



Alternative voice services trials—grant opportunity guidelines—draft

May 2020

Detail	Response
Opening date:	[Day Month Year]
Closing time:	Four weeks from opening
Commonwealth policy entity:	Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Communications
Enquiries:	If you have any questions, please email us at usg@communications.gov.au . Questions should be sent no later than one week before the closing time. Questions will be posted on an anonymised basis on GrantConnect, along with the answers, as Frequently Asked Questions.
Date guidelines released:	[Day Month Year]
Type of grant opportunity:	Targeted competitive

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Director—Publishing and Communications
Communication Branch
Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Communications
GPO Box 594
Canberra ACT 2601
Australia

Email: publishing@communications.gov.au

Websites: www.infrastructure.gov.au | www.communications.gov.au | www.arts.gov.au

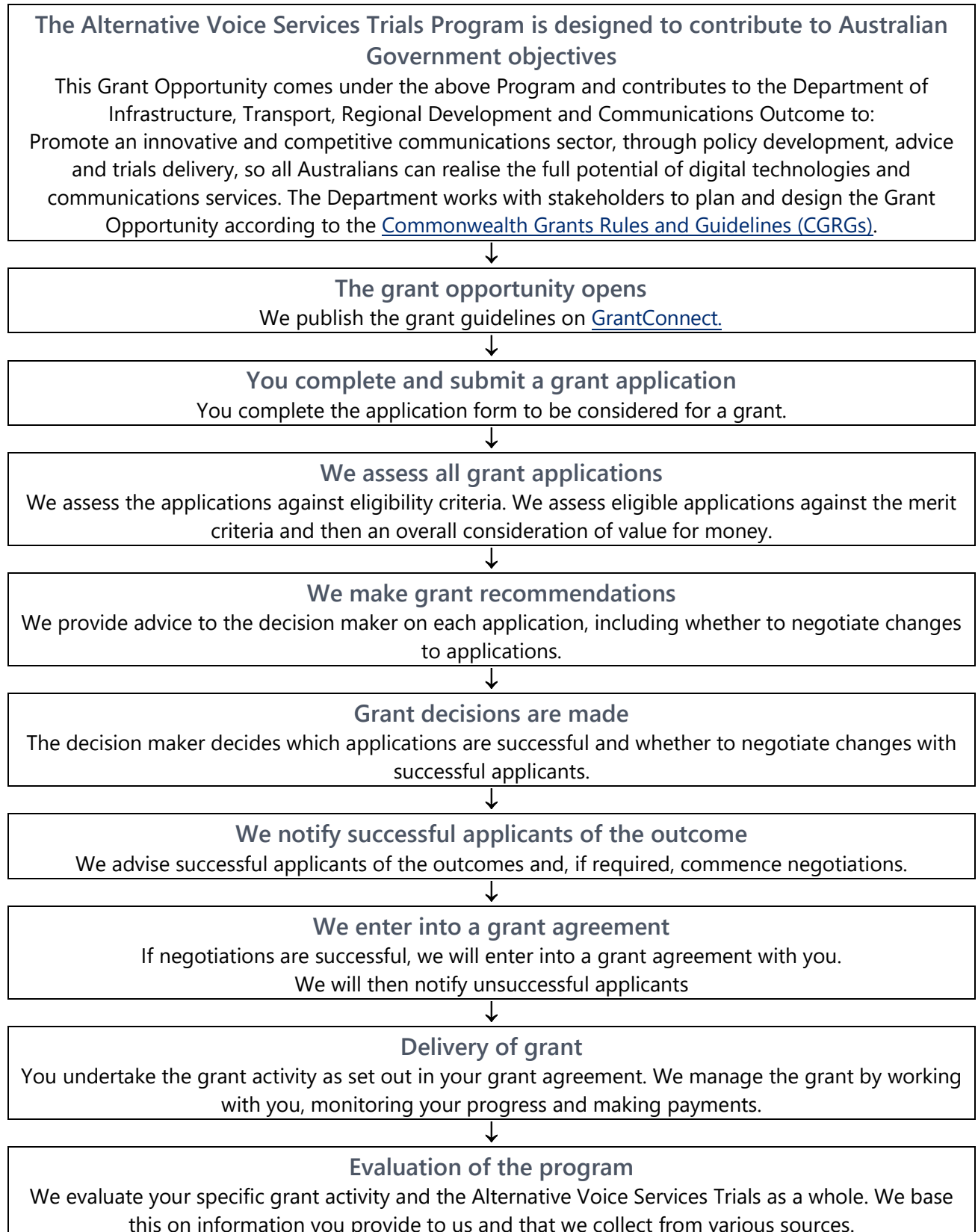
Contents

Alternative Voice Services Trials—Grant Processes	4
Introduction	5
About the grant opportunity	5
2.1 Context	5
2.2 Overview of the program	6
2.3 Data to assist applicants and grantees	7
2.4 Funding available	7
2.5 What the grant can be used for	8
2.6 Grant period	8
2.7 Probity	8
How to apply for the Grant	9
3.1 Questions	10
3.2 Timing of grant opportunity processes	10
Assessment and approval of grant applications	10
4.1 Eligibility criteria	11
4.2 Merit criteria	11
Merit criterion 1—the proposed approach and expected outcomes	11
Merit criterion 2—capability and capacity to deliver the outcomes	12
Merit criterion 3—Costs	12
4.3 Overall value for money	12
4.4 Conflicts of interest	13
4.5 Customer Information and privacy	13
4.6 Who will assess the applications?	14
4.7 Who will approve grants?	14
4.8 Notification and negotiations with successful applicants	14
4.9 Feedback on unsuccessful applications	15
The grant agreement and its administration	15
5.1 The grant agreement	15
5.2 How we pay the grant	16
5.3 Grant Payments and GST	16
5.4 Keeping us informed	16
5.5 Reporting	17
5.6 Compliance visits	17
5.7 Record keeping	17
Evaluation	17
Other important information	18
7.1 Complaints	18
7.2 Confidential Information	18
7.3 Freedom of information	19
7.4 How we treat your information	19

Tables / images

Table 1: Expected timing for this grant opportunity (Note: These times are indicative and may be altered. Any alterations will be published on GrantConnect.)	10
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Alternative Voice Services Trials—Grant Processes



Introduction

These Grant Opportunity Guidelines (guidelines) contain information for the Alternative Voice Services Trials (trials) Program (program).

You must read these guidelines before filling out an application.

The guidelines set out:

- the background to, and objectives of, the program
- how to make an application
- how grant applications will be assessed and approved, including the eligibility and merit criteria
- how grants will be contracted, administered, monitored, paid and evaluated.

About the grant opportunity

2.1 Context

The Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Communications (the Department) is proposing to contract organisations to trial alternative ways to deliver voice services in rural and remote areas of Australia, and particularly those areas serviced by Telstra's high capacity radio concentrator (HCRC) networks.

The objective of the trials is to identify new ways to deliver voice services, including by new providers, and assess the effectiveness, given concerns about existing voice solutions and the potential for alternative technologies to provide better services and functionality.

The trials were announced as part of the Government's response to the 2018 Regional Telecommunications Review and reflect particular concerns about the performance and longevity of HCRC networks.

The trials are also relevant to the Government's commitment to explore with industry and the community better ways to deliver the Universal Service Guarantee (USG) for telecommunications over time. The trials should provide insights into better ways to deliver the USG.

The Department is interested in maximising competition under the program and to trial a range of alternative voice technologies and providers.

On 20 December 2019, Minister Fletcher issued a draft design for the trials.¹ These guidelines take account of the comments that were received in submissions on the draft design.

¹ <https://www.paulfletcher.com.au/media-releases/joint-media-release-new-ways-of-delivering-voice-telephone-services-for-rural-and>

2.2 Overview of the program

The general structure of the program is:

- Carriage service providers (CSPs), or consortia² with a CSP as a member, would be contracted to provide alternative voice services to consumers in rural and remote Australia using a technology other than copper or HCRC.
- The consumers should be in NBN Co's fixed wireless and satellite footprints. Given the focus on HCRC areas, some consumers would be expected to be in these areas (which are within NBN Co's fixed wireless and satellite footprints), but this is not essential.
- In addition to voice services, CSPs may provide other services (e.g. data services) and this will be considered as part of the value for money assessment but this is at their discretion.
- The Department anticipates that at least 1,000 consumers in total would participate in the trials. The Department also aims to have a number of CSPs involved in the program, and if necessary, may negotiate with applicants to limit the number of consumers who participate in their trials. Applicants should take this into account in preparing their applications.
- Grant applications will be assessed to see if they will, in combination, deliver a spread of consumers across different regions, with different geographic, demographic and climatic characteristics if possible. As appropriate, applicants should set out how they would address consumers with special needs, such as elderly customers, students and remote indigenous communities.
- Alternative voice services would be delivered over a 12-month period at no cost to the customer (subject to fair and reasonable use by the customer—that is, CSPs would be able to charge for use in excess of pre-defined usage allowances).
- Grant funding could be directed to the cost of necessary equipment such as antennas, boosters or handsets as well as monthly service charges. Funding for set-up, administration and promotion connected with the program would also be considered.
- Consumers would keep their existing fixed voice service, such as a copper or HCRC service, at their expense as a safety net, but the alternative services would act as their primary service for the period of the trials. To support this, applicants would need to put in place arrangements with consumers to redirect calls to the alternative service at no cost.
- Consumers in the trials are expected to respond to third party customer surveys (conducted by an entity engaged by the Department) aimed at providing information regarding their service (e.g. call quality and clarity, reliability (including dropouts and faults), the time it takes to connect a call and latency).
- Applicants should also set out other ways in which they propose to gather consumer feedback on the trials (e.g. forums, online groups, workshops).
- At the end of the trials, funding for alternative services will cease and the provision of the alternative services will cease unless consumers and CSPs make alternative ongoing arrangements. This will be a purely commercial arrangement between these two parties.
- A small stakeholder reference group is proposed to advise on any consumer issues that may arise in the course of the trials.

² For convenience, CSP is used throughout the guidelines to refer to a person delivering voice (and other telecommunications) services and should be understood to include consortia involving a CSP.

As the trials aim at identifying and assessing alternative (and potentially innovative) ways of delivering voice services, applicants can propose alternative services that may not be commercially available in Australia, provided that any limitations are made clear in the application process and to prospective consumers.

Applications for grants will be assessed on a competitive basis against specified eligibility and merit criteria and overall value for money as discussed below. The Department will provide advice to the Minister for Communications, Cyber Safety and the Arts as the decision maker on which applications should be funded and whether there is a need to negotiate with applicants to vary their applications (see section 5 below). Subject to the decision maker's decision, the Department will negotiate with applicants and, if there is agreement, enter into grant agreements with the successful applicants.

The Department's standard grant agreement is attached to these guidelines (Attachment B). Applicants will need to advise, as part of their application for a grant, whether or not they can comply with the standard terms and conditions of this grant agreement.

The Department reserves the right to vary these guidelines prior to the close of applications and to vary or terminate the program at any time at its absolute discretion. If the program is terminated, or reduced in scope, while trials are under way, the Department will pay any part of the grant due and owing at that time, and also reimburse any reasonable and substantiated expenses that you unavoidably incur that relate directly and entirely to the termination or reduction in scope. The Department will also assist grant recipients to ensure that consumers participating in the trial are not disadvantaged.

2.3 Data to assist applicants and grantees

The Department will endeavour to provide applicants and grantees with data on premises and services in operation in the target area (i.e. in the NBN Co fixed wireless and satellite footprint) but it cannot guarantee this will be possible.

The Department proposes to establish a register for people in the NBN Co fixed wireless and satellite footprint interested in being consumers under the trials but it cannot guarantee this will happen.

Ultimately, it is the responsibility of applicants and grantees to source such information and promote their trials and attract consumers, without relying on the Department being able to deliver on these two measures. Grantees will also need to ensure they have in place arrangements to provide customer information for monitoring purposes, including the proposed independent surveying of customers.

2.4 Funding available

The Australian Government has allocated a total of \$2 million for the trials.

There is no minimum grant amount per grantee.

There is no maximum grant amount per grantee, but total grants cannot exceed the amount of available funds, being up to \$2 million (GST exclusive).

As the Government aims to have a number of CSPs involved in the program, applicants should not assume they alone could receive the full grant amount.

The Department reserves the right, subject to the decision maker's decision, to negotiate with applicants to vary their applications. For example, the Department may negotiate to cap the number of consumers applicants can engage in trials, or to give greater priority to consumers currently using HCRC technology.

2.5 What the grant can be used for

Grants may be used to fund equipment and installation costs and the monthly charges to consumers for the voice services. Funding for set-up, administration and promotion connected with the Program will also be considered. Any set-up costs, administration and promotion should generally not exceed around 10 per cent of the total grant amount being sought.

It is not intended that the grants could be used to fund significant investments in infrastructure or facilities. You also cannot use the grant for the following activities:

- purchase of land
- costs incurred in the preparation of a grant application or related documentation
- overseas travel
- other activities not relevant to the activities to which the grant has been made

2.6 Grant period

All grant activities should be conducted during the financial year from 1 July 2020 to 30 June 2021, but we will look to extend the grant period given the impact of COVID-19 on industry. This would be subject to Government agreement and the availability of funds. The Department's intention is that all trials should be completed over a period of no more than 12 months.

The Department will give grantees written notice of any change to the grant period as soon as possible.

No additional funding will be available if the grant period is extended (i.e. total funding will remain at \$2 million).

The Department reserves the right to hold further rounds of the program if the initial round is undersubscribed.

2.7 Probity

The Australian Government will make sure that the grant opportunity process is fair, according to the published guidelines, incorporates appropriate safeguards against fraud, unlawful activities and other inappropriate conduct and is consistent with the CGRGs.

The Department has appointed a probity advisor for the trials. The probity advisor will provide the Department with expert probity advice, as required, on probity matters relating to the program and assist in ensuring that all applications are assessed fairly, uniformly and transparently.

How to apply for the Grant

Grant applicants must:

- complete the application form attached to these guidelines (Attachment A)
- provide the information requested in the form (including letters of support from all consortium members)
- ensure that they meet, and can address, all the eligibility criteria
- provide responses to the merit criteria
- indicate your ability to comply with the terms and conditions of the Commonwealth's standard grant agreement (see Attachment B).
- fill out the conflict of interest declaration
- declare your ability to comply with the *Privacy Act 1988* and the Australian Privacy Principles
- submit your application/s to the Department by the closing time (0900 on Monday 13 July 2020).

We will publish the opening and closing dates of the Grant Opportunity and any other relevant information on GrantConnect.

Applications should provide sufficient information to enable their assessment against the eligibility criteria and merit criteria.

You are responsible for ensuring that your application is complete and accurate. Giving false or misleading information is a serious offence under the Criminal Code Act 1995 and we will investigate any false or misleading information and may exclude your application from further consideration.

Applications must be lodged by email at usg@communications.gov.au, except where physical electronic media need to be lodged, in which case the media are to be lodged as set out below.

Application files lodged by email must not exceed a combined size of 10 megabytes per email.

All electronic files, regardless of transmission method, should be provided in an appropriate Microsoft compatible format. Geo-spatial information such as maps should be provided in either Mapinfo TAB or MID/MIF, ESRI Shape, GML, or KML format.

If some files are too large to be emailed to the Department, the Department will accept physical electronic media, such as CD-ROM, DVD ROM or USB stick, if the media are PC-formatted. Applicants should include an index of all electronic documents on the physical electronic media.

Physical electronic media formats should be delivered via confirmed delivery prior to the closing time identified above. Physical electronic media are to be addressed and delivered to:

Director, USG Implementation
Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Communications
GPO Box 2154
CANBERRA ACT 2601

To ensure fairness to all applicants, we reserve the right not to consider any application, or any part of an application, that was received after the closing time, or which is submitted in a way that is not consistent with these Guidelines.

We will acknowledge that we have received your application within three working days. If you do not receive an acknowledgment within three working days you should contact us.

You cannot change your application after the closing time but the Department may ask you to provide clarification or additional information.

If you find an error in your application after submitting it, you should contact us immediately at usg@communications.gov.au. We do not have to accept any additional information, nor requests from you to correct your application after the closing time.

If we find an error or information that is missing, we may ask for clarification or additional information from you that will not change the nature of your application. However, we can refuse to accept any additional information from you that would change your submission after the closing time.

3.1 Questions

If you have any questions during the application period, contact usg@communications.gov.au. The Department's written decision on the questions is final.

Answers to questions will be posted on GrantConnect as Frequently Asked Questions. The Department will not accept any new questions received within one week of the closing time.

3.2 Timing of grant opportunity processes

You are to submit an application between the published opening and closing times.

If you are successful, we expect you will be able to commence your trial from August 2020 or as soon as possible thereafter.

Table 1: Expected timing for this grant opportunity (Note: These times are indicative and may be altered. Any alterations will be published on GrantConnect.)

Activity	Timeframe
Guidelines released and applications open	15 June 2020
Closing time	0900 am, 13 July 2020
Assessment of applications	July 2020
Recommendations to decision maker, including on whether to negotiate to vary applications	July 2020
Negotiations and award of grant agreements	August 2020
Notification to unsuccessful applicants	August 2020
Earliest start date of grant activity	August 2020
End date of grant activity or agreement	30 June 2021 (or such later date as notified by the Department to grantees)

Assessment and approval of grant applications

Your application will be assessed against the eligibility criteria and merit criteria described below.

You must meet the eligibility criteria. We will not consider your application if you do not satisfy all of the eligibility criteria.

The merit criteria are equally weighted. In addition to being assessed against the merit criteria, eligible applications will be assessed for overall value for money.

Your application will also be assessed against your conflict of interest declaration, your ability to comply with the *Privacy Act 1988* and the Australian Privacy Principles. If you advise any conflicts of interest or difficulties in complying with privacy obligations, we will consider how you propose to mitigate these issues.

We will also consider your statement of compliance with the standard grant agreement for this program. We may negotiate with you to resolve any issues of non-compliance, but also reserve the right to exclude your application from further consideration if we consider the issues cannot be successfully negotiated.

The assessment will be based on the information provided in your application. However, the Department reserves the right to make such enquiries and obtain and consider such other information as it considers relevant to the assessment of your application. The Department may seek advice from a technical adviser, probity adviser or other adviser and use this advice in assessing applications.

4.1 Eligibility criteria

The eligibility criteria are:

- You must have an Australian Business Number (ABN)
- You must be registered for the purposes of GST
- You must have an account with an Australian financial institution
- If you are submitting a consortium application, you must nominate a single lead applicant that will enter into any grant agreement with us, if successful
- You must be, or propose to become, a Carriage Service Provider (CSP) as defined in the Telecommunications Act 1997, or be a consortium with at least one organisation operating as, or proposing to operate as, a CSP.

4.2 Merit criteria

There are three merit criteria. As noted above, they are equally weighted.

Merit criterion 1—the proposed approach and expected outcomes

Assessment against this criterion will be based on what you propose to deliver for the trials. Matters to be considered include:

- the broader outcomes you expect to demonstrate from your participation in the trials and how they will align with the objectives of the trials.
- proposed location/s (including priority HCRC areas)
- number of proposed consumers to take part including minimum and maximum numbers (in the event we need to negotiate to cap the number)
- your approach to providing voice services using alternative technologies and background on these, including proposed equipment, installation process and support
- details of the voice services, including service inclusions, costs for consumers (if any)³ and approach to ensuring network and service reliability

³ The Department expects customers will not pay for the alternative voice service under the trials for fair and reasonable use, but any excess use could be at the customer's cost providing this is made clear in the application and is clear to any customer under the trial.

- any additional services or features to be offered to the consumers in addition to voice service e.g. data services, back-up power
- what customer support you intend to provide—e.g. call diversion arrangements, customer service hotlines, complaints handling procedures, service and network standards
- arrangements for supporting monitoring of the trials, including the sharing of customer and service information for survey purposes.

Merit criterion 2—capability and capacity to deliver the outcomes

Assessment against this criterion will be based on your ability to deliver your proposals successfully. Matters to be considered include:

- experience in providing voice services (and any other proposed services)
- access to any necessary infrastructure
- your track record in delivering similar projects (if any)
- access to personnel and/or partners with the right skills and experience
- your readiness to commence the project including availability of key personnel and equipment
- your assessment of risk and mitigations
- your financial and operational ability to deliver the proposal including demonstrated access to the funds you propose to contribute.

Merit criterion 3—Costs

Assessment against this criterion will be based on the cost to the Commonwealth of your proposal. Matters to be considered include:

- any set-up, administration or promotional costs for which funding is sought (noting such costs should generally not exceed around 10 per cent of the total grant amount being sought)
- any upfront per-service costs, such as for equipment (e.g. antennas and boosters) or installation
- costs for each voice service to be provided
- total grant funding being sought.

4.3 Overall value for money

An assessment will be undertaken to consider which eligible applications represent overall value for money to the Commonwealth. The value for money assessment considers all of the factors that applicants are required to discuss in their applications, including:

- the merit criteria
- compliance with privacy requirements
- compliance with conflict of interest requirements
- statements of compliance with the draft grant agreement.

The value for money assessment also considers these matters in the wider context of the program's objectives, which include innovation and competition, and broader Commonwealth policy. In particular, as part of the value for money assessment, the Department may consider which combination of applications will together best achieve the program's objectives.

The value for money assessment takes into account the total cost of the proposal, including both the funding sought from the Commonwealth and applicants' own contributions to the costs of their trials, as well as any costs to customers.

Value for money in the context of this grant process is a multifaceted assessment that takes into account the costs and benefits of a grant application (including financial and legal compliance risks), individually and relative to the other applications. The assessment balances these factors and recognises trade-offs between them. The value for money assessment also takes into consideration other whole-of-government considerations.

Based on the overarching value for money assessment, the Department reserves the right to recommend funding one or more applications which were lower ranked against the merit criteria than other eligible applications. The Department also reserves the right to recommend not funding one or more applications which are highly ranked against the merit criteria based on the value for money assessment.

4.4 Conflicts of interest

Any conflicts of interest could affect the performance of the trials. There may be a conflict of interest, or perceived conflict of interest, if any of your personnel:

- has a professional, commercial or personal relationship with a party who is able to influence the assessment process, such as an Australian Government officer;
- has a relationship with or interest in, an organisation, which is likely to interfere with or restrict the applicants from carrying out the proposed activities fairly and independently or
- has a relationship with, or interest in, an organisation from which they will receive personal gain because the organisation receives a grant under the grant opportunity.

You will be asked to declare, as part of your application, any perceived or existing conflicts of interest or that, to the best of your knowledge, there is no conflict of interest.

Conflicts of interest and their mitigation will be considered as part of the value for money assessment.

If you later identify an actual, apparent or perceived conflict of interest, you must inform the Department in writing immediately.

Conflicts of interest for Australian Government staff will be handled as set out in the Australian [Public Service Code of Conduct \(Subsection 13\(7\) of the Public Service Act 1999\)](#). Assessment Committee members and other officials must also declare any conflicts of interest.

4.5 Customer Information and privacy

Successful applicants will be required to manage customer information in accordance with the *Privacy Act 1988* and the Australian Privacy Principles. While complying with these obligations, you will also be required to provide customer information, including contact details, to us for monitoring purposes, including proposed customer surveying. During the course of the trials, a third-party survey company engaged by the Department will be in contact with your customers to seek feedback about the trials. Customers should provide their consent to you to provide their details to the Department and its survey provider for these purposes.

As part of your application, you will be asked to declare your ability to perform the trial in a manner that complies with the Privacy Act 1988 and the Australian Privacy Principles, and undertake to impose the same privacy obligations on officers, employees, agents and subcontractors that you engage to assist with the activity, in respect of personal information you collect, use, store, or disclose in connection with the activity. You must not do anything, which if done by the Department would

breach an Australian Privacy Principle as defined in the Act, noting that the Privacy Act allows customer information to be shared where you have consent.

Your ability to perform the trial in a manner that complies with the Privacy Act 1988 and the Australian Privacy Principles will be considered as part of the value for money assessment.

4.6 Who will assess the applications?

An Assessment Committee made up of Departmental officers and contractors (if required) will assess each application.

All those taking part in the assessment will be required to perform their duties in accordance with the CGRGs.

The Assessment Committee will provide its grant recommendations to the Department executive.

The Department executive will review the Assessment Committee's recommendations and submit these to the decision maker. The Department's recommendations may include recommendations to negotiate with applicants.

4.7 Who will approve grants?

The decision maker (the Minister for Communications, Cyber Safety and the Arts) decides which grants to approve taking into account the recommendations of the Assessment Committee. The decision maker may consult the Minister for Regional Health, Regional Communications and Local Government on the decision.

The decision maker may also consider the application in the broader policy context and whether the application supports other Australian government priorities.

The decision maker's decision is final in all matters, including:

- the approval of applications for funding, including negotiating to vary applications, including to cap the number of customers and to focus on HCRC areas
- the level of funding for individual applications and the total level of funding
- the terms and conditions of funding.

There is no appeal mechanism for decisions to approve or not approve a grant.

4.8 Notification and negotiations with successful applicants

We will advise you of the outcome of your application in writing. If you are successful, we may negotiate with you to vary your application, as set out below.

The Department may enter into negotiations with applicants to vary their applications before finalising a grant agreement. The reasons for negotiating with applicants may include, but are not limited to:

- the total number of consumers to be enrolled in trials across the applications would exceed the funding available, so the applications need to be varied to cap the number of consumers
- prioritising trials with consumers currently served by HCRC technology
- funding levels proposed for set-up, administration and promotion
- changes to the grant agreement proposed by the applicant.

The Department will not commence negotiations without the decision maker's approval.

It is expected that any proposed changes to the grant agreement will be clearly set out in your application. The Department is not obliged to consider any additional changes that are raised during the negotiation process, but may choose to do so at its sole discretion. If we determine that your proposed changes would affect the grant as approved, we may be required to re-submit the matter to the decision maker for decision.

After a grant agreement has been executed, your grant will be listed on the GrantConnect website within 21 calendar days after the date of execution.

4.9 Feedback on unsuccessful applications

If you are unsuccessful, you may ask for feedback within two weeks of being advised of the outcome. We will give written feedback within one month of your request.

The grant agreement and its administration

5.1 The grant agreement

Successful applicants must enter into a legally binding grant agreement with the Commonwealth. Each grant agreement will set out the grantee's obligations.

This program uses a standard Commonwealth grant agreement (Attachment B). Your grant agreement may have specific conditions determined by the assessment process or other considerations made by the decision maker. We will identify these in the agreement and these will be discussed as part of the negotiation process (see above).

We must execute a grant agreement with you before we can make any payments. We are not responsible for any of your expenditure until a grant agreement is executed. We are not responsible for any expenditure other than that provided for in the grant agreement.

The Commonwealth may recover grant funds if there is a breach of the grant agreement.

Following any negotiations, you will have 15 days from the date of a written offer to execute this grant agreement with the Commonwealth ('execute' means both you and the Commonwealth have signed the agreement).

The offer may lapse if both parties do not sign the grant agreement within this time. Under certain circumstances, we may extend this period.

The grant agreement will state:

- the maximum grant amount to be paid
- how you will spend the grant
- milestones and reports required so we can pay the grant in instalments
- any financial contributions you are contributing.

5.2 How we pay the grant

We will not exceed the maximum grant amount under any circumstances. If you incur extra costs, you must meet them yourself.

A small set-up payment may be paid in advance if it is part of your application and confirmed in negotiations and included in your grant agreement.

We will make monthly payments based on your satisfactory progress against milestones set out in the grant agreement and as reflected in reports by you. The milestone payments will be linked to your delivery of trial services and will be paid in arrears.

Your final milestone payment will be made when you submit a satisfactory final report demonstrating you have completed outstanding obligations (see 5.5 below).

Grantees must provide monthly reports on the progress of the trials and submit an invoice to the Department with the monthly reports. We will review each report and ensure that the milestone has been completed and the invoice is correct. Once these checks have been completed, grant payments will be made within 20 business days.

5.3 Grant Payments and GST

All grantees must be registered for GST and grant payments will be GST inclusive.

Grants are assessable income for taxation purposes, unless exempted by a taxation law. We recommend you seek independent professional advice on your taxation obligations or seek assistance from the [Australian Taxation Office](#).⁴ We do not provide advice on your particular taxation circumstances.

5.4 Keeping us informed

You should let us know if anything is likely to affect your grant activity.

We need to know of any key changes to your organisation or its business activities, particularly if they affect your ability to complete your project, carry on business and pay debts due.

You must also inform us of any changes to your circumstances, including to your:

- name
- addresses
- nominated contact details
- bank account details.

If you become aware of a breach of terms and conditions under the grant agreement, you must contact us immediately.

If your circumstances change so that they give rise to a conflict of interest that did not previously exist, you must advise us as soon as possible and advise of any proposed mitigations.

⁴ <https://www.ato.gov.au/>

5.5 Reporting

You must submit reports as required under the grant agreement.

We will expect you to report each month on:

- Milestones
- Services delivered
- How you are using the grant
- Outages and other issues.

We may need to re-examine reports for payment on completion of milestones, seek further information or request an independent audit of claims and payments at any time.

You are to discuss any reporting delays with us as soon as you become aware of them.

When you complete the trials, you must submit a final report.

The final report must:

- identify what deliverables have been achieved, including technology used, services delivered and number of consumers
- identify any service outages and issues
- identify the new technologies used
- identify the total costs incurred
- discuss lessons learned during the trials
- be submitted within the time agreed to after completion.

5.6 Compliance visits

We may visit you during or at the completion of your trials to review your compliance with the grant agreement. We will provide you with reasonable notice of any compliance visit.

5.7 Record keeping

We may also inspect the records you are required to keep under the grant agreement.

Evaluation

The Department will evaluate the grant program to determine if:

- individual grants achieved the outcomes they proposed to achieve;
- the program as a whole achieved the Government's objectives; and
- the program was administered efficiently and effectively.

The Department may use information from your application, as well as your monthly and final reports for this purpose. The Department will also assess survey reports on customer experience during the trials for the evaluation. The Department may also seek the views of its stakeholder reference group.

The Department may also interview you, or ask you for more information to help us to evaluate how effective the program was in achieving its objectives.

Other important information

7.1 Complaints

Any complaints about the program, including the assessment of applications, should be provided in writing to usg@communications.gov.au.

Any questions you have about decisions on this grant opportunity should be sent to usg@communications.gov.au.

If you do not agree with the way the Department has handled your complaint, you may also complain to the [Commonwealth Ombudsman](#). The Ombudsman will not usually look into 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

7.2 Confidential Information

Other than information available in the public domain, you agree not to disclose to any person, other than us, any information that is confidential to the Department relating to the application process and/or grant agreement, without our prior written approval. The obligation will not be breached where you are required by law, Parliament or a stock exchange to disclose the relevant information or where the relevant information is publicly available (other than through breach of a confidentiality or non-disclosure obligation).

We may, at any time, require you to arrange for you, or your employees, agents or subcontractors to give a written undertaking relating to non-disclosure of our confidential information in a form we consider acceptable.

We will keep any information in connection with the grant agreement confidential to the extent that it meets all of the three conditions below:

- a. you clearly identify the information as confidential and explain why we should treat it as confidential
- b. the information is commercially sensitive
- c. revealing the information would cause unreasonable harm to you or someone else.

We will not be in breach of any confidentiality agreement if the information is disclosed to:

- Commonwealth employees and contractors to help us manage the program effectively
- employees and contractors of our Department so we can research, assess, monitor and analyse our programs and activities
- employees and contractors of other Commonwealth agencies for any purposes, including government administration, research or service delivery
- employees and contractors of State, Territory or local government agencies where you have agreed to the disclosure and the information would help you undertake your trials
- the Auditor-General, Ombudsman or Privacy Commissioner
- the responsible Minister or Parliamentary Secretary, or

- a House or a Committee of the Australian Parliament.

7.3 Freedom of information

All documents in the possession of the Australian Government, including those about this grant opportunity, are subject to the [Freedom of Information Act 1982](#) (FOI Act).

The purpose of the FOI Act is to give members of the public rights of access to information held by the Australian Government and its entities. Under the FOI Act, members of the public can seek access to documents held by the Australian Government. This right of access is limited only by the exceptions and exemptions necessary to protect essential public interests and private and business affairs of persons in respect of whom the information relates.

All Freedom of Information requests must be referred to the Freedom of Information Coordinator in writing by mail to the Freedom of Information Coordinator, GPO Box 2154, Canberra ACT 2601 or by email to foi@communications.gov.au.

7.4 How we treat your information

We treat your personal information according to the [Privacy Act 1988](#) and the [Australian Privacy Principles](#). This includes letting you know:

- what personal information we collect
- why we collect your personal information
- who we give your personal information to.

The Australian Government may use and disclose information about grant applicants and grantees under this grant opportunity in any other Australian Government business or function. This includes disclosing grant information on GrantConnect as required for reporting purposes and giving information to the Australian Taxation Office for compliance purposes.

We may share the information you give us with other Commonwealth entities for purposes including government administration, research or service delivery, according to Australian laws.