

Questions and Answers

Who can propose ideas to the Try, Test and Learn Fund?

Any Australian individual or organisation can propose ideas to the Try, Test and Learn Fund.

Can I submit more than one idea to the Try, Test and Learn Fund?

Yes, individuals and organisations can submit more than one idea to the Try, Test and Learn Fund.

Can I email or mail my submission for the Try, Test and Learn Fund?

No. The Department will only accept submissions through the form on DSS Engage and not by any other means, such as by email or mail.

Can I upload attachments to the submission form?

No, you cannot upload attachments to support your submission. Make sure that you respond to all required questions and provide all relevant information in the online submission form on DSS Engage. Only your answers to questions on the form will be considered when assessing your idea.

Can I submit an idea in partnership or as part of a group with other individuals or organisations?

Yes, you may submit ideas as a group or partnership. Only one form needs to be submitted for each idea, even if multiple submission partners are involved in its development. In the submission form, the details of the principal contact should be entered first. You can then specify that you are making a joint submission, and provide the details of your submission partners. If your idea is shortlisted, all contributors will be consulted during the co-development stage.

I am under 18. Can I submit my idea for the Try, Test and Learn Fund?

Yes. The Department welcomes ideas from those under 18, particularly since the three priority groups for Tranche 1 focus on young people. If you are under 18 years of age at the time you make your submission, you will need to have a parent or guardian agree to the terms and conditions in the submission form on your behalf. Make sure you discuss with your parent or guardian whether you should share your details on DSS Engage.

Which parts of my submission will be published?

The final questions on the submission form allow you to select which parts of your submission will be published on DSS Engage. You can choose to either publish your answers to questions 1, 2 and 3, or to write a summary of your idea to be published. If you are under 18, make sure to discuss with your parent or guardian whether you should share your details on DSS Engage. Your submission must not breach the privacy of others, including by relating their personal details, history, or the like.

I don't want to publish my contact details. Will this impact the assessment of my idea?

No, choosing not to publish your contact details on DSS Engage will not impact the Department's assessment of your idea. However, the Department encourages the sharing of details to allow collaboration between Proposers. If you are under 18, make sure to discuss with your parent or guardian whether you should share your details on DSS Engage.

I've submitted my idea, but I don't want it to be considered anymore. Can I withdraw my submission?

You can withdraw your submission from consideration under the Try, Test and Learn Fund while submissions are still open. If you wish to withdraw your submission, email InvestmentApproach@dss.gov.au with your unique submission number, the name of your submission, and a note that you wish to withdraw your submission from consideration.

Your submission cannot be withdrawn once submissions have closed and the assessment process has begun. This means that if you want to withdraw your submission, your email requesting the withdrawal of your submission must be received before **5pm Canberra Time (AEDT) on 24 February 2017**.

My submission was found to be ineligible. Will you tell me why my submission was ineligible? Can I submit again?

The Department will notify you within 10 business days of submission whether your idea is eligible for publication and assessment under the Try, Test and Learn Fund. Due to the large volume of expected submissions, the Department is unable to provide individual feedback.

If your submission is found to be ineligible, you may submit again before the submission deadline of **5pm Canberra Time (AEDT) on 24 February 2017**. Make sure you check the eligibility criteria in the Try, Test and Learn Fund Handbook before submitting your idea again.

What type of activities or things can be purchased using Try, Test and Learn Fund funding?

Try, Test and Learn Fund funding can be used for most costs associated with delivering a service, including operating and administration expenses, staff salaries and training for paid or unpaid staff.

Try, Test and Learn Fund funding will not be provided for purchasing land, paying for capital works or covering retrospective costs. More information will be provided during the co-development and funding stages.

My idea is based around a specific location. Is it still eligible for the Try, Test and Learn Fund?

Yes, the Try, Test and Learn Fund supports ideas that trial new services or supports in a particular area or region. If your idea is specific to a location, make sure to detail this in Question 7 of the submission form.

Do I need to provide evidence about my idea in my submission form?

No, providing evidence to support your idea in your submission form is not a requirement, however any data or evidence that you provide may make your submission stronger. The Try, Test and Learn Fund will support ideas that will generate new and useful policy evidence for the Government.

Do I have to conduct consultations for my idea to be competitive?

Working closely with communities and service users is an important principle of the Try, Test and Learn Fund. Ideas that consider the perspectives and needs of service users may propose more effective solutions. However, consultation is **not** a requirement and if your idea is shortlisted, consultation with service users and other stakeholders will occur as part of the co-development stage.

Can my idea target more than one of the priority groups?

Yes. If your idea targets more than one priority group, make sure you select all the groups your idea targets in Question 1 of the submission form.

Is there a limit to how much the Department will spend on individual ideas? Do I need to provide an estimate of how much my idea will cost?

The Department **does not** expect submissions to include an estimate of how much the implementation of ideas will cost. You can choose to indicate in Question 7 the approximate amount that you think will be required for the delivery of your idea if you wish. If your idea is shortlisted, part of the co-development process will involve shaping the idea such that the implementation and evaluation process falls within a reasonable cost estimate.

A total of up to \$10 million will be allocated for funding selected ideas in Tranche 1, including evaluation funding. The Department welcomes ideas of different sizes and scopes, and ideas may be expanded or adjusted in the co-development stage. In Tranche 1, the Department anticipates that individual ideas will receive between \$50,000 and \$2 million.

The eligibility criteria say that ideas should target one of the priority groups. Can ideas target a priority group as well as other groups? What if the idea targets a broader group (e.g. all carers)?

Your idea should be focused on supporting the priority group as its main objective. If your idea focuses on a priority group but happens to provide incidental support to others, it will still be considered. An idea that is targeted at a broad group that includes a priority group is not eligible.

The eligibility criteria say that ideas should provide a service or support. What does this mean?

Ideas submitted to the Fund must provide a service or support, or a change to a service or support, for members of at least one priority group with the aim of improving workforce participation or capacity to work. Ideas may involve working with individuals in the priority groups or with others, such as with employers.

Services or supports are packages of activities or resources (such as training, financial support, technology, information resources or the like) that assist those people.

Some examples of services or supports (which form a **non-exhaustive** list) include:

- Structured programs to support priority groups' workforce participation
- Apps or other technology solutions to support priority groups' workforce participation
- Employer-side programs that support priority groups' workforce participation
- Use of behavioural insights to improve existing programs
- Conditionality or mutual obligation requirements (i.e. changes to the obligations people need to meet to receive payments or government services)
- Other innovative approaches to supporting priority groups.

Are social impact bonds eligible under the Try, Test and Learn Fund?

Proposals for social impact bonds are not in the initial scope for Try, Test and Learn Fund funds. Social impact bonds are a more complex financial instrument that require intensive development work that is beyond the scope of the Fund at this stage.

The eligibility criteria say that ideas should directly improve an individual's workforce participation or capacity to work. What about other services that might help the priority groups?

Your idea should focus on workforce participation and / or capacity to work. This could mean that the idea increases an individual's capacity to work, to undertake study or training which could increase their employability, or to achieve other outcomes closely linked to job readiness.

Generalised support that is not closely linked to these outcomes (e.g. a parenting skills course for young parents without ties to employability) would not be eligible.

The eligibility criteria say that my idea must show outcomes within 12 months. How do I know if my idea will provide outcomes in 12 months?

It may be difficult to predict exactly how effective an idea will be, and to predict what outcomes it will provide in 12 months. It is adequate to provide your best estimate of the outcomes and activities that will occur over time.

The Department will use your description of your idea, as well as the activities and outcomes that you expect to happen over different timeframes, to assess whether your idea is likely to provide some outcomes within 12 months. Your idea doesn't need to reach its ultimate objectives within 12 months, but rather show an appropriate level of progress towards reaching those ultimate objectives within that time frame.

What makes an idea innovative? Will you fund an existing or previous program? How do I know if my idea provides new or useful policy evidence?

A new or innovative idea may be a policy idea that has not been trialled before in Australia, or it may be a reinvention of a former or existing program. The Department is interested in funding ideas that could provide new and useful policy evidence for Government. If your idea is a reinvention of an existing or previous program it must offer a significant point of difference to the original program. Also consider how delivery and evaluation of your proposal might provide new evidence and what hypothesis it would test. Providing new evidence could include testing the impact of innovations on the processes or technologies used, the groups accessing the service, the location of the service, or a combination of these things.

There is an optional question about co-funding. What if I do not have any co-funding arrangements?

You are not required to answer Question 9 of the submission form, which asks about co-funding – it is an optional question. If you have co-funding arrangements in place, or are exploring co-funding arrangements, we are interested to hear about them because they may form part of how your idea would work. However, the Department wants to encourage ideas from a broad a range of stakeholders and co-funding arrangements are not necessary for your idea to be eligible.

There is an optional question about evaluation. What if I have not considered an evaluation approach for my idea?

You are not required to answer Question 10 of the submission form, which asks about evaluation – it is an optional question. If you have an evaluation approach in mind, make sure to include it as it will form part of the Department's understanding of how your idea would work and what its value would be. However, the Department wants to encourage ideas from a broad a range of stakeholders and if your idea is eligible, it will still be considered even if it does not include an evaluation approach. Where ideas are chosen for further development, the Department will work with evaluation experts and other stakeholders to design an appropriate evaluation approach.

Will the Government fund someone else to deliver my idea, or use it for other purposes?

Before submitting your idea, you must agree to the terms and conditions provided in the submission form. These terms and conditions allow the Government to use your idea for the purposes of assessing it against the assessment criteria and publishing selected parts on DSS Engage according to your preference (see the question on publication below). The Government cannot implement your idea for any other purpose outside of the Try, Test and Learn Fund.

If your idea is shortlisted, then the Try Test and Learn Fund Terms and Conditions allow the Department to continue to use your idea throughout a co-development process. This will be subject to wider licence rights consistent with the wider use that the Department will need to make of your idea to both co-develop and deliver it. As the idea Proposer you will be invited, but not obliged, to participate in this co-development process and help to shape and develop the idea.

If you are interested in delivering your idea, you may be directly approached to apply for funding, by demonstrating your capability and capacity to be a delivery partner. Funding would typically be documented in an agreement based on a Departmental funding deed template. However, the Department reserves the right to invite other potential providers to take part in a funding selection process or to approach a service provider other than the idea Proposer via a direct selection process.

If my idea is published on DSS Engage, won't others be able to take it and use it?

When you submit your idea to the Try, Test and Learn Fund, you agree to have parts of your idea published on DSS Engage. This approach of sharing Try, Test and Learn Fund ideas online is designed to support open conversation and collaboration between stakeholders and experts, and to foster the very best ideas to support young people's workforce participation. The initial ideas submitted online will not be highly refined or ready for implementation – the successful ideas will be co-developed and refined later in the Try, Test and Learn Fund process. In addition, you can choose what details about your idea will be made public. You can choose whether to publish your answers to some of the questions in the form or a public summary that you can write specifically for DSS Engage.

If the Fund receives similar ideas from multiple Proposers, the Department may seek additional information to better understand each Proposer's idea and intent, and to decide which ideas stand out. The Department may also decide to invite multiple Proposers with similar ideas to collaborate during the co-development phase.

My idea was not shortlisted. What feedback are you giving to Proposers?

The Department will provide a summary of general feedback about the ideas once the ideas selected for co-development have been announced. This feedback will cover the performance of ideas against both the eligibility and the assessment criteria. Feedback on individual submissions will not be provided.

What can I contact Proposers of other ideas about?

Proposers of eligible ideas will have an opportunity to refine and develop their ideas in partnership with others if they and any other party or parties wish to do so. You can contact other Proposers of ideas about opportunities to collaborate and develop ideas in partnership. This may be where you have similar ideas, or where your ideas would complement one another.

I've submitted my idea and started collaborating with other Proposers. When am I able to modify my submission?

Once you have submitted your idea, you can modify your submission. You can do so at any point after your idea is published on DSS Engage up until the idea submission deadline of 24 February 2017. When modifying your submission, you can:

- submit an edited version of your original idea
- submit a completely new idea to replace an original idea
- submit a new idea in addition to an original idea.

At the end of the submission form, Proposers can indicate whether they want their modified submission to replace their original submission.

I've collaborated with another Proposer and we are ready to submit our new idea. When we resubmit, what happens to our original ideas? What happens to the new idea?

If you want to submit your new idea in addition to your original ideas, fill out the submission form with your new idea. If the new idea is eligible, the Department will publish it on DSS Engage.

If you want your resubmission to replace your existing ideas, you can provide the unique identification number of your original ideas at the end of the submission form. If the new idea is eligible, the Department will publish it on DSS Engage and remove your original ideas from the website. If you choose this option, your original ideas will not be assessed.

I want to collaborate with someone who has proposed an idea, but they haven't published their contact details. How do I get in contact with them?

You can email your message to the other Proposer, along with your contact details and the details of the idea you want to collaborate on, to InvestmentApproach@dss.gov.au. Your message and contact details will then be forwarded to the Proposer you wish to contact. If your contact details are not included in the message, it will not be forwarded. The Department is not responsible for ensuring that Proposers respond to any messages forwarded to them.

I don't want to collaborate with anyone on my idea. Will this impact the assessment of my idea?

The Department encourages you to collaborate with other Proposers to further develop your idea but it is not a requirement that you collaborate or modify your submission. The assessment of your idea will not be affected by whether your idea was modified during the submission process.

How do I find out more about the co-development and funding stages?

The Handbook provides an overview of the co-development and funding stages. More information will be provided in Program Guidelines to be released prior to the commencement of the co-development stage.

The Handbook mentions that the implementation of ideas might be discontinued. What does this mean?

The Try, Test and Learn Fund will support ideas that are suitable for trial. Ideas that are suitable for trial will have the potential to be scaled up and delivered to more individuals or communities if they are successful. If a trial is unsuccessful, it may be discontinued.

When a delivery partner has been selected to deliver an idea, the Department will work with them to agree a funding agreement. Funding agreements will include performance review processes, indicators and milestone dates. These milestone dates will be points in time for reviewing the progress of implementation of an idea using monitoring, evaluation and program reporting data. Performance reviews will occur in close consultation between the Department, delivery partners and others including the Expert Advisory Group, which will include leading academics and policy experts and play an advisory role in the monitoring, empirical measurement and evaluation work of policies financed by the Try, Test and Learn Fund.

If agreed indicators are not being met, these milestones will allow review and adjustments. In some cases, where it is clear that the idea will not succeed despite adjustments to expected indicators or changes to the delivery approach, funding may be discontinued.

Questions and answers update – 20 December 2016

The eligibility criteria refer to “capital funding” as something that cannot be included as part of an idea. What is capital funding?

Capital funding is funding for capital items as defined in the DSS Capital Works Policy. A capital item is any item of real estate or infrastructure valued at \$10,000 or more (including GST). Capital items include, but are not limited to:

- land
- new and existing buildings, including demountable buildings that are a fixture to the land
- building renovations, and
- roads, pipelines and airstrips.

Try, Test and Learn Fund ideas can include the funding of assets, which are defined as any item of property valued at \$10,000 or more (including GST) that do not fall under the definition of a capital item.

For example, ideas may include funding for the development of apps, or the purchasing of items such as vehicles or technology if they are critical to the delivery of a service or project.