: RMSSupport@arc.gov.au

There is also information about RMS on the ARC website – [Research Management System \(RMS\) Information](#) and on the RGS website – [General Information about RMS](#).

5.1 Facilitation and proposal development

The department, through the AEA Executive Director and Expert Advisors, may seek to work with Lead Organisations or potential Lead Organisations and their partners. The department may also facilitate collaboration between Lead Organisations with similar or complementary proposals, or between Lead Organisations and other organisations or funding bodies. Any such facilitation of collaboration, including the release of confidential information to another Lead Organisation or individual, will only be made following receipt of the Lead Organisation's consent.

When facilitating collaborations, the department is not responsible or liable for any comments, consultation or assistance provided by the department, its staff or any consultants, and the facilitation must not be taken to imply that the department will offer funding for the project.

The department recommends that the Lead Organisation seek their own independent legal, technical, and financial advice before proceeding with departmental facilitation of their proposal.

6. The grant selection process

6.1 Assessment of grant proposals

The department will review the proposal against the eligibility criteria. Proposals that do not meet all the eligibility criteria will not progress to the merit assessment stage.

The department, including its staff, the AEA Executive Director and Expert Advisors, will then assess eligible proposals against the selection criteria and against other proposals. When conducting eligibility checks or assessing proposals, the department may request further information from a Lead Organisation regarding their project, Collaborating Organisation or Partner Organisations.

The proposal will be considered on its merits, based on:

- how well it meets the selection criteria
- how it compares to other proposals
- whether it provides value for money.

The department may ask external Expert Advisors to inform the assessment process. Any Expert Advisor who is not a Commonwealth Official will be required to perform their duties in accordance with these Guidelines.

When assessing the extent to which the proposal represents value for money, the department will have regard to the:

- overall objective/s to be achieved in providing the grant
- relative value of the grant sought
- extent to which the evidence in the proposal demonstrates that it will contribute to meeting the program objectives, and
- anything identified during the due diligence process conducted in relation to the proposal.

The AEA Executive Director and Expert Advisors will make recommendations to the Program Delegate regarding which proposals to approve for a grant. The Program Delegate will consider the recommendations and risks regarding proposals as identified during the assessment processes, including but not limited to national interest, national security, financial viability, or any other risks identified.

6.2 Who will approve grants?

The Program Delegate has been delegated the power to approve grants under HESA by the Minister for Education. The Program Delegate decides which grants to approve, considering recommendations of the AEA Executive Director and Expert Advisors, and the availability of grant funds for the purposes of the grant program.

The Program Delegate's decision is final in all matters, including the:

- approval of the grant
- the grant funding amount to be awarded
- the conditions imposed on the grant.

7. Notification of proposal outcomes

The department will advise the Lead Organisation of the outcome of their proposal in writing, via RMS. If a Lead Organisation is successful, the department will advise them of any specific conditions imposed on the grant.

If the Lead Organisation is unsuccessful, feedback will be provided on why proposals were not successful.

The Lead Organisation can submit a new proposal for the same project (or a similar project) in any future grant opportunities under AEA Seed or AEA Ignite. The Lead Organisation should include new or more information to address any feedback that the Lead Organisation received regarding their previously submitted proposal.

8. Successful grant proposals

The Program Delegate will impose conditions on the grant, which will be provided to the successful Lead Organisation in writing. The Lead Organisation will not receive grant funding, nor be able to incur eligible expenditure, until the conditions are imposed, and any other conditions set by the Program Delegate are met.

The Program Delegate may decide to fund only some aspects of the project and the Lead Organisation can decide to apply again for further funding.

8.1 Project management plan

Prior to the imposition of any conditions on the grant, the Lead Organisation must provide a Project management plan. The Project management plan should demonstrate meaningful outcomes at each stage or milestone. This is important as the Program Delegate has the discretion to partially or fully fund proposals, and proposals seeking higher amounts of grant funding will attract greater attention on incremental progress and final outcomes as specified in the Project management plan.

The Project management plan should include:

- a clear implementation timetable and tangible milestones
- a comprehensive budget and financial management strategy, including additional cash and in-kind contributions
- a clear approach to tracking, assessing, and reporting on progress
- a risk plan identifying any risks and mitigation strategies.

If the Lead Organisation is successful in being selected for a grant, the department will work with them to review and finalise the Project management plan for inclusion in the Conditions of Grant.

8.2 Conditions of Grant

The Conditions of Grant will include key performance indicators and milestones appropriate to each project. The details of the Conditions of Grant, including the payment schedule and milestones, will be informed by the grant proposal and Project management plan. The department will use the standard Conditions of Grant template available on AEA [website](#).

The Conditions of Grant will include, at minimum, the following:

- the name and details of the successful Lead Organisation
- total funding for the grant activity, including if payments are to be made upfront or by agreed milestones
- commitment of cash and/or in-kind contributions from organisations in the proposal
- a description of activities to be undertaken and milestones to be met
- agreed performance indicators and outcomes for the project, and
- reporting requirements, including the frequency of, and information required in, reports.

The Minister for Education may seek to reduce the amount of a successful Lead Organisation's grant should the project fail to meet key milestones or deliver key objectives as specified in the Conditions of Grant.

The department reserves the right to audit any evidence on which a proposal is based.

Successful Lead Organisations may transfer AEA funding to one or more Collaborating or Partner Organisations. The funding arrangements for AEA Seed grants must be reflected in a legally binding partnership agreement with participating organisations.

A Conditions of Grant document is a mechanism for the Minister (or their delegate) to unilaterally impose conditions on a grant that the Commonwealth is providing. As the Minister or their delegate imposes such conditions unilaterally, successful Lead Organisations are not required to sign the Conditions of Grant, and they accept the conditions imposed on the grant when they accept the grant.

Acceptance of AEA Seed Conditions of Grants by Lead Organisations will be time limited. Once the Project management plan has been finalised and accepted by the department, the successful Lead Organisation will have a specified period to agree to the Conditions of Grant from when it is issued by the department. The offer may lapse if Lead Organisations do not agree to the Conditions of Grant within the specified timeframe. To accept the grant and agree to the Conditions of Grant, successful Lead Organisations will be required to action acceptance within RMS.

For the purposes of AEA Seed, Conditions of Grant will not be negotiable.

If a successful Lead Organisation does not agree to the Conditions of Grant, a grant will not be made by the Program Delegate, and they will not receive the grant funding.

8.3 Legislation, policies and industry standards

The Lead Organisation, and all other participating organisations, must comply with all relevant laws, regulations and Australian Government policies in undertaking their project including any Conditions of Grant. The Lead Organisation, and all other participating organisations, must also comply with the specific legislation, policies and industry standards that follow. It is a condition of the grant funding that the Lead Organisation meet these requirements.

Lead Organisations are required to be compliant with all relevant laws and regulations, and may be requested to demonstrate compliance with the following legislation and policies:

- [Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research](#)
- [NHMRC/ARC/UA National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research](#)
- [Guidelines to Counter Foreign Interference in the Australian University Sector](#)
- [Commonwealth Modern Slavery Act 2018](#) and the [National Action Plan to Combat Modern Slavery 2020-25](#)
- [The National Redress Scheme](#)
- [Workplace Gender Equality Act 2012](#)
- State/Territory legislation in relation to working with children/vulnerable people

- All relevant ethics codes and guidelines adopted by the Office of the Gene Technology Regulator, and all other relevant regulatory agencies operating in Australia and in any place in which the research is being conducted.

To be eligible for a grant, the Lead Organisation must declare in their proposal that they comply with these requirements. The Lead Organisation will also need to declare they can meet these requirements in their Conditions of Grant.

8.4 Grant payments and GST

All amounts referred to in these guidelines are exclusive of the Goods and Services Tax (GST), unless expressly stated otherwise. The Lead Organisation is responsible for all financial and taxation implications associated with receiving grant funds.

The department will make an initial payment at the start of the agreed grant period. The department will make subsequent payments in advance, based on the Lead Organisation's forecast eligible expenditure and adjusted for unspent amounts from previous payments. Payments are subject to satisfactory progress. Grants under AEA Seed may be approved by the Program Delegate in stages, and the approval of the next stage of grant funding may be subject to the achievement of milestones set out in the Conditions of Grant.

The department will set aside, at minimum, 10 per cent of the total grant funding for the final payment. The department will pay this when Lead Organisations submit a satisfactory final report demonstrating they have completed all outstanding obligations.

Grant payments will be managed through UniPay.

9. Announcement of grants

Approved grants will be announced by the department on its [website](#), on the Australian Research Council's Data Portal, and may also be announced by the Minister for Education. Information that is likely to be in the public announcement includes:

- named participants and professional titles
- Lead Organisation and the State or Territory of that organisation
- Collaborating and Partner Organisation(s)
- funding awarded
- project ID
- summary of the project
- project duration.

The Lead Organisation should ensure that information contained in the project title and summary descriptions will not compromise their obligations related to confidentiality and IP.

The Lead Organisation will be notified in writing prior to any announcement.

10. How the department monitors the Lead Organisation's grant activity

10.1 Keeping the department informed

The successful Lead Organisation must advise the department:

- if anything is likely to or will affect their project or organisation
- of changes to their organisation or business activities where they affect their proposal, affect their ability to complete the project, carry on business and pay debts due
- immediately if they become aware of a breach of the Conditions of Grant
- of public or promotional events relating to their grant and provide an opportunity for the Minister or their representative to attend.

10.2 Reporting

The successful Lead Organisation must submit reports consistent with the reporting requirements as specified in the Conditions of Grant.

The department may require and request reports in the course of a project, which will function as reviews on achievement of milestones and performance indicators. These may be used to determine whether the department makes a milestone payment at the designated time, or if a project requires a variation to its Conditions of Grant. AEA Seed grants may be approved by the Program Delegate in stages, and the approval of the next stage of grant funding may be subject to the achievement of particular milestones by the successful Lead Organisation. Where a milestone is not met, or other conditions imposed on a grant are breached, the Minister for Education may exercise their power to reduce or require repayment of a grant amount under Part 2-5 of HESA.

At a minimum, the successful Lead Organisation will be required to submit a final report on:

- project outcomes, including achievements such as patents, trademarks or Plant Breeders Rights awarded; joint researcher/industry publications; spin-out and start-up companies established; jobs created; options and assignments on IP taken up; and movements of personnel between universities and businesses
- total eligible expenditure incurred
- contributions of participants directly related to the project
- progress towards achievement of milestones and project outcomes as specified in Conditions of Grant
- any significant obstacles or challenges
- lessons learned in undertaking the project.

The amount of detail the successful Lead Organisation provides in their reports should be relative to the size, complexity and grant amount.

The successful Lead Organisation must discuss any potential or actual reporting delays with the department as soon as they become aware of them.

The department may ask successful Lead Organisations for ad-hoc reports on their grant. This may be to provide an update on progress, or any significant delays or difficulties in completing the project within the agreed grant timeframes.

The department may visit the successful Lead Organisation during or at the completion of their grant activity to review their compliance with the Conditions of Grant. The department will provide the successful Lead Organisation with reasonable notice of any compliance visit.

The department may also inspect the records the successful Lead Organisation is required to keep under the Conditions of Grant.

If the successful Lead Organisation makes a public statement or produces promotional material about a grant or project funded under AEA, the department will require them to acknowledge the grant by using the following:

'This [name of grant activity or project/services] received grant funding from the Australian Government.'

10.3 Financial declaration and audit

The successful Lead Organisation will be required to provide an audited financial acquittal report that provides a declaration that the grant funds were spent in accordance with the Conditions of Grant and to report on any unspent grant funds.

An audited financial acquittal report must be prepared by a suitably qualified individual. It must include an income and expenditure statement for the grant audited by a:

- registered Company Auditor under the *Corporations Act 2001 (Cth)*
- member of CPA Australia
- member of the Institute of Public Accountants in Australia, or
- member of the Institute of Chartered Accountants in Australia.

10.4 Conditions of Grant variations

The Conditions of Grant will require that the successful Lead Organisation must not make any substantial changes to the activities, personnel, timeline, or budget of the project without the prior written approval of the Program Delegate.

Generally, such changes will require a variation to the Conditions of Grant. Requests to vary the Conditions of Grant must be made in writing and addressed to the Program Delegate specified in the Conditions of Grant. Requests must include the nature and reason for the variation, the likely impact of the variation on the project (including elements such as progress, achievement of outcomes, time, budget, and resources), and supporting information or evidence.

Approval of variations to the Conditions of Grant is at the discretion of the Program Delegate.

10.5 Evaluation

The department will evaluate the AEA from time to time to determine how well it is being delivered and how well expected outcomes and objectives are being achieved. Information from successful Lead Organisations' proposals and reports may be used for this purpose. The department may also interview the successful Lead Organisation or ask them for more information on their views of the AEA, their suggestions for improvement, or what the impact of the grant was from their perspective.

The successful Lead Organisation and their collaborators may be contacted up to 7 years after the successful Lead Organisation grant finishes, for information to assist with evaluation.

11. Decision-making framework

The department and the Australian Government will make sure that the grant decision making process is fair, according to these published Guidelines, incorporates appropriate safeguards against fraud, unlawful activities and other inappropriate conduct, and is consistent with HESA and the OGGRs.

11.1 Enquiries and complaints

Questions from potential Lead Organisations should be directed towards their university's Research Office or Technology Transfer Office in the first instance.

The department's complaints process applies to complaints about this grant opportunity. For information on the process and how to lodge a complaint see the department's [Complaints website page](#).

If a Lead Organisation does not agree with the way the department has handled their complaint, they may complain to the [Commonwealth Ombudsman](#). The Ombudsman will not usually investigate a complaint unless the matter has first been raised directly with the department.

The Commonwealth Ombudsman can be contacted on:

Phone (Toll free): 1300 362 072

Email: ombudsman@ombudsman.gov.au

Website: www.ombudsman.gov.au

11.2 Conflicts of interest

Any conflicts of interest could affect the performance of the grant opportunity or AEA. There may be a conflict of interest, or perceived conflict of interest, if the department's staff, AEA Executive Director, Expert Advisors, any member of a committee, or advisor and/or the Lead Organisation or any of their personnel has a:

- professional, commercial or personal relationship with a party who can influence the proposal assessment selection process, such as an Australian Government officer, or Expert Advisor
- relationship with or interest in, an organisation, that is likely to interfere with or restrict the Lead Organisations from carrying out the proposed activities fairly and independently
- relationship with, or interest in, an organisation from which they will receive personal gain because the organisation receives a grant under the AEA.

The Lead Organisation will be asked (as part of their proposal) that when the grant is made, all actual or perceived conflicts of interest (pecuniary or otherwise; both within and outside Australia) relating to the proposed project have been disclosed to the department and further, that the Lead Organisation has taken the steps required by the department to resolve or address the conflict. Each individual or organisation named in a proposal must declare any actual or perceived conflict of interest that exists, is likely to arise, or does arise in relation to any aspect of the proposal or project to the Lead Organisation for inclusion in the proposal.

Conflicts of interest for Australian Government staff will be handled as set out in the Australian [Public Service Code of Conduct \(Section 13\(7\)\)](#) of the [Public Service Act 1999](#). Any member of a committee and other officials including the decision maker must also declare any actual or perceived conflicts of interest.

If Lead Organisations later identify any actual or perceived conflicts of interest, pecuniary or otherwise, both within and outside Australia, they must inform the department in writing immediately and take any steps that the department requires to resolve or address the conflict.

11.3 Confidentiality

Disclosure and use of **Australia's Economic Accelerator program information** ('AEA program information') is managed under Division 181 of HESA. The Department will manage and use Lead Organisations' information consistently with these provisions.

As set out in section 181-10 of HESA, **AEA program information** is any information that was obtained or created by an officer for the purposes of the AEA.

Under Division 181, an officer who discloses, copies or records **AEA program information** other than in the course of official employment, commits an offence if the information is personal information, or the officer's actions are likely to cause competitive detriment to a person or found an action for breach of confidence. An officer is an employee of, or somebody who performs services for or on behalf of, the Commonwealth, a higher education provider, Open Universities Australia or a Tertiary Admission Centre (see section 179-15). This would include Departmental employees working on the program, the AEA Executive Director and Expert Advisors. This offence is set out in section 181-15 and has a maximum penalty of imprisonment for 2 years unless an exception in the division applies.

Relevant exceptions set out in the division are:

- if the person to whom the information relates has consented to the disclosure, or to the making of the copy or record (subsection 181-15(2))
- if the disclosure, or the making of the copy or record, is required by a law of the Commonwealth (subsection 181-15(4))
- if the disclosure is to the Minister for Education or their staff (section 181-20); and
- if the disclosure relates to information of a general nature, such as the name of a researcher, description of a field, or amount of a grant, and is being made publicly available by the Minister (section 181-25).

As set out in section 181-5 of HESA, the object of Division 181 is to give confidence that personal information and other sensitive information provided in relation to a proposal and the program will be dealt with appropriately.

11.4 Freedom of Information

The department is subject to the *Freedom of Information Act 1982* (FOI Act). The objective of the FOI Act is to make available information about the operations of departments, to create a general right of access to information in the possession of Ministers, departments, and public authorities and also to create a right for people to amend records containing personal information that is incomplete, incorrect or misleading.

Anyone can make a freedom of information (FOI) request. A Lead Organisation is not obligated to state a reason for their request, nor can the department ask for a reason.

All documents held by the department can be subject to a FOI request, however, in some cases exemptions from disclosure may apply.

A valid request is one which is in writing, states that it is a request for the purposes of the FOI Act, provides enough information about a requested document to enable its identification, gives details on how notices under the FOI Act may be sent to the Lead Organisation (the return address may be a physical, postal or electronic address) and must be sent to the department either by post, email or fax or delivered in person.

All requests should be made directly to the FOI Coordinator: foi@education.gov.au.

12. Privacy

12.1 Privacy

The department is bound by the AEA information management provisions in Division 181 of HESA. The department will only manage and use **AEA program information** consistent with these provisions. These provisions also bind the AEA Executive Director and Expert Advisors. The relevant requirements and exceptions are set out in the Confidentiality section at 11.3.

The department is also bound by the [Australian Privacy Principles](#) in the [Privacy Act 1988](#) (Privacy Act). The department uses and discloses personal information only for the purposes for which it was provided, or for a secondary purpose if an exception applies.

The exceptions include where:

- the individual has consented to a secondary use or disclosure
- the individual would reasonably expect the department to use or disclose their personal information for the secondary purpose, and that purpose is related to the primary purpose of collection, or, in the case of sensitive information, directly related to the primary purpose
- the secondary use or disclosure is required or authorised by law
- a permitted general situation exists in relation to the secondary use or disclosure, and
- it is reasonably necessary for the enforcement of the criminal law or of a law imposing a pecuniary penalty, or for the protection of public revenue.

In this situation, the department is collecting any personal information for the purposes of the AEA.

For the purposes of administering the AEA and assessing proposals, the department may:

- provide personal information contained in the proposal to third parties for the purposes of assessment for potential other funding opportunities
- copy, modify and otherwise deal with information contained in the proposal for the purpose of conducting the funding round
- share the personal information contained in the proposal with other government departments and agencies for the purposes of the AEA.

Personal information may be collected from the Lead Organisation, and other individuals involved in the project, for the purposes of the AEA and will be used by the department, and Expert Advisors for the purposes of the program.

The department takes all reasonable measures to ensure that personal information it collects is accurate, up to date and complete. These measures include updating and maintaining personal information when the department is advised by individuals that information has changed.

The department also takes all reasonable steps to ensure that the personal information it holds is protected against loss, unauthorised access, use, modification or disclosure and other misuse.

Any individual may contact the department to obtain information about how to request access to or changes to the information the department holds about them.

Access may be given unless the department considers that there is a sound reason under the Privacy Act, the Freedom of Information Act 1982 or other relevant law to withhold the information.

The department's Privacy Policy contains more information about the way in which the department will manage personal information, including information about how individuals may access and seek correction of their personal information held by the department. The Privacy Policy also contains information on how individuals can complain about a breach of privacy and how the department will deal with such a complaint.

For the department's Privacy Policy, go to <https://www.education.gov.au/about-department/resources/department-education-complete-privacy-policy>.

Lead Organisations submitting a proposal for AEA Seed should be aware that any personal information on their RMS profile (including information that does not appear in the pdf and is hidden from assessors) is visible to other users of RMS, including Commonwealth staff and other Registered Organisations.

All requests for access to personal information should be made to the Privacy Officer: privacy@education.gov.au, or in writing to:

Privacy Officer
Legal Services
Department of Education
LOC: C50MA10
GPO Box 9880
Canberra ACT 2601

12.2 Indigenous status

To complete a profile within the RMS, participants must answer a question about their Indigenous status. The information about Indigenous status is not used to assess proposals. However, it will be visible to other users of RMS. It will also be used as part of the department's evaluation of AEA.

12.3 Third party personal information

Lead Organisations that include third-party personal information in the Project Summary of the online RMS application form must obtain consent from the third-party individuals, prior to the publication of that information.

12.4 Privacy requirements for Lead Organisations

Lead Organisations must ensure that:

- If any personal information in an AEA proposal submitted through RMS has not been provided directly by the individual to which the information relates to (named or unnamed participant), the individuals named in the proposal must have consented to that information being used and disclosed in accordance with these Guidelines.

- They obtain the consent of participants to the publication of their names, fields of research and institution provided in an AEA proposal.
- They notify individual participants (including from Collaborating or Partner Organisations) involved in the AEA proposal, that if their proposal is successful, their name, field of research and institution may be published by the ARC, the department and/or the Minister in accordance with section 9 of these Guidelines.

13. Glossary

Term	Definition
AEA	Australia's Economic Accelerator program, the program under which funding is given, established under Chapter 5 of the OGGRs.
AEA Executive Director	The senior Priority Manager engaged by the Secretary for the purposes of section 42-75 of HESA. The AEA Executive Director is a highly qualified, experienced, and motivated business and technology specialist, who will also work with Lead Organisations to foster connections and formal collaboration arrangements with industry partners. The other Expert Advisors will support the AEA Executive Director by providing technical expertise within the priority areas.
Collaborating Organisation	The organisation referred to in section 2 of these Guidelines.
Commencement date	The expected start date for the grant activity.
Commonwealth	The Commonwealth of Australia, also referred to as the Australian Federal Government.
Conditions of Grant	The document in which the Program Delegate has imposed conditions on the AEA Seed grant made to the successful Lead Organisation, under subsection 41-25(2) of HESA.
Department of Education or department	The Commonwealth Government agency responsible for administering the AEA.
Department's websites	The approved and official department websites are: https://www.education.gov.au/university-research-commercialisation-package/australias-economic-accelerator https://www.aea.gov.au
Eligibility criteria	Refers to the mandatory criteria which must be met to be eligible for a grant, set out in section 2 of these Guidelines and Chapter 5 of the OGGRs.
Expert Advisors	Individuals with technical and/or subject matter expertise within a priority area that may provide input into suitable projects.

Term	Definition
Grant	A grant made under the AEA Seed stream of the AEA as specified in Chapter 5 of the OGGRs.
Grant activity/activities	Refers to the project/tasks/services that the Lead Organisation is required to undertake.
Grant opportunity	Refers to the specific grant round or process where a Commonwealth grant is made available to successful Lead Organisations. Grant opportunities may be open or targeted and will reflect the relevant grant selection process.
GST	Has the meaning as given in section 195-1 of the <i>A New Tax System (Goods and Services Tax) Act 1999</i> .
HERC IP Framework	<p>Higher Education Research Commercialisation Intellectual Property Framework</p> <p>A framework to assist IP management and negotiation in university-led research commercialisation. HERC IP provides standardised IP licensing and contractual agreements as well as education and guidance materials to establish a common and clear starting point to negotiations.</p>
HESA	The <i>Higher Education Support Act 2003</i> .
In-kind contribution	<p>In-kind contributions are non-monetary resources used on the project where no cash has been transferred to the Lead Organisation's account(s) for the project.</p> <p>A contribution of goods, services, materials and/or time to the project from an individual, business or organisation. Values should be calculated based on the most likely actual cost, for example, current market, preferred provider or internal provider rates/valuations/rentals/charges (that is in the financial year of the date of the proposal) of the costs of labour, workspaces, equipment and databases. The calculations covering time and costs should be documented by the Lead Organisation. The department may require these calculations to be audited.</p> <p>For further guidance see Appendix B.</p>
Intellectual Property (IP)	Refers to creations of the mind. It could include a brand, logo, invention, design or artistic work, or new plant variety.
Lead Entrepreneur (LE)	The person referred to in section 2 of these Guidelines.



Term	Definition
Lead Organisation	The organisation referred to in section 2 of these Guidelines.
Minister for Education or the Minister	The Minister responsible for the administration of HESA.
Named participants	The persons described in section 2 of these Guidelines.
National Reconstruction Fund (NRF)	<p>National Reconstruction Fund</p> <p>The NRF will provide finance for projects that diversify and transform Australia’s industry and economy and target its funding at priority areas that leverage Australia’s natural and competitive strengths.</p>
National Reconstruction Fund Priorities	<p>National Reconstruction Fund Priorities:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Value-add in resources 2. Value-add in agriculture, forestry and fisheries 3. Transport 4. Medical science 5. Renewables and low emission technology 6. Defence capability 7. Enabling capabilities
On-costs	Includes workers’ compensation insurance, employer contributions to superannuation, recreation and sick leave, long service leave accrual and payroll tax.
OGGRs	The <i>Other Grants Guidelines (Research) 2017</i> , an instrument made by the Minister under section 238-10 of HESA.
Participants	All named participants on a proposal (as described in section 2.5 of these Guidelines), and all unnamed participants such as postdoctoral research associates and postgraduate researchers working on a project.
Partner Organisation	The organisation referred to in section 2 of these Guidelines.
PhD student	A student undertaking a PhD as defined in the OGGRs.
Project	A project described in a proposal for grant funding under the AEA.
Program Delegate	The person who has been delegated the power to make AEA Seed grants under part 2-3 of HESA by the Minister.



Term	Definition
Program Manager	The person/s within the department responsible for the day to day running of the AEA.
Proposal	A request for funding submitted through RMS by a Lead Organisation seeking grant funding under the AEA Seed grant program. It includes the specifics of a proposed grant activity as well as the administrative information required to determine the eligibility of the proposal. The proposal must include the information required by these Guidelines and the OGGRs.
Research	Has the same meaning as in the OGGRs.
Selection criteria	The criteria described in section 4 of these Guidelines.
Selection process	The method used to select successful Lead Organisations as described in section 6 of these Guidelines.
Technology Readiness Level (TRL)	<p>A globally accepted benchmarking tool for tracking progress and supporting development of a specific technology through the early stages of the innovation chain, from blue sky research (TRL 1) to actual system demonstration over the full range of expected conditions (TRL 9).</p> <p>There are various TRL rating scales that may be applicable to various technologies. For the purposes of this Program, the department uses the Department of Defence TRL scale.</p> <p>Further TRL information is available at Appendix A.</p>
UniPay	The department's online payment system, through which AEA Seed grants are paid, that tracks and controls funding decisions and processes to calculate payment amounts according to an annual schedule of payments.



Term	Definition
Value for money	<p>A judgement based on the proposal representing an efficient, effective, economical and ethical use of public resources, and determined from a variety of considerations.</p> <p>When considering proposals, an official should consider the relevant financial and non-financial costs and benefits of each proposal including, but not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the quality of the proposal and proposed activities • fitness for purpose of the proposal in contributing to the AEA objectives • that the absence of a grant is likely to prevent the Lead Organisation and government’s outcomes being achieved; and • the potential successful Lead Organisation’s relevant experience and performance history.



Appendix A. Technology Readiness Levels

Explanatory note:

For the purposes of AEA Seed, the department refers to the TRL using the Defence Technology Group of Australia's Department of Defence terminology, which has been extracted in the tables below.

The descriptions below may not readily correlate to all NRF priority areas. Lead Organisations may find the more sector-specific descriptions in the following link to be more applicable:

[EDP-TRL-Table_July_2016.xlsx \(live.com\)](#) (Courtesy Science and Industry Endowment Fund [SIEF]).

Technology Readiness Level Definition

<i>TRL 1</i>	Basic Research: Initial scientific research has been conducted. Principles are qualitatively postulated and observed. Focus is on new discovery rather than applications.
<i>TRL 2</i>	Applied Research: Initial practical applications are identified. Potential of material or process to solve a problem, satisfy a need, or find application is confirmed.
<i>TRL 3</i>	Critical Function or Proof of Concept Established: Applied research advances and early-stage development begins. Studies and laboratory measurements validate analytical predictions of separate elements of the technology.
<i>TRL 4</i>	Lab Testing/Validation of Alpha Prototype Component/Process: Design, development and lab testing of components/processes. Results provide evidence that performance targets may be attainable based on projected or modelled systems.
<i>TRL 5</i>	Laboratory Testing of Integrated/Semi-Integrated System: System Component and/or process validation is achieved in a relevant environment.
<i>TRL 6</i>	Prototype System Verified: System/process prototype demonstration in an operational environment (beta prototype system level).
<i>TRL 7</i>	Integrated Pilot System Demonstrated: System/process prototype demonstration in an operational environment (integrated pilot system level).
<i>TRL 8</i>	System Incorporated in Commercial Design: Actual system/process completed and qualified through test and demonstration (pre-commercial demonstration).
<i>TRL 9</i>	System Proven and Ready for Full Commercial Deployment: Actual system proven through successful operations in operating environment, and ready for full commercial deployment.

Expanded TRL Descriptions

TRL 1 Definition [NOT ELIGIBLE]	TRL 1 Description
<p>Basic Research.</p> <p>Initial scientific research begins. Examples include studies on basic material properties. Principles are qualitatively postulated and observed</p>	<p>Basic principles are observed. Focus is on fundamental understanding of a material or process.</p>
TRL 2 Definition [NOT ELIGIBLE]	TRL 2 Description
<p>Applied Research.</p> <p>Initial practical applications are identified. Potential of material or process to satisfy a technology need is confirmed.</p>	<p>Once basic principles are observed, practical applications can be identified. Applications are speculative, and there may be no proof or detailed analysis to support the assumptions. Examples are still limited to analytic studies. Supporting information includes publications or other references that outline the application being considered and that provide analysis to support the concept. The step up from TRL 1 to TRL 2 moves the ideas from basic to applied research. Most of the work is analytical or paper studies with the emphasis on understanding the science better. Experimental work is designed to corroborate the basic scientific observations made during TRL 1 work.</p>
TRL 3 Definition	TRL 3 Description
<p>Critical Function, i.e., Proof of Concept Established.</p> <p>Applied research continues and early-stage development begins. Includes studies and initial laboratory measurements to validate analytical predictions of separate elements of the technology. Examples include research on materials, components, or processes that are not yet integrated.</p>	<p>Analytical studies and laboratory-scale studies are designed to physically validate the predictions of separate elements of the technology. Supporting information includes results of laboratory tests performed to measure parameters of interest and comparison to analytical predictions for critical components. At TRL 3 experimental work is intended to verify that the concept works as expected. Components of the technology are validated, but there is no strong attempt to integrate the components into a complete system. Modelling and simulation may be used to complement physical experiments.</p>

TRL 4 Definition	TRL 4 Description
<p>Laboratory Testing/Validation of Alpha Prototype Component/Process.</p> <p>Design, development and lab testing of technological components are performed. Results provide evidence that applicable component/process performance targets may be attainable based on projected or modelled systems.</p>	<p>The basic technological components are integrated to establish that the pieces will work together. This is relatively "low fidelity" compared with the eventual system. Supporting information includes the results of the integrated experiments and estimates of how the experimental components and experimental test results differ from the expected system performance goals. TRL 4-6 represent the bridge from scientific research to engineering, from development to demonstration. TRL 4 is the first step in determining whether the individual components will work together as a system. The goal of TRL 4 should be the narrowing of possible options in the complete system.</p>
TRL 5 Definition	TRL 5 Description
<p>Laboratory Testing of Integrated/Semi-Integrated System.</p> <p>Component and/or process validation in relevant environment- (Beta prototype component level).</p>	<p>The basic technological components are integrated so that the system configuration is similar to (matches) the final application in almost all respects. Supporting information includes results from the laboratory scale testing, analysis of the differences between the laboratory and eventual operating system/environment, and analysis of what the experimental results mean for the eventual operating system/environment. The major difference between TRL 4 and 5 is the increase in the fidelity of the system and environment to the actual application. The system tested is almost prototypical. Scientific risk should be retired at the end of TRL 5. Results presented should be statistically relevant.</p>
TRL 6 Definition [NOT ELIGIBLE]	TRL 6 Description
<p>Prototype System Verified.</p> <p>System/process prototype demonstration in an operational environment- (Beta prototype system level).</p>	<p>Engineering-scale models or prototypes are tested in a relevant environment. This represents a major step up in a technology's demonstrated readiness. Examples include fabrication of the device on an engineering pilot line. Supporting information includes results from the engineering scale testing and analysis of the differences between the engineering scale, prototypical system/environment, and analysis of what the experimental results mean for the eventual operating system/environment. TRL 6 begins true engineering development of the technology as an operational system. The major difference between TRL 5 and 6 is the step up from laboratory scale to engineering scale and the determination of scaling factors that will enable design of</p>



	<p>the final system. The engineering pilot scale demonstration should be capable of performing all the functions that will be required of a full manufacturing system. The operating environment for the testing should closely represent the actual operating environment. Refinement of the cost model is expected at this stage based on new learning from the pilot line. The goal while in TRL 6 is to reduce engineering risk. Results presented should be statistically relevant.</p>
TRL 7 Definition [NOT ELIGIBLE]	TRL 7 Description
<p>Integrated Pilot System Demonstrated.</p> <p>System/process prototype demonstration in an operational environment-(integrated pilot system level).</p>	<p>This represents a major step up from TRL 6, requiring demonstration of an actual system prototype in a relevant environment. Final design is virtually complete. The goal of this stage is to retire engineering and manufacturing risk. To credibly achieve this goal and exit TRL 7, scale is required as many significant engineering and manufacturing issues can surface during the transition between TRL 6 and 7.</p>
TRL 8 Definition [NOT ELIGIBLE]	TRL 8 Description
<p>System Incorporated in Commercial Design.</p> <p>Actual system/process completed and qualified through test and demonstration- (pre-commercial demonstration).</p>	<p>The technology has been proven to work in its final form and under expected conditions. In almost all cases, this TRL represents the end of true system development. Examples include full scale volume manufacturing of commercial end product. True manufacturing costs will be determined and deltas to models will need to be highlighted and plans developed to address them. Product performance delta to plan needs to be highlighted and plans to close the gap will need to be developed.</p>
TRL 9 Definition [NOT ELIGIBLE]	TRL 9 Description
<p>System Proven and Ready for Full Commercial Deployment.</p> <p>Actual system proven through successful operations in operating environment, and ready for full commercial deployment.</p>	<p>The technology is in its final form and operated under the full range of operating conditions. Examples include steady state 24/7 manufacturing meeting cost, yield, and output targets. Emphasis shifts toward statistical process control.</p>

Appendix B. In-kind contributions

The department treats cash and in-kind contributions equally. In-kind contributions are the non-cash contributions. These can include labour contributions and facilities, equipment and services provided by project partners to the project. In order for in-kind contributions to count towards the Lead Organisation's total eligible project value, the contribution must directly relate to eligible activities or eligible special purpose activities.

In-kind contributions may include:

- salaries and on-costs for Australian personnel directly employed for the project activities. Australian Government funds awarded (or contracted) to researchers employed by partners, or to the partners themselves, for specific projects cannot be claimed as in-kind contributions. The Lead Organisation must use the labour calculations outlined in Section 3.1.
- facilities, equipment and services provided by a partner to the project from the Lead Organisation's own resources. The department does not prescribe a specific formula to determine the value of these contributions. The Lead Organisation needs to determine the value of these contributions. They must be realistic, justifiable and valued proportionally to their use on the project.

Examples of in-kind contributions include:

- if the fee for usage was \$500 per use and the project was receiving 100 usages per year at no cost, the value of the resource could be valued at \$50,000 per year.
- if their project receives office space as an in-kind contribution from a partner, the Lead Organisation should value the contribution at the amount it would otherwise cost to rent equivalent office space.

Appendix C. AEA Seed Partner Organisation Declaration

To whom it may concern

I am writing on behalf of *[Partner Organisation]* to provide our support for the funding proposal: *[AEA Seed Application Number]* *[AEA Seed Project Title]*.

[Please use up to 2 pages to provide the details of:

- the Partner Organisation*
- an overview of how the Partner Organisation will work with the other participating organisation/s to successfully complete the project*
- an outline of the relevant experience and/or expertise the Partner Organisation will bring to the project]*

Total partner contributions over the Project funding term are listed below and are consistent with the total contributions listed in the proposal:

Contribution Type	Amount
Cash (\$AUD) for grant period	\$
FTE (to 2 decimal points) for funding term (in-kind)	
FTE (\$AUD) for funding term (in-kind)	\$
Non-staff in-kind (\$AUD) for funding term	\$

Declaration

On behalf of *[insert Partner Organisation]* I declare that, should this proposal be successful, the Partner Organisation:

- Is aware of the requirements related to Partner Organisations under the AEA Seed Tranche 3 2023 Program Administrative Guidelines.
- Will support and actively participate in the proposed AEA Seed project.
- Will contribute the staff, funds and other resources indicated in the proposal and has obtained, or will obtain, the necessary authorisations to do so.
- Confirms that cash contributions are not sourced from Commonwealth Government funds for the purposes of research, including the Research and Development Tax Incentive (R&D Tax Incentive or R&DTI).
- Will comply with, and require that its subcontractors and independent contractors comply with, all applicable laws.
- Information contained in this proposal, together with any statement provided, is to the best of my knowledge, true, accurate and complete. I also understand that the giving of false or misleading information is a serious offence.

- Acknowledges that if the department is satisfied that any statement made in a proposal is incorrect, incomplete, false or misleading, the department may, at its absolute discretion, take appropriate action.
- Understands that they may be requested to provide further clarification or documentation to verify the information supplied in this form and that the department may, during the application process, consult with other government agencies, including State and Territory government agencies, about the Lead Organisation’s claims and may also engage external technical or financial advisers to advise on information provided in this form and the proposal.
- Provides consent to be contacted by the department to discuss the particulars of the partner’s commitment to the proposed Seed project
- Approves of the information in this form being communicated to the department in electronic form.

Signing

By signing below, I agree that I am authorised to sign and submit this declaration on behalf of the Partner Organisation and confirm all of the above statements to be true.

Partner (organisation name):	
Partner ABN/ACN:	
Authorised representative (name):	
Position/role:	
Phone:	
Email:	
Signature:	
Date:	

