Tips for submitting a successful SEDI or SEDI First Nations Grant application

Applying for a Social Enterprise Development Initiative (SEDI) or SEDI First Nations Grant takes valuable time and resources. To help you decide whether to proceed and to increase your chance of submitting a successful application, we've outlined below some key program details and insights from past application rounds. These tips are applicable to both the SEDI and SEDI First Nations Grants, unless specified.

Strengthening your application

Every application is carefully assessed, but common themes have emerged as to why some were unsuccessful. The following insights may help you decide whether to apply and how to strengthen your grant application.

1. Capability building alignment

It is important to show how your plans for grant funds connect with your broader plans to grow or strengthen your enterprise's social impact. Providing this context can give the assessment panel a clearer understanding of how the proposed capability building activities will support your organisation and the communities or beneficiaries you work with. For example, when the capability building plan focuses on strengthening internal systems or back-office operations, you need to explain how these improvements will support the delivery, reach or effectiveness of your social impact.

2. Scaling social impact (for SEDI Grant applications only)

Clearly explain how your capability building plan connects to your plan to scale impact within one or more approved Department of Social Services (DSS) outcome areas.

Scaling generally means substantially growing the social impact your enterprise delivers, for example, by:

- Reaching more people (going wider), or
- Deepening the support you provide to the people you already work with (going deeper)

3. Direct impact

To be considered for a grant, your social enterprise must have a direct impact on Australians experiencing entrenched disadvantage, or in the case of the SEDI First Nations Grants, an impact on First Nations communities. This means your social enterprise *must be working with* people or communities in the DSS target outcome areas.

4. Likelihood of achieving planned social Impact

The panel considers how likely and achievable your proposed scaling of social impact is. Please explain why you believe your scaling is achievable. For example:

- If you are planning to enter a new market or location or provide new services, the panel will be interested in why you believe there is demand for these.
- If your plan requires additional philanthropic or government grant funding, explain why you believe this funding is available?

- If your revenue has fluctuated significantly or you have made losses, explain how your plans will be financially achievable after the grant funds are expended.

Where possible, **include relevant evidence and metrics**. This helps the panel understand how achievable your plan is.

5. Funding need

The panel considers if the enterprise needs the grant to achieve its plans. These considerations include the enterprise's ability to self-fund the capability development planned for the grant. If your enterprise is holding significant cash reserves and has a healthy balance sheet, the panel will need to understand why these funds are not used to carry out the plans.

This helps the panel understand the enterprise's circumstances and assess your application fairly.

General tips

Some general tips that can help your application come through clearly:

- Answer questions directly and concisely, including specific numbers or metrics where relevant.
- When describing the impact, focus on what your own enterprise achieves, not national data and the total scale of the challenge.
- If you use AI tools to help draft parts of your application, it's worth reading the final text carefully to ensure the responses answer the questions and are not repeated across multiple questions.