

Australian Alumni Grants Fund Guidelines for Applicants

These guidelines apply only to the pilot AAGF round 2.1 which targets participants in Aus4Skills non-scholarships human resource development (HRD) activities.

The closing dates for submission of proposals is **midnight Wednesday 10 April 2019**.

Updated February 2019

Aus4Skills is an Aus4Vietnam Investment - managed by Coffey, a Tetra Tech company, on behalf of the Australian Government



Abbreviations

AAGF	Australian Alumni Grants Fund
AASC	Australia Awards Short Course
AAV	Australia Awards Vietnam
DFAT	Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (Australia)
HRD	Human Resource Development
ILO	Informal Learning Opportunity
SGF	Small Grants Fund

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1 INTRODUCTION

The Australian Alumni Grants Fund (AAGF), formerly known as the Small Grants Fund (SGF) is an activity under the Australian Alumni in Vietnam Strategy administered by Aus4Skills. The AAGF has been established to fund proposals from Vietnamese alumni of Australian education institutions.

These guidelines will only apply to the pilot AAGF round 2.1 which targets participants in Aus4Skills non-scholarships human resource development (HRD) activities. The guidelines will be revised for other AAGF rounds that may occur with a different target cohort.

This pilot round is being undertaken as alumni of Aus4Skills HRD activities were not eligible for the previous two SGF rounds. Grants under the AAGF will allow HRD alumni to build on and sustain gains achieved by supporting them to consolidate or amplify/scale up and extend their application projects, or the application of learning obtained from HRD activities more generally. Follow-up projects funded under the AAGF should contribute to greater sustainability of learning of HRD alumni, and where relevant more lasting impact of their application projects. It is expected that AAGF funding will contribute to HRD alumni applying their learning to bring about change in their workplace, sector or community.

2 CONTRIBUTING TO AUS4SKILLS PROGRAM OUTCOMES

Any AAGF project must contribute to one or more of the following three Aus4Skills Program Outcomes:

- Outcome 1: Male and female alumni use new skills and knowledge to make positive contributions to selected priority areas
- Outcome 2: Selected Vietnamese government, private sector and civil society organisations, and other partners, demonstrate organisational change as program-facilitated improvement(s) in policies, practices and/or performance standards
- Outcome 3: Australia and Vietnam have stronger, sustainable links in selected sectors/agencies

As the principal purpose of this pilot round is to support proposals which emerge from the learning gained from Aus4Skills HRD activities, such proposals will, by definition, be within priority sectors (and contribute to one or more of the Program Outcomes). Thus, unlike in the previous two rounds there will not be any separate list of priority areas/sectors for this round.

Additional principles applied in selection of successful grant proposals are that:

- Proposals must deliver broad-based effects or outcomes (i.e. they must not just be focused on individual benefits to an alumnus or small group of alumni).
- Proposals must result in an on-going delivery of benefits beyond grant completion.
- Proposals must address the issues of gender equality, disability inclusion and the inclusion of the rural disadvantaged including disadvantaged ethnic minority communities.
- Proposals must be written in English. If a supporting document is not in English, a translation should be submitted together with the original. Please see *Funding for translation* below.
- Proposals must be written and submitted by applicants unless applicants are persons with disability whose health condition does not allow them to write and submit.
- Proposals will be given priority if they deliver outcomes specifically relevant to Program Outcome 2: *Selected Vietnamese government, private sector and civil society*

organisations, and other partners, demonstrate organisational change as program-facilitated improvement(s) in policies, practices and/or performance standards.

- Applicants must not be named in more than one proposal in any single AAGF round.
- Applicants must not have an ongoing or un-acquitted grant (i.e. grants cannot be for overlapping periods).
- Successful applicants will be required to sign a Grant Agreement before a grant is awarded, which includes mandatory financial and reporting requirements.

3 ELIGIBLE CATEGORIES FOR A GRANT

The following categories of projects are eligible for AAGF funding:

Category 1. Development and conduct of a training program or training course(s), workshop(s), seminar(s), or conference(s) (proposals merely to attend one of these events are not eligible), or **public awareness campaigns or advocacy activities.**

Category 2. Applied research. This category may include presentation of papers or posters of which an alumnus is the lead author at conferences located only in Australia or Vietnam.

Category 3. Organisational and Institutional Change. This category provides scope for innovative activities that contribute to changes/improvements in an organisation and to a better workplace enabling environment, including for the advancement of women. The improvements may be in the form of policy, practice and/or performance standards.

- **Policy (includes ongoing policy development)**

Any work that has or will likely result in a product that will give instructions to others (even without the person who produced it present). Includes curricula & published applied research.

- **Practice**

Any work that involves application of skills provided by the grant or procedural changes otherwise facilitated by the grant, other than work on policies. Includes examples of new collaboration or links, and cultural, attitudinal and behavioural change where it manifests as something tangible, like staff attendance habits or female participation in decision-making.

- **Performance Standards**

Any change to the quality or quantity of **results** achieved by an organisation or group as a result of the grant (new or improved outputs or outcomes by organisation or group), other than new or improved policies.

Category 4. HRD application projects/action plans. This category refers to a single or group application project or action plan or the extension or upscaling of these projects/plans that have been or are being applied as a result of participation in Aus4Skills HRD activities. This category also includes a project which involves the application of learning more generally from participation in Aus4Skills HRD activities.

Examples of relevant results of grant projects might include (but are not limited to):

- Sustainable improvements to gender equality, disability and social inclusion in an organisation, professional field or community
- Improved capability of alumni and their work units to apply new or improved professional approaches
- Improved policy within alumni work units
- Improved ongoing leadership opportunities for alumni, especially women
- Improved organisational systems, procedures or policies
- Improved teaching and learning practice in alumni work units
- Improved research practice in alumni work units
- Strengthened productivity of professional networks of alumni
- New or improved productive linkages between Vietnam and Australia
- Improved social and economic conditions among disadvantaged, vulnerable groups or in local communities
- Improved private sector development
- Contribution to policy dialogue between the Australian and Vietnamese Governments

Ineligible proposals and items

The following types of proposals are not eligible for funding under the AAGF:

- Proposals which are entirely or primarily for the purchase of equipment or construction.
- Proposals which, in effect, subsidise the commercial activities of an individual applicant, a group of applicants and/or a private sector enterprise¹, for which the individual applicant, a group of applicants and/or enterprise would normally be expected to invest its own funds.

The following budget items are not eligible for financial support under the AAGF:

- Payments to non-Vietnamese nationals for services rendered.
- Fees/salaries for alumni for any work/tasks carried out by alumni who submit proposals.
- Fees (i.e. tuition, enrollment, attendance) for formal studies, trainings or short courses in Vietnam, Australia or any other country.
- Office equipment such as computers, printers, photocopiers, cameras and mobile phones, etc.
- Any personal items not relevant to the implementation of the AAGF-funded activity.
- Payments to applicants' employer(s) if proposals are approved.

4 APPLICANT ELIGIBILITY

All alumni of Aus4Skills Australia Awards Short Courses (AASC) and Informal Learning Opportunities (ILOs) are eligible to apply. Other alumni of Australian education institutions can be part of an eligible team of alumni who submit an AAGF application, with the condition that the team is led by an HRD alumnus.

¹ This does not apply to private colleges or universities which are eligible for AAGF funding.

5 DURATION OF GRANT IMPLEMENTATION

The maximum duration for implementing a grant project is 12 months. Grant implementation should commence within 3 months of the notification of grant approval.

Aus4Skills approval must be obtained by the grantee in case of a delay in implementation. Requests to delay implementation must be accompanied by justifiable reason(s) for the delay, the proposed new start date (but should be within 6 months of notification of the grant approval) and the proposed new implementation timelines. In case of delay in implementation, the project end date will not be extended.

Failure to commence by the agreed start date without valid justification may result in the withdrawal of the grant.

6 FUNDING AND ACCOUNTABILITY

The value of a grant is based on the following table.

Number of alumni applicants	Maximum Grant
One or two alumni	VND 166 million ²
Three alumni	VND 250 million
Four alumni and more	VND 332 million

Any project that has the involvement of an alumni team must clearly demonstrate that it is a team project with specified roles for each alumnus. It should show the added value in submitting a team proposal as compared to individual submissions.

Additional funding

a. Co-funding

Aus4Skills will provide matching funds of 100% of a contribution by the applicant, employer or other relevant Vietnamese organisation (e.g. industry association) **to a maximum of VND50,000,000³**. The co-funding must be in the form of cash (not *'in kind'* contribution) and be shown as part of the budget in the AAGF application. Such a co-funding arrangement will increase the amount of funds available for a proposal as well as strengthen the applicant's and the employer's commitment to the proposal. Aus4Skills will assess in its sole discretion whether 'matching funds' are available.

	Example 1:	Example 2:
AAGF project grant	VND 166,000,000	VND 166,000,000
Co-funding (i.e. from employer)	VND 50,000,000	VND 100,000,000
AAGF matching funds	VND 50,000,000#	VND 50,000,000#

² The figures listed here are respectively the approximate equivalent of AUD10,000, AUD15,000 and AUD20,000.

³ This figure is the approximate equivalent to AUD3,000.

#The maximum matching funds are VND50,000,000 regardless of the amount of co-funding amount. Aus4Skills will not match funds sourced from loans.

b. Partnership with an Australian organisation/expert(s)

As a key targeted outcome of Aus4Skills is establishing or expanding links with Australia, applicants will be rewarded with additional funding if their proposal involves a partnership arrangement with an Australian organisation or expert(s). The partnership arrangement must involve substantive inputs and support (intellectual, physical or monetary) from the Australian organisation/expert(s), which should be outlined in a letter of support to be uploaded in the grant application. **A maximum of VND50,000,000** will be available as additional funding under this arrangement. The additional amount should be included in the AAGF application budget. Aus4Skills will assess in its sole discretion whether the '*partnership*' qualifies for the additional funding and the level of that funding.

Example 3:

AAGF project grant	VND 166,000,000
Qualifying Partnership	Yes (i.e. Australian university provides a substantive financial or resource contribution)
Additional Funding	VND 50,000,000#

Important Note:

The maximum additional amount available for any one proposal under either of these two arrangements is VND50,000,000. Therefore, where a proposal meets both a. and b. above, the maximum additional amount is VND50,000,000.

Funding for translation

All applications and subsequent progress and completion reports must be written in English. As alumni of HRD component activities generally have lower English proficiency levels than other alumni cohorts, the following measures will apply in this pilot round.

Where an application is approved, the applicant(s) will be entitled to claim the costs of translation into English of the mentioned-above documents up to a maximum of VND3,400,000 per application. The cost for translation must be included in the application budget and receipts must be submitted in acquittal reports to support claims for translation costs.

The guidelines for the pilot will be available in Vietnamese and placed on the Australia Awards Vietnam website (www.australiaawardsvietnam.org).

Disbursements

Grants will be disbursed by bank transfer in Vietnamese Dong. Grants usually are disbursed over several payments in response to Funds Requests received from grant awardees based on the following principles:

- First disbursement may be up to 40% of Total Approved Aus4Skills Budget (equal to Total Aus4Skills & Contingency, and Matching Funds), except for presentation at international conference, where payment may be up to 80% of the approved budget.

- Second disbursement will be up to 40% of the grants value upon Aus4Skills' receiving a satisfactory Progress Report including Financial Acquittal Report and Second Funds Request.
- Disbursement of the outstanding portion of the grant based on actual costs will be subject to Aus4Skills' receiving a satisfactory Completion Report including Financial Acquittal Report and Final Funds Request.

Solid evidence showing the usage of co-funding or/and involvement of a partnership with an Australian organisation/ expert(s) must be provided at the first, second or final disbursements. Failure of providing the evidence will result in withdrawal of the matching funds.

If for any reason the proposed project or any projects included in the proposal cannot proceed as originally approved, Aus4Skills must be informed immediately. In such situations, any unexpended funds must be returned to Aus4Skills.

Once a grant application has been approved no further funds will be made available for that project within an AAGF round.

Fraud

Note carefully that Aus4Skills has a zero-tolerance policy on fraud. Where DFAT or Aus4Skills have reasonable concerns about how the grantee(s) manages the grants, Aus4Skills or DFAT will require explanation and additional supporting documentation. If this does not alleviate their concerns, Aus4Skills or DFAT may require the grantee to undertake an independent financial audit.

Aus4Skills Equity of Access Fund

For alumni with disability and rural disadvantaged alumni (including rural disadvantaged ethnic minority alumni) wishing to participate in AAGF events organised by the Australian Embassy or Aus4Skills, alumni may seek the support from the [Equity of Access Fund](#).

7 APPLICATION, APPRAISAL AND APPROVAL PROCESS

As the pilot round 2.1 will target only Aus4Skills HRD alumni, promotion of the opening of the pilot round will be entirely in-house with no publicity on social media or elsewhere. The three Aus4Skills HRD component managers will have primary responsibility for communicating information about the pilot to their respective component participants. It is anticipated that the component managers will communicate to participants by email, personal contact and by briefing sessions held during visits to their respective component locations.

As eligibility is restricted to Aus4Skills HRD alumni, it is important that Aus4Skills HRD alumni do not share information about the opening of pilot round 2.1 on social media or other communication channels.

Proposals must be completed in English and submitted online at the SmartyGrants system at <https://vietnam.smartygrants.com.au/AAGFRound2-1>

The closing dates for submission of proposals is midnight Wednesday 10 April 2019.

Proposal Evaluation Criteria

The evaluation criteria that will be used in evaluating proposals are as follows. While it is recognised that specific criteria may apply to any particular proposal to varying degrees, you should complete the proposal template as fully as you are able.

Evaluation Criteria	Weighted Percentage
Strategic purpose	20 (30 for conference presentations under category 2)
Methodology/approaches	20 (0 for conference presentations under category 2)
Gender, disability and social inclusion	15
Financial and risk management	15
Ownership, sustainability and communications	20 (30 for conference presentations under category 2)
M&E	10
Total	100

Proposals will be approved on a competitive basis by the Australian Embassy.

The applicant(s) may be requested by Aus4Skills to provide additional information and to resubmit the proposal. Proposals can be resubmitted a maximum of one time.

All unsuccessful applicant(s) will be informed in general terms of the reasons for their proposal's non-approval. Detailed reasons will not be given because of the number of applications received and resulting resource constraints. Decisions will be considered final and no further negotiations on non-approved proposals will be undertaken.

8 SUPPORT FOR ALUMNI

Aus4Skills will provide support for alumni in preparing AAGF proposals and managing AAGF projects as deemed feasible. This support will normally take the form of training materials that include capacity building on mainstreaming gender, disability and social inclusion and M&E.

In addition, following the Embassy approval of grants, Aus4Skills will provide successful applicants with training materials that details the financial management and reporting requirements.

9 RECOGNITION OF SUCCESSFUL GRANT COMPLETION

When a grant has been successfully implemented and both the completion and final financial reports have been received and accepted by Aus4Skills, a Certificate of Grant Completion will be awarded to the respective alumnus/alumni team.

10 GRANT PROMOTION AND AUSTRALIAN IDENTITY

Aus4Skills' promotion of the AAGF will include publicising successful outputs and outcomes of grant projects on the [Australia Global Alumni website](#), the [Australia Awards Vietnam website](#), [Australian Alumni in Vietnam Facebook](#), [Aus4Skills Facebook](#) and on other media channels as appropriate.

Grantees are requested to provide suitable photographs, video footage and other relevant materials for Aus4Skills promotion activities. Recipients of grants are encouraged to publicise the grants through their own networks.

Grantees are requested to acknowledge the Australian Government's support in an appropriate way in their publications, reports, at training courses and workshops and in presentations at conferences by using the disclaimer provided below (in both English and Vietnamese).

Disclaimer

This report/research/publication is supported by the Australian Government through the Australian Alumni Grants Fund. The opinions expressed in this report/research/publication are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Australian Government.

Tuyên bố miễn trừ trách nhiệm

Báo cáo/ Nghiên cứu/ Ấn phẩm này do Chính phủ Australia hỗ trợ thông qua Quỹ Hỗ trợ cựu sinh viên Australia. Mọi quan điểm và nhận định trình bày trong báo cáo/ nghiên cứu/ ấn phẩm này là của cá nhân tác giả và không nhất thiết thể hiện quan điểm của Chính phủ Australia.

Grantees are required to use the co-branding logo of Australia Global Alumni and Aus4Skills in their projects' communication materials. Grantees should contact Aus4Skills for specific guidance for using the co-branding logo in their communication materials prior to publications or public presentations. All requirements will be detailed in the grant agreement.

11 FURTHER INFORMATION

Further information can be obtained from the Aus4Skills at:

Australian Alumni Grants Fund

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