

Australian Alumni Grants Fund Guidelines for Applicants Round 4 - 2021

Updated November 2021

Aus4Skills is an Aus4Vietnam Investment - managed by Tetra Tech International Development, on behalf of the Australian Government.



Abbreviations

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

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1 INTRODUCTION

The Australian Alumni Grants Fund (AAGF) is an activity under the Australian Alumni in Vietnam Strategy and administered by Aus4Skills. The AAGF has been established to fund proposals from Vietnamese alumni of Australian education institutions to consolidate their professional knowledge and skills; contribute to organisational and institutional change in selected Vietnamese government, private sector, civil society and other partner organisations; and strengthen linkages between Australia and Vietnam. Four previous grant rounds implemented by Aus4Skills have supported Australian Alumni in Vietnam to deliver projects in selected priority areas.

These guidelines apply to the AAGF Round 4 which targets **Broader Alumni and Aus4Skills HRD Alumni cohorts** (See **Section 3** for more details).

Proposals in any priority area/sector will be given special consideration if they contribute to the targeted outcomes of the three key pillars and cross-cutting themes of [DFAT's Vietnam COVID-19 Development Response Plan](#).

2 CONTRIBUTING TO AUS4SKILLS PROGRAM OUTCOMES

Any AAGF project must contribute to 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

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

- Proposals must deliver broad-based effects or outcomes (i.e. they must not be focused only on individual benefits to an alumnus or small group of alumni).
- Proposals must result in ongoing delivery of benefits beyond grant completion.
- Proposals must address issues of gender equality, disability inclusion and 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.
- Proposals must be written and submitted by applicants unless an applicant is a person with disability whose health condition does not allow him/her to write and submit the application.
- 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 under the AAGF (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 APPLICANT ELIGIBILITY

Broader Alumni

- Vietnamese alumni who have completed their studies in an Australian education institution through an Australian Government funded scholarship, including Australia Awards Scholarships, Australia Awards Fellowships, Endeavour Scholarships and Fellowships, and the Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research (ACIAR) Scholarships.
- Vietnamese alumni who have completed their studies in an Australian education institution through Vietnamese Government scholarships.
- Vietnamese alumni who have self-funded their studies or received other scholarship support and who have completed post-graduate studies at an Australian education institution in Australia or Vietnam.

Aus4Skills HRD Alumni

- Alumni of Aus4Skills Australia Awards Short Courses (AASC) and Informal Learning Opportunities (ILOs).
- 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 Aus4Skills HRD alumnus.

4 SELECTED PRIORITY AREAS/SECTORS

The **selected priority areas/sectors** for AAGF Round 4 are:

- **Agriculture and Rural Development** (agricultural-forestry-fisheries sciences, agribusiness, agricultural economics, rural development, sustainable tourism management, food safety, aquaculture, science and technology transfer)
- **Climate Change** (including disaster risk reduction, science and technology transfer)
- **Cyber security** (including cybercrime, cyber technology standards, international cyber norms, digital transformation and digital infrastructure)
- **Disability** (including social work, special education)
- **Education** (educational studies, education management, institutional governance, adult and vocational education management)
- **Gender Equality** (gender and development, women's studies, social work, social policy, women's leadership)
- **Governance and Economic Growth** (economics, competition, international trade, public policy, public administration, public finance management, corporate finance, law to support economic integration, entrepreneurship and innovation)
- **Health** (including vaccinate cooperation, research, health system strengthening, support Vietnam's COVID-19 recovery)
- **Infrastructure and Transport** (project management and financing, traffic forecasting, transport engineering, social and environmental safeguards, urban transport planning and management, transport master planning, public-private partnership, transport economics, road safety and audit, logistics and supply chain management including maritime logistics management)
- **Regional Stability and Human Rights** (criminology and public governance, international law, international human rights law, maritime sustainability and maritime security, international law of the sea, international relations, political science, international security studies, strategies studies)
- **Water and sanitation** (water management, water engineering, water quality and supply systems, water and waste water, water governance, water security, drought management, marine pollution, science and technology transfer)

Proposals in any of the priority areas/sectors above will be given special consideration if they contribute to the targeted outcomes of the three key pillars (health security, stability, economic recovery) and cross-cutting themes (protecting the most vulnerable, especially women and children, ethnic minorities and people with disabilities) of [DFAT's Vietnam COVID-19 Development Response Plan](#).

5 ELIGIBLE PROJECT CATEGORIES FOR A GRANT

The following categories of projects are eligible for AAGF funding:

Category 1. Professional and Community Development and/or Capacity Building

This category provides scope for a wide range of training activities, including workshops, seminars, forums, and train the trainer activities which contribute to professional development and/or capacity building within the grantee(s) workplace or community. Applied research activities are included under this category, provided they have a professional development, community development, or capacity building element.

Category 2. Public Awareness and/or Advocacy Campaigns

This category provides scope for awareness and/or advocacy initiatives aimed at increasing public visibility and awareness of a particular issue (for example, disability rights, air pollution, COVID-19 vaccine safety etc.). This may include explaining why the issue matters to a public audience in an understandable and accessible way, and providing ways for the public to get involved in addressing the issue. The objectives of a public awareness and/or advocacy campaign may include increased public support for and knowledge of a particular issue, increased digital engagement on the issue, and/or formulation of community actions and strategies to address the issue.

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. Applied research and training activities are included under this category, provided they contribute in some way to organisational or institutional change.

- *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 and 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.

Note with respect to HRD alumni: Alumni of Aus4Skills HRD activities may propose a grant project under any of the three categories listed above. Each of these categories provides scope for: (i) the extension or upscaling of a single or group application project/plan that has been or is being applied as a result of participation in Aus4Skills HRD activities; or (ii) application of learning more generally from participation in Aus4Skills HRD activities through the organisation of a professional development, community development or capacity building activity, a public awareness/advocacy campaign, or activities that contribute to changes/improvements in an organisation and to a better workplace enabling environment.

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 including promoting accessibility for people with disabilities
- 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 are only to attend one or more training courses, presentation or events or present papers/posters at conferences.
- 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.
- Research that is exclusively for the purpose of completing PhD or Master degree studies.

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

- Research that does not include a professional development, community development, capacity building, or organisational/institutional change component.

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

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

6 DURATION OF GRANT IMPLEMENTATION

The maximum duration for implementing a grant project is 12 months. Grant implementation should commence within 2 months from the date of submission of the signed Grant Agreement.

Aus4Skills approval must be obtained by the grantee(s) in case of a delay in implementation. Requests to delay implementation must be accompanied by justifiable reason(s) for the delay and revised implementation timelines. Note that the proposed new start date must be within 4 months from the date of submission of the signed Grant Agreement and the project end date will not be extended.

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

7 FUNDING AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Application can be submitted up to the maximum levels below:

Number of alumni applicants	Maximum Grant
One or two alumni	VND 165,000,000²
Three alumni	VND 245,000,000
Four alumni and more	VND 325,000,000

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

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: Co-funding

Aus4Skills will provide matching funds of 100% of a contribution by the applicant, employer or other relevant Vietnamese/ Australian organisation (e.g. industry association, universities) **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 including the timing of the provision of the co-funding. Such a co-funding arrangement will increase the amount of funds available for a proposal as well as strengthen the commitment of the applicant/employer/organisation to the proposal. Aus4Skills will assess in its sole discretion whether ‘matching funds’ are available.

	Example 1 (VND)	Example 2 (VND)	Example 3 (VND)
AAGF project grant	165,000,000	165,000,000	165,000,000
Co-funding (i.e. from employer)	30,000,000	50,000,000	100,000,000
AAGF matching funds	30,000,000	50,000,000	50,000,000
Total	225,000,000	265,000,000	315,000,000

The maximum matching funds are VND50,000,000 regardless of the amount of co-funding amount.

Aus4Skills will not match funds sourced from loans.

Funding for translation

All applications and subsequent progress and completion reports must be written in English. If Aus4Skills HRD alumni are not proficient in English, they are only entitled to claim the costs of translation into English of their application, progress and completion reports up to a maximum of VND5,000,000⁴ 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.

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

⁴ This figure is the approximate equivalent to AUD300.

Disbursements

Grants will be disbursed by bank transfer in Vietnamese Dong (VND) to a Vietnamese bank account, unless otherwise approved in advance by Aus4Skills. Grants are usually disbursed over several payments in response to Funds Requests received from grantees 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) upon Aus4Skills' receiving a satisfactory First Funds Request.
- Second disbursement will be up to 40% of Total Approved Aus4Skills Budget (equal to Total Aus4Skills & Contingency, and Matching Funds) 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.

Satisfactory documentary evidence showing the provision and use of co-funding in line with the approved project plan and budget must be provided to Aus4Skills at the first, second or final disbursement requests. Failure to provide the evidence to Aus4Skills' satisfaction will result in withdrawal of the matching funds.

If for any reason the proposed project or any component(s) of the project included in the proposal cannot proceed as originally approved, Aus4Skills must be informed immediately. Aus4Skills will review the status of the project with the grantee(s) and advise whether it will continue to support the project and in what form. In the event that Aus4Skills, in its sole discretion, determines that it will not continue to support the project, any unexpended funds must be returned to Aus4Skills. In the event that Aus4Skills is not informed immediately, it may seek to recover funds from the grantee(s).

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

Further information can be found in the [AAGF Financial Guidelines](#).

Fraud

Note carefully that Aus4Skills has a **zero-tolerance policy on fraud**. Where DFAT or Aus4Skills have reasonable concerns about how the grantee(s) manage grant funds, Aus4Skills or DFAT will require explanation and additional supporting documentation. If their concerns are not addressed, Aus4Skills or DFAT may require the grantee to undertake an independent financial audit. In the event of fraud, Aus4Skills will seek to recover funds from the grantee(s).

Further information can be found in the [AAGF Financial Guidelines](#).

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 Aus4Skills [Equity of Access Fund](#).

8 OTHER POLICY REQUIREMENTS

Child Protection

Aus4Skills has a zero-tolerance policy toward the exploitation of children and is committed to implementing internationally-recognised child protection compliance standards aimed at protecting children from exploitation and abuse. Grantees and any of their associates engaged in the grant activity must understand their obligation for managing risks to children and act accordingly. Grantees must comply with [DFAT's Child Protection Policy](#) which sets standards for personal behaviour.

Grantees are responsible for immediately notifying Aus4Skills if any person engaged in grant activity is accused of, charged with, or convicted of criminal offences relating to child exploitation and abuse.

Preventing Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment

Aus4Skills also has a zero-tolerance policy towards sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment of any kind. This applies to our own activities and extends to those conducted by our partners, including grantees. Alongside others, we aim to contribute to the strengthening of safeguarding – by enhancing accountability, improving support for people affected, and driving cultural change through strong leadership. Grantees must comply with [DFAT's Preventing Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment Policy](#) which sets out expectations and requirements in this area.

Grantees are responsible for immediately notifying Aus4Skills if any person engaged in grant activity is accused of, charged with, or convicted of criminal offences relating to sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment.

9 APPLICATION, APPRAISAL AND APPROVAL PROCESS

Proposals must be completed in English and submitted online at the SmartyGrants system at <https://vietnam.smartygrants.com.au/AAGFRound4>

The closing date for submission of proposals is midnight (Hanoi time) Sunday, 16 January 2022.

Proposal Evaluation Criteria

The evaluation criteria that will be used in evaluating proposals are outlined below. 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	Assessment questions
Strategic purpose	20	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Problem Analysis• Objectives and Expected Results of the Project• Contribution to Aus4Skills Program Outcomes• Contribution to broader impacts• Contribution to the expected outcomes of the DFAT's Vietnam COVID-19 Development Response Plan

Evaluation Criteria	Weighted Percentage	Assessment questions
Methodology/ Approaches	20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Methodology for delivering the project and achieving the designed outputs • How research methodology has been reviewed and endorsed by expert(s) in the field • How the target numbers of interviews, surveys and focus groups will be achieved and a schedule for data collection • How to identify and prioritise the need for particular training and at what stage a training needs analysis is undertaken • How to involve the public/community members in addressing issues • Implementation Plan
Gender, Disability and Social inclusion	15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project contributes to gender equality • Project benefits people with disabilities • Project benefits people who are rural disadvantaged, including rural disadvantaged ethnic minorities • Direct beneficiaries • Indirect beneficiaries
Financial and Risk management	20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Budget items • Co-funding (if applicable) • Quotation • Risk management
Ownership, Sustainability and Communications	15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relevant to expertise and skills gained from Australian studies • Supported by employer, community • Lasting benefits/results which continue beyond the project completion and not just be a one-off event • Plan to scale up or replicate project or its results in other organisations, locations or communities • Promotion of the findings, results, outputs of the project to a wide audience
Monitoring & Evaluation	10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outcome Indicators • Output Indicators
Total	100	

As stated above, proposals under AAGF Round 4-2021 will be given special consideration if they contribute to the targeted outcomes of the three key pillars (health security, stability, economic recovery) and cross-cutting themes (protecting the most vulnerable, especially women and children, ethnic minorities and people with disabilities) of [DFAT's Vietnam COVID-19 Development Response Plan](#).

The applicant(s) may be requested by Aus4Skills to provide additional information and to resubmit the proposal. Proposals can only be resubmitted once.

Proposals will be approved on a competitive basis by the Australian Embassy. The assessment and review process may take up to 3 months, depending on the number of submitted applications.

All unsuccessful applicant(s) will be informed in general terms of why their proposal was unsuccessful. 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 unsuccessful grantees will be undertaken.

10 SUPPORT FOR ALUMNI

Aus4Skills will provide support for alumni in monitoring AAGF projects as deemed feasible. A briefing session on the AAGF guidelines and application process will be organised for potential alumni applicants following the announcement of Round 4. Following the approval of grants, Aus4Skills will deliver a training workshop (either face-to-face or online) to successful applicants on financial and communication management and reporting. The workshop will instruct grantees on the completion of funds requests and progress/completion reports (including financial acquittal reports) on SmartyGrants, the online platform used to manage the AAGF Round 4.

11 RECOGNITION OF SUCCESSFUL GRANT COMPLETION

When a grant has been successfully implemented and the completion and final financial reports have been received and accepted by Aus4Skills, a Certificate of Grant Completion will be awarded to the respective grantee(s).

12 GRANT PROMOTION AND AUSTRALIAN IDENTITY

Information about the AAGF Round 4 will be published on the [Australia Awards Vietnam website](#), the [Australian Alumni in Vietnam Facebook page](#), and the [Aus4Skills Facebook page](#). The AAGF Round 4 will also be promoted during alumni activities.

The Aus4Skills HRD component managers will have primary responsibility for communicating information about the AAGF Round 4 to their respective component participants.

Aus4Skills' promotion of the AAGF Round 4 will include publicising successful outputs and outcomes of grant projects through the channels noted above 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, and at training courses and workshops 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 all grant project communication materials. Grantees should contact Aus4Skills for specific guidance on the use of the co-branding logo in their communication materials prior to publication or public presentations. All requirements relating to co-branding and communications will be detailed in the grant agreement.

Further information can be found in the [AAGF Communications Guidelines](#).

13 FURTHER INFORMATION

Further information can be obtained from Aus4Skills at:

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