Ignite Program Guidelines

Department of Trade, Business and Asian Relations

NORTHERN TERRITORY GOVERNMENT

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1. Purpose and objectives

The Ignite Program (the Program) is a Northern Territory Government initiative to support businesses to develop and commercialise innovative products and services and increase investment in Northern Territory start-ups.

The Program helps start-ups fast-track their innovation activities by providing expert advice, unlocking funding, and opening doors to potential investors.

The Program provides a pathway for businesses to move from an early-stage innovation opportunity through to commercial readiness by supporting:

- planning and validation through Stream A; and
- development of a Minimum Viable Product[1] (MVP) or commercialisation activity through Stream B.

The Program is intended to support increased development and commercialisation of innovative ideas, strengthen the Northern Territory innovation ecosystem, support investment readiness and generate economic benefit for the Territory.

1.1. Objectives

The objectives of the Program are to:

a. support Territory businesses to identify, validate and develop innovative ideas;
b. increase the number of innovative businesses capable of attracting customers and investment;
c. support the development of MVPs and other early commercialisation activities;
d. develop a pipeline of quality, early-stage investible start-ups in the Territory;
e. contribute to economic growth, employment and industry development in the Territory.

2. Program Participation

Participation, including approved funding are provided subject to these Guidelines, General Terms and Conditions – Grants and Subsidies and the NTG's standard legal funding provisions.

These Guidelines, General Terms and Conditions – Grants and Subsidies together with the applicant's Statutory Declaration, constitute the agreement governing the provision and use of funding.

If you are eligible for funding, you will be required to separately accept the NTG's standard legal funding provisions, which set out your rights and obligations with respect to use of the funding.

3. Eligibility requirements - Applicants

3.1. General Eligibility criteria – applicants

[1] Minimum Viable Product (MVP) is a product that has enough basic features to attract customers and offers the market something new and unique, either through a new product or offering an established product in a new or unique way.

To apply for either stream, an applicant must:

a. be a legal entity
b. hold a valid Australian Business Number
c. be a Territory Enterprise
d. not be an excluded applicant
e. comply with and satisfy the Department's General Terms and Conditions – Grants and Subsidies.

Funding and support are approved to the legal entity named in the application. An approval cannot be transferred to another legal entity.

3.2. Excluded entities

The following are not eligible under this Program:

a. government agencies
b. government owned or controlled bodies
c. statutory corporations (whether Commonwealth, State or Territory)
d. schools, universities or other educational institutions
e. applicants that do not meet the Department's General Terms and Conditions – Grants and Subsidies.

4. Stream A - Planning

4.1. Stream A - Purpose

Stream A helps eligible applicants investigate, validate and develop an innovation idea through access to specialist mentoring and planning support.

The purpose of Stream A is to fund applicants who have an innovative idea for a new business, early-stage product or service to work with an Innovation Partner to create an Innovation Project Plan[2] (IPP) and by doing so, the applicant better understands the commercial potential, risks, market need and next steps for their innovation.

4.2. Stream A - Assistance available

Eligible applicants may receive a voucher valued at up to $2,000, excluding GST, to work with an approved Innovation Partner.

The funding is paid directly to the approved Innovation Partner after services have been delivered and required evidence has been provided.

Applicants do not receive the voucher payment directly.

[2] Innovation Project Plan (IPP) is a document that outlines an idea, its objectives, implementation approach, and expected outcomes to demonstrate the idea's value and feasibility.

4.3. Stream A - eligibility

To be eligible for Stream A, the applicant must meet the general applicant eligibility requirements and demonstrate that the proposed innovation:

a. addresses an identified customer, industry or market need
b. involves a new or improved product, service, process, technology or business model
c. has reasonable potential for commercial application, adoption or growth.

4.4. Stream A - funding available

a. Funding is on a first come first served basis until the allocated funding has been exhausted or the Program is terminated.
b. The maximum funding to an eligible recipient available under Stream A is $2,000, ex GST.
c. The total funding for Stream A is $100,000.
d. Funding is awarded to eligible applicants by contract through a Voucher.
e. Successful recipients will have a maximum period of 3 months from the Department's written notice (the Voucher) to complete and submit their IPP.

4.5. Stream A - process

a. Applicants to review the list of approved Innovation Partners at GrantsNT.
b. Applicant applies through GrantsNT.
c. The Department reviews eligibility.
d. If eligible, the applicant is approved for Stream A support.
e. The applicant works with an approved Innovation Partner.
f. The applicant develops an IPP with support from an Innovation Partner.
g. Once the IPP is completed, the applicant submits the IPP with the Department and accepts the voucher in GrantsNT.
h. The Innovation Partner redeems the voucher for payment.
i. The Department will review the submitted IPP, applicants with strong IPPs may be invited to join a founder development program, participate in pitch training and encouraged to apply for Stream B.

4.6. Stream A - Innovation Project Plan

An IPP should include:

a. a non-confidential summary of the innovation
b. the customer, industry or market need being addressed
c. the proposed product, service, process, technology or business model
d. market research, validation or planned validation
e. proposed development milestones

f. a pathway to an MVP or commercial outcome.

5. Stream B - Creating

5.1. Stream B - Purpose

Stream B supports eligible applicants to progress a validated innovation towards commercial readiness, market entry or investment readiness.

Stream B is intended for applicants that have already developed an IPP or equivalent document and are ready to undertake practical development or commercialisation activity.

5.2. Stream B - Funding available

a. Funding will be granted on a competitive basis with an assessment panel consisting of Department representatives assessing each application on merit.

b. The maximum funding to an eligible recipient available under Stream B is $15,000, ex. GST.

c. The Department may approve less than the amount requested.

d. Funding is limited and subject to availability.

e. Funding will be awarded to eligible applicants by contract through a Funding Agreement. Applicants should note that the terms of such Funding Agreement may include provisions about Intellectual Property ownership that are different to those contained in this Guideline.

f. Successful recipients will have a maximum period of 6 months to complete the works or services under Stream B.

5.3. Stream B - proposed innovation eligibility

To be eligible for Stream B, the applicant must:

a. meet the general eligibility requirements

b. have an IPP developed through Stream A or an equivalent document prepared independently

c. propose an eligible project and budget that directly relates to the innovation described in the IPP

d. demonstrate capacity to deliver the project.

5.4. Stream B - Eligible activities

Funding may be used for activities directly related to progressing the innovation, including:

a. MPV development

b. prototype development or refinement

c. product testing

d. customer or market validation

e. technical development

f. specialist professional advice

g. intellectual property advice or protection
h. regulatory or compliance activities required for market entry
i. commercialisation planning.

5.5. Stream B - Ineligible expenditure

Funding cannot be used for:

a. retrospective costs
b. ordinary business operating expenses
c. wages or salaries not directly related to the approved project
d. debt repayment
e. purchase of land or buildings
f. activities not directly related to the approved innovation
g. activities already funded by another government program
h. expenditure incurred before funding approval.

5.6. Stream B – Assessment matrix

Stream B is competitive.

Eligible applications will be assessed against the following criteria.

Criterion	**Weighting**
Market opportunity	20%
Commercial viability	20%
Growth potential	20%
Capability and delivery	20%
Territory benefit	20%

Market opportunity

The application demonstrates a clear customer, industry or market need and provides evidence of demand or validation.

Commercial viability

The application demonstrates a realistic pathway to market and a sound commercial rationale.

Growth potential

The application demonstrates potential to scale, attract investment, form partnerships or expand beyond the initial market.

Capability and delivery
The applicant demonstrate the capability, resources and planning required to deliver the proposed project.

Territory benefit
The project demonstrates potential benefit to the Northern Territory, such as economic activity, employment, industry capability, innovation ecosystem development or investment attraction.

5.7. Stream B - Before you apply

Ensure that you have a completed IPP or equivalent document that eligibility requirements for the program.

5.8. Stream B - Process

a. Applicant applies through GrantsNT.
b. The Department reviews eligibility.
c. Eligible applications are assessed by an assessment panel.
d. Applicants may be invited to pitch or provide further information.
e. The assessment panel makes recommendations to the Department's Delegate.
f. The Department's Delegate makes the funding decision.
g. Successful applicants enter into a funding agreement which is final and binding. The Delegate may (but is not obliged to) debrief any applicant or provide reasons for its decision.
h. The Department will invite successful applicants to join a founder development program and encourage them to participate in the next pitch training session.

5.9. Stream B - Funding decision

The Delegate may:

a. approve funding
b. approve partial funding
c. approve funding subject to conditions
d. decline funding.

The fact that an applicant has met eligibility requirements does not guarantee funding.

6. Payment – both streams

The Department may approve alternative payment arrangements to the methods below where reimbursement would create a genuine barrier to delivering the approved project. Alternative payment arrangements are not guaranteed and may be subject to additional conditions, reporting or evidence requirements.

6.1. Stream A - Payment

Stream A voucher payments are made directly to approved Innovation Partners after services are delivered and required evidence is provided.

6.2. Stream B - Payment

Stream B funding will be made in two payments, 1) upon execution of the funding agreement; and 2) paid upon successful completion of milestones, and subject to the Recipient providing satisfactory reporting and acquittal of activities and expenditure so far.

7. Reporting and acquittal

Successful Stream B recipients must provide evidence that the approved project has been completed to the agreed stage, and funding has been used for the approved purpose.

Evidence may include:

a. invoices
b. receipts
c. progress reports
d. milestone reports
e. photographs
f. prototypes
g. testing results
h. market validation outcomes
i. other evidence requested by the Department.

8. Innovation Partners

Only approved Innovation Partners may provide Stream A services under the Program.

Innovation Partners must be registered with the Department and meet the requirements set out in the Innovation Partner registration and participation requirements.

Innovation Partners do not assess Stream B applications and are not part of the Stream B assessment panel.

Refer to the Ignite Program Partner Guidelines.

9. General Conditions – Specific to Ignite

9.1. All services at risk of Recipient

Program participation is entirely at the Recipient's and Innovation Partner's risk in all things.

The Department makes no representation and gives no warranties, express or implied, as to the suitability or calibre of the experience, qualifications or standard of work produced or expected to be produced by any registered Innovation Partners.

The Department will not carry out any specific enquiries in relation to a business other than those it deems necessary (in its absolute discretion) to ensure, as far as reasonably practicable, that a business is eligible to be registered as an Innovation Partner to the Program.

The Recipient must make all necessary enquiries to ensure that the Innovation Partner is suitably qualified and experienced to provide the services. The Department takes no responsibility whatsoever for any services provided by the Innovation Partner which may not meet the Recipient's expectations, including without limitation services that are of unacceptable standard or quality.

9.2. Intellectual property and public disclosure

Subject to any agreement between a Recipient and the Department in writing to the contrary, intellectual property contained in an IPP is owned by the Recipient.

Recipients agree to the Department referring to any financial support granted for the purposes of the Program in media releases, speeches, and annual reports at any time.

Recipients warrant to the Department that they are, and will remain legally entitled throughout their participation in the Program to deal with Information contained in their application (as developed during participation in the Program) and any disclosure or dealings will not infringe the intellectual property rights (including any Moral Rights within the meaning of the *Copyright Act (Cth) 1968)* of any third party.

9.3. Use of Information

By applying to participate in the Program, Recipients consent to the NTG using any information provided to it by the Recipient to promote the Program. Any such information will only be used for the purpose of summarising a project or an IPP on the basis that all relevant individuals are de-identified and no information that is commercial in confidence is disclosed without the consent of the Recipient). Recipients may also be invited to participate in case studies and other promotional activities that showcase Territory innovation and support investment attraction.

10. Contacts

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