



Industry briefing on the Emerging Aviation Technology Partnerships Program Guidelines – Round One

The Emerging Aviation Technology Partnerships Program (the Program) is an exciting program and we have no doubt we will see some great projects get off the ground.

The purpose of this briefing is to run through the Program’s guidelines for Round One and to draw attention to some of the key sections. If you intend to submit an application we strongly recommend you take the time to read through the whole document as the guidelines are quite comprehensive, and contain all the information necessary to complete an application.

It is important to note at the outset that we are running the Program as an open-competitive process which is why this briefing will focus on the guidelines that are publically available. We will refer to the guidelines throughout the briefing and you will likely find it most useful if you have a copy on hand to refer to as we go along.

In the interests of ensuring the market has fair and equal access to information, we will put a summary of this briefing on our website. Any answers to questions today that are not already publicly available will also be published online.

We are also taking queries at EATP@infrastructure.gov.au and posting any answers that provide additional information that is not contained within the guidelines, on GrantConnect and our website.

Starting with section 2, which provides an overview of the Program on page 6.

The Program was announced in May last year as part of the Commonwealth Government’s Digital Economy Strategy. Essentially, the Program is intended to encourage the adoption of emerging aviation technologies (such as drones, electric vertical take-off and landing (eVTOL) aircraft and new aviation propulsion systems and it has a focus on demonstrating benefits of the technology in regional settings in particular and using this experience to break down barriers for the sector.

We have approximately \$32.6 million for the Program over two years. Some of that has been allocated for the running of the Program, so we have approximately \$30 million to support projects.

We intend to be flexible with this funding, with the majority being paid as grants and some funds used for procurements that contribute to the delivery of projects - such as procuring community outreach services where there may be flow on benefits not just for that project but for broader levels of acceptance and understanding within the community, or services to support regulatory development.



The Program has two rounds and we have nominally allocated half the funding for each round, so approximately \$15 million per round, and again nominally allocated a split between the grants and procurement funding.

The exact split between rounds and between grants and procurements will be dependent on the applications we receive under round one. This is an innovative program, and we don't want to constrain innovation by enforcing hard and fast arbitrary figures, we want to keep it as flexible as possible.

As the name suggests, this is a 'partnerships' program and not a straightforward grants program and rather than providing grants and playing a purely administrative role, we are looking to work with grantees during the delivery of projects. This will be expanded on when we get to section 10.2

Specific objectives and outcomes for the Program can be found at sections 2.1 and 2.2 respectively on page 7 of the guidelines. At section 2.3 on page 7, you will find the Program's five focus areas which include scope for both research and development and the establishment of operational trials.

While the focus areas are distinct, we acknowledge that there may be some overlap between them and applications may target more than one focus area or an applicant may wish to prepare separate applications for different focus areas.

As mentioned earlier, the Program has two rounds and section 2.5 on page 9 provides information on the likely funding and timing of round two. The scope and the exact timing for the release of Round Two will be determined once the selection process for Round One is complete and the Guidelines for Round Two will be made available on GrantConnect and the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Communications' website, following similar processes to Round One.

Section 3.1 on page 10 provides information on grants available.

There is no minimum or maximum grant amount, the amount of each approved grant will depend on the scope and complexity of the proposed project and will be proportional to the contribution of the project towards the Program's objectives.

The only cap we are working to is the total funding for the Program which is approximately \$30 million. While we have a notional figure per round, this is a fluid figure that will be dependent on the applications we receive.

We will seek to address each focus area when recommending proposals to the decision maker for approval, who in this case is the Minister for Infrastructure, Transport and



Regional Development, the Hon Barnaby Joyce, but we don't have any specified targets per focus area or per jurisdiction. We will be guided by the applications received and aim to select projects that will bring most benefit to the sector as a whole.

Section 3.1 also provides information on co-contributions which is something we've received a few queries on. As stated in the guidelines, applicants are not required to financially contribute towards the project however, are encouraged to do so and should note the nature of any co-contribution as part of the application as this is something we will take into consideration during the merit assessment – you will note there is a merit criterion at 6.2 that covers funding contribution.

We have included some caveats around funding in that we cannot fund projects if the same activity has previously received funding. To give an example, if you received funding through a different Commonwealth program to conduct research at an earlier stage of the project and are now seeking funding to conduct a trial – that would be acceptable. But if you have already received Commonwealth funding to conduct a particular trial in a particular location we wouldn't also be able to fund that same trial.

The last point to highlight in this section is that we may seek to discuss or refine project scope and funding sought with an applicant before making recommendations to the decision maker.

As this is a competitive process, we would only do this for highly ranking projects that we intend to recommend to the Minister; there would be no disadvantage to applications already rated as unsuitable. These types of discussion would enable us to maximise the funding we have available and ultimately achieve the best outcomes for the sector. While this would help inform our recommendations to the Minister, these discussions would not guarantee that an applicant is successful as ultimately the Minister has final decision making power.

Section 3.2 on page 10 covers the grant period and flags that we have in-principle agreement to extend the Program end date beyond 30 June 2023. When the Program was announced in May last year, it received funding across two years from 2021-22 to 2022-23. In line with this two-year funding allocation, we have noted that applicants may plan for projects spanning up to two years. The exception to this is that some research projects may need to conclude earlier to feed into Round Two.

We hope to confirm the end date as soon as possible and will provide any update on GrantConnect and our website so please do keep checking in to ensure you receive these updates.



The next key section is section 4 – Eligibility criteria from page 11 to 13. This section provides a list of who is and isn't eligible to apply as well as eligible locations, grant activities and expenditure.

One point to draw attention to here is section 4.1 which outlines that both companies incorporated in Australia as well as foreign corporations are eligible to apply as long as any foreign corporation can demonstrate how funding will benefit the Australian sector. This is part of the merit assessment also covered at section 6.3.

We very much welcome international players, but are also very keen for investments to be realised in, and benefit, the local economy.

From pages 13 to 15, you will find the merit criteria which is section 6. We encourage you to familiarise yourself with this section and ensure you address all of the criteria relevant to the focus area or areas that you are addressing in your application.

You will see some of the criterion apply to all focus areas and some of the criterion only apply to certain focus areas.

You will also see that each criterion has a number of sub-criterion. When we are undertaking the merit assessment, we will consider and score each sub-criterion so it is important you address each in your application.

Information on how to apply can be found at section 7 which begins on page 15.

This section details what you need to include with your application, how to submit your application and also lists the attachments that are required.

Given the nature of the Program and the range of projects we may receive from potentially straightforward research projects to more complex trial projects, the level of complexity and detail of the supporting documentation should be proportionate to the project. We don't expect to see a 20-page project management plan for a small research project and likewise we don't expect to see a 2-page project management plan for a complex trial.

Section 8, beginning on page 18, provides information on the assessment process. Essentially it's a three-part process which includes a preliminary assessment by the Program's team to determine eligibility and assess merit, then a formal merit assessment of all eligible application by an Assessment Committee, and then a final decision being made by the Minister upon recommendation by the Assessment Committee.



The last section we will cover in this briefing is section 10, specifically section 10.1 and 10.2 which cover the grant agreement and the informal agreement respectively, both on page 21.

Consistent with other Commonwealth grant programs, payment will be made under a grant agreement. We are using a standard grant agreement template that is linked through the guidelines and this agreement will contain a number of standard clauses as well as detail specific to individual projects including deliverables and payment milestones.

One thing that has come up often in relation to the grant agreement is how we are handling IP and ensuring benefits are shared across industry. Generally speaking, we will not be asking grantees to forgo intellectual property rights, doing so could create a commercial disadvantage. There may be some instances where we may retain the right to retain and share project material but this will be determined on a case by case basis and dependent on the nature of the project.

In keeping with this, assessment criteria 3 at section 6.3 asks applicants to demonstrate how their project will not only contribute to industry growth but also their approach to sharing outcomes and findings. This is essentially about ensuring any lessons and benefits are easily shared across the industry.

Perhaps unlike many other grant programs, we will also be looking to enter into informal agreements with successful applicants and other parties who will be involved in delivery of the project. This may be local or state governments or community representatives, and it will most likely take the form of a Memorandum of Understanding. The informal agreement will outline how all the parties will work together including roles and responsibilities. This really goes to the partnerships approach we are taking in that we don't see projects being delivered in isolation, we want organisations to consider who they need to work with to ensure the project can be delivered successfully and really see this partnership approach as a defining feature of the program. There is no limitation to the number of parties that may work together.

This concludes the briefing, but please note information on the notification of outcomes, how we monitor grant activity, enquiries and feedback, and probity - which covers things such as conflict of interest, privacy and confidentiality – can be found in the guidelines. As mentioned at the start of the briefing, if you are considering submitting an application we do encourage you to read the whole document as it is quite comprehensive and contains all information needed to complete an application. It also provides detail on how we will administer the Program.