

Agribusiness Digital Solutions Grants Program

Round 1 Guidelines

Overview

Setting the scene

The Digital Transformation in Agribusiness Initiative will enhance the development, trialling, and adoption of digital solutions across the agriculture and food supply chains. A key focus of the initiative is to assist agribusiness and food supply chain participants to recover from COVID-19. This initiative is aimed at enhancing digital skills, creating regional jobs, and driving efficiencies for businesses.

The Queensland Government acknowledges the significance of agriculture to the State's economy and recognises the sector is well positioned to lead economic recovery. As part of the Stage Two Economic Recovery initiatives, the Queensland Government is providing up to \$1.2 million to industry organisations in Round 1 of the Agribusiness Digital Solutions Grants Program.

Purpose

- to create a resilient and profitable agribusiness sector by accelerating digital transformation from farm to plate
- to maximise consumer confidence in relation to traceability, food safety, nutrition and provenance of Queensland products through enhanced traceability systems
- to support agribusiness from the impacts of COVID-19 through cost saving measures and waste efficiencies
- create regional jobs and enhance digital skills and capability across the Queensland agribusiness and food sector.

About the program

The **Agribusiness Digital Solutions Grant Program** is based on a co-investment model with industry organisations to apply technologies and digital systems within the supply chain to increase agribusiness resilience and responsiveness to future disruptions and allow for industry wide learning.

Projects may include but are not limited to:

- building digital capabilities across the agribusiness supply chain
- building systems to digitise paper-based solutions
- digital automation of systems, including options to grow new and existing markets
- integrated data management solutions
- digital integration of regulatory compliance requirements
- real-time farm monitoring, including digital dashboards for food safety and biosecurity management
- integrated systems to demonstrate proof of authenticity
- purchasing and or upgrading of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) for the purpose of enhancing digital capability in accordance of the intent of this program, including increased cyber security software as part of a digital solution.

Operational framework

Funding arrangements

The Queensland Government is providing up to \$1.2 million (GST exclusive) of grant funding in Round 1 to industry organisations.

Up to \$200,000 (excluding GST) is available for successful projects that target industry wide outcomes. Funded projects must be completed by 30 June 2022. Multiple project applications from industry organisations will be considered, however each organisation will be limited to a maximum of one funded project.

Co-contribution of a minimum of 50 per cent is required for successful projects, of which 20 per cent is a cash contribution. This cash contribution may be provided in the form of a bank loan, your own funds, project partner funds, or a combination of these. Government assistance of any kind cannot be used to make the 20 per cent contribution.

25 per cent of the approved grant funding will be made available upon execution of a grant deed. A further payment of up to an additional 50 per cent of the approved grant funding will be made following department approval of:

- a mid-project progress report; and
- satisfactory evidence of expenditure of up to 75 per cent (or other actual amount spent by the Recipient to date).

The amount payable after receipt of the progress report and evidence of expenditure will be calculated based on the total spend to date, including in-kind support. For example, if the project spend to date is 50 per cent of the total approved grant funding, the department will pay a further 25 per cent (on top of the initial 25 per cent).

A final instalment will be paid upon:

- demonstrated successful completion of the project, including satisfactory evidence of remaining expenditure; and
- acceptance of the final report.

Unless otherwise agreed to by the parties, grant payments are made only to the organisation (or if necessary the legal entity on behalf of the organisation) that applied for, and, was approved to receive, the grant – not to individuals (unless it is a grant intended specifically for the benefit of an individual, e.g. research fellowship).

Eligibility criteria

Applicants must meet each of the following criteria to be eligible for funding:

- hold an ABN and be registered for GST
- must be a registered industry organisation with a headquarters in Queensland or represent a significant number of Queensland food and agribusiness enterprises
- must be able to contribute a minimum of 20 per cent of the funding amount sought toward the project in cash at the outset of the project. A total co-contribution of 50 per cent is required for successful projects
- must be in a financial position to pay up front for the approved product(s) and or service(s) in full. If successful, approved applicants will then be reimbursed after submitting supplier invoices and proof of purchase
- the industry organisation owns or has a broad licence to use the product/service and share details about the operation and outcomes with the department, other industry groups and agribusinesses.

State and Commonwealth Government agencies, and Universities are not eligible to apply, however they may be engaged as part of the project.

Note: For the purposes of this grant program industry organisations include associations incorporated under the *Associations Incorporate Act 1981*, cooperatives registered under the *Cooperatives Act 1997*, an entity established to represent primary producers or agribusinesses.

Approvals

Approval of successful applicants will be at the discretion of the department.

Selection criteria

Only applications that meet the eligibility criteria will be assessed. Not all eligible applications are guaranteed grant funding. Applications will be competitively assessed against the selection criteria, using a merit-based approach, by a panel of independent assessors with relevant expertise. Assessment will take place based on applications as provided by the applicant at the time of submission. Only those applications that present a strong business case against each of the selection criteria will be offered funding.

All criteria will be equally weighted. You must address all of the following criteria when completing your application. The application should demonstrate:

1- Benefits to Queensland (impact)

- the project will provide benefit to Queensland Agricultural/Aquaculture and Forestry industries and/or the broader community (outside of the benefit to the applicant organisation)
- the project will create jobs in Queensland, both during the project execution and in the longer-term, for both the applicant organisation and the associated supply chain and local community
- where possible, the project will benefit Queensland regions (outside of Brisbane).

2- Accelerated adoption potential

- the project has the potential to drive digital transformation across the Queensland agribusiness and food sector
- demonstrated collaboration with supplier / research partner and capability to provide the technology and services required for industry wide adoption
- at the time of application the product or service is at, or beyond, minimum viable product stage (i.e. beyond initial proof of concept/ prototype of any new innovation has been tested with potential users of the product or service).

3- Project viability

- that the project is well planned and achievable with key activities, outcomes, expenditure and timeframes identified
- that key project risks have been identified and risk mitigation strategies are in place
- the project will deliver 'value for money'
- organisational capability including access to technical and management skills and experience relevant to the project.

Use of funds

The Agribusiness Digital Solutions Grant Program projects should focus on activities that accelerate digital transformation across the Queensland's agribusiness and food supply chains and fall within the following eligible cost categories:

- salaries of project staff (including salary-related on-costs)
- services provided by (unrelated) external parties
- consumables and equipment
- travel, accommodation and subsistence costs.

It is expected that all Agribusiness Digital Solutions Grant Program funding will be expended in Queensland. Funding to be expended outside of Queensland must be demonstrated to be essential to the project. Project costs must be deemed appropriate for the project and reasonable in nature by the DAF.

Costs not eligible for funding include:

- capital expenditure, including capital works and/or physical infrastructure such as buildings, telecommunications and IT networks
- employee allowances, bonuses and fringe benefits
- conference fees
- entertainment costs
- inventory and warehousing costs
- costs associated with securing (grant writers) and/or managing the grant funding
- business as usual or general administration or operational activities.

Terms and conditions

Successful applicants will be required to enter into a legally binding grant deed with the Queensland Government on terms approved by the Queensland Government, a copy of which will be provided to successful applicants following the department's assessment of applications. You should ensure you have read and accept the terms and conditions of the guidelines, prior to submitting an application.

Successful applicants will be required to execute a grant deed within 15 business days of receiving it.

Successful applicants must commence projects within 90 days of execution of the grant deed and eligible expenditure can only be incurred from the grant deed execution date.

Payment of grants will be made in three instalments. The first payment will be made upon execution of the grant deed and additional payments in accordance with the funding arrangements. Final payment will be made upon successful completion activities and delivery of the final project report. Documentary evidence that all project requirements have been satisfied will be required.

Funding recipients will be expected to make outcomes and learnings available to the department as part of project requirements. This may include intellectual property created as a result of this project.

Any third-party agreement entered into as part of this project to access products and service must allow for sharing details about the operation and outcomes with the department, other industry groups and agribusinesses for industry transformation purposes.

Applicants are expected to actively promote their projects, and to provide information and attend media/promotion events if requested.

The Queensland Government funding should be acknowledged by recipients in all relevant published material, media releases and public statements.

Privacy

The Queensland Government collects and collates information from the application form to assess applications for the program. Only authorised departmental officers and approved grant assessors have access to this information.

Applicants should note that broad details of successful proposals, agreed outcomes, progress and the level of funding awarded may be published by the Queensland Government. Some information may be used to promote funded projects.

Your personal information will not be disclosed to any other third party without your consent, unless required by law or for the purposes of *Information Privacy Act 2009*.

For audit purposes, the Queensland Government is required to retain the applications and other supplied supporting material.

The provisions of the *Right to Information Act 2009* apply to documents in the possession of the Queensland Government.

More information about DAF's general privacy policy is available on our website at daf.qld.gov.au.

Reporting

Reports must be prepared and submitted in line with the grant deed. A mid-project progress report will be submitted in addition to a final report that will need to be submitted upon completion of the project.

The amount of detail provided in the reports should be relative to the size and complexity of the project. Further information may be requested at any stage and claims may be subject to independent audit.

Mid-project progress report must include:

- status of activities to-date and milestones achieved
- summary of progress
- proof of expenditure incurred
- issues and risks identified and proposed actions.

Final report must include:

- if and how outcomes have been achieved
- proof of expenditure incurred
- summary of total eligible expenditure incurred for the project, including a financial statement
- demonstrated value for money and return on investment
- digital processes, products, and systems engaged in project
- jobs created and retained
- demonstrated agribusiness cost savings or efficiencies (business improvement metrics)
- training or skilling facilitated
- adoption potential.

How to apply

Applications open 1.00pm on 1 October 2020 and close at 11.59pm on 1 November 2020. You can lodge an application online via daf.qld.gov.au/AgTech.

More information

For more information on the Agribusiness Digital Solutions Grants Program contact the Customer Service Centre on 13 25 23 or email DAFAgTech@daf.qld.gov.au.