



Department of
Primary Industries and
Regional Development

Protect
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Innovate

WA Agrifood and Beverage Voucher Program – Round 4

Program Guidelines

This guideline contains information for applicants and should be read prior to completing the application form

3 February 2023



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WA Agrifood and Beverage Voucher Program – Round 4

Program Overview

The WA Agrifood and Beverage Voucher Program (AFB Voucher Program) has been established to support eligible small businesses operating in Western Australia (WA) who are seeking to grow their business to:

- Increase direct and indirect jobs;
- Improve international competitiveness;
- Facilitate growth, diversification and expansion domestically and internationally through the provision of expert advice;
- Research technological solutions to improve efficiency and resolve digital problems;
- Encourage sustainable and socially responsible business practices and improved environmental outcomes; and
- Lower carbon and greenhouse gas emissions.

For the purposes of this Program, an eligible small business¹ will be required to have an annual sales turnover of between \$100,000 and \$10 million. Vouchers may be provided to metropolitan and regionally based WA businesses that meet the eligibility criteria and are assessed as competitive. The maximum value of a voucher that a business can apply for is dependent on the annual sales turnover of that business.

Before applying for a voucher, business owners are encouraged to consider strategic reports commissioned by DPIRD that outline emerging opportunities in the food and beverage sector, or reference to other industry/government reports demonstrating growth opportunities. The following DPIRD reports are available on the [Food Industry Innovation web page](#) and include, but are not limited to:

- Premium Market Opportunities;
- Target Market Opportunities;
- Partnering for Growth; and
- Alternative Proteins

A maximum of \$600,000 is available for this round of the Program, and vouchers will be offered on a competitive application basis. Vouchers are issued in the name of the business and have no cash value and are non-transferable. They are payable by DPIRD to the Professional Service Provider nominated by the approved applicant.

Key dates

AFB Voucher Round 4	Date	Time (AWST)
Applications open	3 February 2023	
Applications close	27 March 2023	5.00 pm

¹ A Small Business is defined by the Australian Taxation Office as having an aggregated turnover up to \$10m pa.

Who can apply for funding?

This scheme is open to eligible WA food and beverage businesses seeking to accelerate growth; realise and develop new opportunities including product development and process innovation; expand domestic markets; penetrate export markets; and improve sustainability, environmental and social outcomes.

Activities that can be funded

The AFB Voucher Program is offered on a competitive application basis in the following five categories:

Category	Example/s of supported activities under the voucher category
Business planning	Business evaluation/plan
Manufacturing for Business Growth	Primary producers transitioning to manufacturing, quality assurance, QA certification, HACCP plans, digital and technology, and compatibility/integration planning of automation opportunities
Sales and Marketing	E-commerce strategy development, online marketing plan and analytics, marketing planning, competitor analysis, customer insights, branding, packaging design, and preparing for export
Financial Health	Structure for capital raising, financial projections, investment memoranda, pitch decks, and succession planning
Environmental Sustainability and Social Responsibility	Environmental Social and Governance (ESG) strategy development, planning improved outcomes for environment and/or communities with measurable business co-benefits, sustainable packaging, waste stream repurposing, energy efficiency and carbon assessment etc

Eligible project expenditure for voucher funded activities includes project-related non-capital expenditure required to deliver the project and project-related costs of the professional service provider as agreed by DPIRD upon issue of the voucher.

Vouchers are to be used to support growth orientated activities that will assist the SME to become more productive and internationally competitive; create jobs; advance technology; enter new or penetrate existing export markets; and in general, increase the scale and profitability of the business.

A business entity is limited to two applications. Should more than two applications be submitted, only the first two completed applications that have been submitted will be considered.

Activities that CANNOT be funded

Vouchers are not to be used for business-as-usual activities or activities that are unlikely to lead to longer-term business growth goals and/or improved sustainability, environmental or social outcomes. Ineligible expenditure includes the following:

- Capital expenditure;
- Non-strategic or non-planning activities (for example where a business is rebranding, the cost of a marketing plan or brand re-design is eligible, however printing costs or website data hosting is not. Design of advertisements are eligible, however advertising costs are not);
- Internal costs, salaries or resources of the applicant;
- Software and hardware purchases;
- Interpreting and translation (with the exception of branding or promotional translating associated with broader promotional campaigns or for product labelling and packaging under the Sales and Marketing category);
- Costs associated with minor or non-technical alterations of a physical product to suit a specific market;
- Costs associated with applying for government grants and public funding programs;
- Basic professional services such as ongoing, routine accounting, tax and legal business;
- Routine maintenance requirements, licensing, costs associated with export documentation, legal/intellectual property costs and financing fees;
- Routine training courses undertaken as a normal part of operating a business (e.g., a spreadsheet or word processing course) and higher education degrees (e.g. an MBA). Short professional development activities that are shown to DIRECTLY contribute to solving an issue or capturing an opportunity may be considered;
- Services relating to import activities;
- Projects where the primary purpose relates to offshore manufacturing;
- Intellectual property fees and charges associated with registering domestic or international patents or other intellectual property enforcement expenses;
- Any administrative fees or surcharges for administering the expenditures listed above; and
- Any other expenditure as determined by the Department that does not meet program conditions;

Funding limits and timeframes

Eligible applicants may apply for up to two vouchers to a maximum amount of \$15,000. The maximum value of each voucher is dependent on annual sales turnover. Separate applications must be submitted for each voucher (only the first quotation attached to each application submitted will be considered).

The maximum value of a voucher that a business can apply for is dependent on the annual sales turnover of the applicant as shown in table 1:

Annual sales turnover of applicant	Maximum value of voucher	Minimum cash co-contribution
\$1m to \$10m turnover**	Up to \$10,000 voucher	50%
\$500k to \$1m turnover*	Up to \$5,000 voucher	
\$100k to \$500k turnover*	Up to \$2,000 voucher	

Table 1: Voucher thresholds

* Turnover thresholds may be defined either from the Statement of Comprehensive Income (P/L statement):

- The past financial year OR
- The average of the last three years OR
- Alternative metrics pre-approved in writing from DPIRD

Businesses with turnover greater than \$1.5m and a trading history of at least three years may also be eligible for assistance from the Australian Government's Department of Industry, Science and Resources (AusIndustry), which operates the Entrepreneurs Program which provides the following services:

- A free Business Evaluation
- A 50:50 grant up to \$20,000 to engage specialist consultants
- Ongoing assistance including invites to EP-run master classes (EP eligible only)

For more information about this service visit: [Entrepreneurs Programme](#)

Applicant Eligibility Requirements

Eligibility requirements

To be eligible under this Program applicants need to complete and submit an application via [SmartyGrants](#) before 5.00 pm AWST on 27 March 2023.

Applicants may apply individually or jointly. Where a project involves more than one Applicant, the lead organisation should submit the application although both Applicants may contribute to project expenditure to meet any co-contribution requirements.

All project expenditure is to be incurred **after** the voucher has been issued. Vouchers will not be provided for retrospective activities. Applicants will need to meet the cost of any ineligible expenditure associated with the approved activity.

Eligibility criteria

Applicants

To be eligible to apply for Vouchers applicants must:

- Be a food or beverage manufacturer for all voucher categories, or a food producer intending to transition to food or beverage manufacturing for the Manufacturing for Business Growth category. (note: manufacturer converts raw agricultural materials into new products);
- Have annual sales turnover between \$100k and \$10m;
- Have a current Australian Business Number (ABN) and be located in Western Australia;

- Be a going concern – i.e. will continue to trade into the foreseeable future and there are no plans, events and/or circumstances known to the Applicant which would result in their business ceasing to trade;
- Have operated for a minimum of 18 months and incorporated in Australia with non-tax-exempt status;
- Be able to provide evidence of a business plan. Applicants that are unable to provide evidence are only eligible to apply for a voucher for professional services related to Category 1 - Business Planning;
- Be able to demonstrate through the citing of independent market research (sourced internally or externally) that they have products and markets with the potential for growth, or are facing a known sustainability issue;
- Agree to participate in future program evaluation activity such as a survey or interview within 24 months of the Service Completion Form being completed;
- Agree and be able to meet the cash co-contribution requirement of minimum of a minimum of 50 percent of the total cost of professional services;
- Apply for new projects and in different voucher categories if they have received vouchers in previous rounds;
- Meet all industrial relations obligations as an employer in accordance with the National Employment Standards; and
- Meet all building, development, waste management and safety compliance requirements, or be specifically using the voucher to work towards resolving a compliance issue to overcome a barrier to business growth.

Professional Service Providers

Applicants who meet the eligibility requirements will need to nominate a Professional Service Provider to carry out the proposed services to be supported by redemption of the voucher. Applicants are encouraged to use locally based professional service providers where possible.

Professional service providers nominated by the applicant to complete consultancy works may be publicly funded entities, not-for-profit enterprises, or privately owned businesses. The applicant must provide evidence that the professional service provider has experience or expertise (or where applicable, certification) in service delivery in their nominated voucher category. This evidence may include, but not be limited to, company brochures; customer testimonials and references; and samples of work for other clients (with redacted text if required).

The professional service provider will not be the same consultant that provided business planning/evaluation services (if applicable) and will not be the business' accountant.

Professional service providers may partner with other professional service providers to deliver the quoted work scope; however, such arrangements must be fully disclosed within the quotation attached to a voucher application, clearly stating the experiences and responsibilities for each delivery partner. Applicants that submit quotations from professional service providers that are providing only a project management service, will be deemed ineligible.

Applicants and professional service providers must be entirely separate entities. For example, they may not be owned by the same parent company, share governance, or have common directors. Professional service providers may submit quotes for up to five applicants. If quotations submitted by differentially named providers, share board members, ownership, or key personnel, DPIRD reserves the right to treat the quotations as being submitted by similar entities, to add up to a maximum of five.

Applicants who are specifically NOT eligible

Applicants will not be eligible for a voucher if their business (SME) is:

- A majority foreign owned or is a subsidiary of larger conglomerates (umbrella companies) with an annual sales turnover of \$10 million or more;
- Simply packaging or boxing raw ingredients sourced from other producers and selling direct to consumers or the food service sector;
- A food service businesses (e.g. restaurants, cafes) producing meals;
- An individual;
- A commonwealth, state and local government agency or body;
- A publicly funded research institution;
- An industry association;
- A not-for-profit organisation; or
- A community-based organisation.

Additional information required for Applicant

In addition to the eligibility criteria, applicants must meet the following compliance criteria to be eligible for assistance under the program depending on the nature of their commercial structure:

- An Incorporated Trustee can apply on behalf of a Trust provided that the Trustee has the power to enter into an agreement and will remain sufficiently liable for the performance of that agreement; and
- Individual Partners may apply on behalf of a Partnership provided that the Partners will remain sufficiently liable for the performance of any agreement they sign.

Applicants must supply the following information:

- If a trustee of a trust, a copy of the trust deed that outlines that the trustee has the authority to make application on behalf of the trust;
- Bank account details;
- Physical and postal addresses; and
- Contact details.

Applicant funding contribution

Applicants must be able to contribute 50% of the total cost of services from their own resources. In-kind contributions do not count towards the required co-contribution.

How to apply for funding

Applicants must submit an online application via [SmartyGrants](#) by 5.00 pm AWST on 27 March 2023.

Applicants who meet eligibility requirements will be requested to upload two electronic files:

1. Evidence of a business plan for all voucher categories other than Category 1 - Business Planning. Applicants without a business plan are encouraged to apply for a voucher to support development of a business plan. Applications for categories other than Category 1 (or with quotations for activities not deemed business planning) that do not include an uploaded plan or part thereof, will be considered ineligible; and
2. A detailed written quotation from your proposed Professional Service Provider.

Voucher categories

Each application must be submitted under one of the five voucher categories. Where two vouchers are applied for by the same business, they must be for different categories, and through two separate applications.

Business planning voucher

Business planning vouchers may be used to access professional services to support with the development of a business plan/evaluation. A business plan provides the basis for the strategic and operational functioning of a business and will assist in securing finance, market development, business activity prioritization and evaluation.

Vouchers may be used to develop a new business plan or review/update an existing business plan. Preference will be given to activities where independent evaluation of the applicant's business leads to a new or updated business plan. Business coaching is also eligible under this category.

AusIndustry provides advice on suggested inclusions in business plans. A well-developed plan will likely amalgamate the following;

- Marketing Plan;
- Quality Management Plan (ISO 9000/9001, ISO 13485, ISO 14000/14001, TQM Six Sigma);
- Workforce Plan;
- Assets Management Plan;
- Financial Projections (NPV, IRR, RoC);
- Product Development Plan;
- Operations Plan; and
- Sustainability Plan;

Manufacturing for business growth

These vouchers are available to businesses that **have a current business plan**.

Activities in the manufacturing for business growth category should aim to:

- Ensure high quality production processes so customers receive quality products with transparent supply chains;
- Help grow customer loyalty and profitability;
- Transform the applicant's competitiveness with large increases in productivity at moderate cost;
- Add digital enhancement to existing physical products; and/or
- Encourage WA primary producers to vertically integrate into supply chains and add value to their base commodities.

Manufacturing for business growth vouchers may be used to:

- Access professional services to investigate systems to maintain consistently high-quality product, reduce unexpected variation in product parameters or reduce risks to food safety. HACCP accreditation will be supported if the applicant can demonstrate that a new level of certification will enable growth of the business by opening new distribution channels, accessing new markets (especially export), or is addressing a key barrier to launching a new product;
- Investigate services focusing on process engineering; supply chain traceability; digital product augmentation; evaluation of proposed automation technology or Internet of Things (IoT) monitoring system for appropriateness for the scale of their

business and compatibility with existing products and processes may also be applied for under this category; or

- For primary producers, access professional services to transition to manufacturing (complete prefeasibility studies, business planning, product development or organizational design work to prepare for new food and beverage manufacturing lines building on primary production of food in WA).

Sales and marketing

These vouchers are available to businesses that **have a current business plan**.

Activities in the sales and marketing category should aim to:

- Maximise the impact of subsequent marketing spends by the Recipient;
- Generate new, targeted sales leads that ultimately result in business growth;
- Support businesses develop a new or revised existing online presence with associated digital marketing strategies; or
- Help prepare a business to pursue export opportunities.

Sales and Marketing vouchers may be used to:

- Access professional services to undertake competitor analysis; market segmentation; customer insights; branding; and packaging design;
- Help WA businesses develop their digital presence, online points of sale, reach new customers on-line and maintain existing customers through digital channels to increase sales volume. Activities such as professional services to develop expert e-commerce strategies including Online-to-Offline/ Offline to Online (O2O) commerce, platforms and domain evaluation and selection, online store design, checkout experience design, search engine optimisation/marketing, online marketing plan and analytics may be supported; or
- Access professional services to support the development of their export strategy to either initiate export activities or to consolidate their knowledge, develop new markets and maximise long term export potential. This may include export planning; export market identification and prioritisation; competitor and product analysis; pricing strategy development; and other considerations (e.g., phytosanitary requirements; country specific labelling and packaging requirements; transport logistics, cold chain planning and consignment monitoring; development of individual employee export knowledge and capability).

Financial health

These vouchers are available to businesses that **have a current business plan**.

Activities in the financial health category should aim to:

- Manage the risks associated with capital expenditure;
- Attract capital (and associated commitments) from external sources;

Financial health vouchers may be used to:

- Access support for becoming investor-ready, preparing for capital raising and pitching the business to targeted investors (including activities such as financial projections and generating investment memoranda and pitch decks);
- Help meet particular funding or capital needs not related to normal business practice, that they have identified as a priority, and which is significantly constraining business growth; or
- Business succession planning

Businesses considering activities under this voucher category are encouraged to read DPIRD's publication 'Guide to Investment Readiness'. Business planning may have identified target investor groups that may contribute 'in-kind' or 'synergistic' value in addition to investment capital. Investors may facilitate new market access, contribute valuable IP for product development, or bring augmented management skill set to the business. Vouchers are not to be used to prepare applications to DPIRD or other State or Australian government grant programs.

Environmental sustainability and social responsibility

These vouchers are available to businesses that **have a current business plan**.

Activities in the environmental sustainability and social responsibility category should aim to:

- Support WA businesses anticipate and respond to changes in market expectations around environmental impact;
- Improve natural resource management; and/or
- Improve social outcomes.

This voucher category recognises that environmental stewardship is not only an opportunity for a marketable point of difference, but increasingly a requirement for access to markets.

Environmental sustainability and social responsibility vouchers may be used to access professional services to support businesses to:

- Reduce inputs and/or waste and/or emissions;
- Develop ESG strategies;
- Improve sustainability outcomes and credentials;
- Meet social responsibility requirements;
- Undertake energy or carbon footprint assessments;
- Undertake climate active or other carbon neutral accreditation or certification;
- Undertake energy efficiency planning or management activities;
- Develop sustainable packaging design and manufacturing;
- Investigate/research/trial waste stream repurposing;
- Design for improved water and wastewater management;
- Transition to approved sustainability programs and certifications;
- Identify and/or design for improved outcomes for environment and or communities with business co-benefits; or
- Undertake activities that support businesses to reduce inputs, waste and emissions and/or improve sustainability outcomes and credentials.

Voucher conditions of use

1. Applicants for vouchers with an existing business plan are able to apply for up to two vouchers this round. Applicants who are unable to provide evidence of a business plan will only be able to apply for one voucher under Category 1, Business Planning.
2. Vouchers will be provided on a cash co-contribution basis (the Recipient contributes \$1 for every \$1 of value awarded through the voucher). The Recipient will need to pay a minimum of 50 per cent of the total cost of the services provided as a cash payment to the agreed Professional Service Provider. A copy of the tax invoice/tax receipt must be provided before DPIRD makes payment to the Professional Service Provider for the amount stated on the voucher.

3. Vouchers are capped at a maximum value depending on business turnover (refer to Section 2 above). For example, a business with between \$1m and \$10m turnover can only access a voucher up to the value of \$10,000 (excluding GST). If the total cost of services is \$55,000, the voucher will cover the maximum of \$10,000. The remaining \$45,000 must be covered by the applicant. Where two vouchers are applied for, the maximum combined value is \$15,000 (excluding GST).
4. Funds from other State and Australian Government funding programs or in-kind contributions cannot form part of the applicant's co-contribution.

Voucher validity period

Approved voucher activities are to commence within one month of notification of the voucher being awarded and must be completed by 30 November 2023. Should activities not be commenced within two months of the voucher being awarded, DPIRD reserves the right to cancel the voucher by providing written notice to the recipient.

Assessment – How will the applications be assessed

The assessment process aims to objectively identify eligible applicants to whom vouchers could be provided.

Applications will be judged in part on the quality of the quotation provided.

Professional service providers may submit quotations for up to five applicants for Round 4 the AFB Voucher Program. If quotations submitted by differentially named providers share board members, ownership or key personnel, DPIRD reserves the right to treat the quotations as being submitted by similar entities, to add up to a maximum of five.

If you have any queries or concerns related to the provision of a suitable quotation from your chosen service provider, please contact us to discuss your situation.

Assessment process

Applications must be submitted by 5:00pm AWST on Monday 27 March 2023. Late applications will not be accepted.

DPIRD will manage the application process and administer the program. An evaluation panel of independent business professionals will assess applications based on compliance with the eligibility requirements and will score each application against the merit criteria in Table 2.

Eligible applicants will be ranked based on their score against the criteria within two pools being metro-based and regionally based businesses. The highest-ranking applicants in each pool will be recommended for approval.

Approval of vouchers is made by the Minister for Agriculture and Food after consideration and review of the independent evaluation panel recommendations.

Work must commence within one month of the notification unless otherwise approved by DPIRD in writing.

Assessment criteria

#	Merit criteria used to evaluate applications	Weighting (%)
1	Evidence your proposed activity will contribute to business growth and/or increased sustainability credentials.	25
2	Evidence the activity will deliver competitive advantage to your business [new products, new markets, new processes, new systems and/or improved sustainability/environmental, social and governance (ESG) practices].	25
3	The relevant experience and track record of the Professional Service Provider, and the 'value for money', and methodology presented in the written quotation.	25
4	Demonstrated supply chain relationships and strategic relationships to understand market and product development opportunities and challenges. OR, Evidence of actions taken to identify and understand market access restrictions or other sustainability/environmental management related risks.	15
5	Evidence of existing business planning already undertaken*, and how this has identified the need for the proposed activity	10
	Total	100%

Table 2: Merit criteria and weighting

* Not applicable to applications for vouchers in category 1; Business planning.

Quotations, at a minimum, should include;

- methodology;
- deliverables;
- milestones to voucher redemption;
- time allocation of specified personnel;
- travel allowances (if applicable); and a
- payments schedule.

Quotations that do not meet the minimum requirements will be considered ineligible.

Quotations that include evidence of key skills, knowledge and experience of the service providers will be scored favourably.

Quotations will not be accepted after the closure date and applications without quotations will be considered ineligible.

Conflict of interest

Assessment team members will complete a conflict of interested (COI) declaration as part of the assessment process. An assessor will not participate in the assessment of applications where there is a perceived conflict of interest. The assessment team chair will be responsible for making judgements regarding conflicts of interest.

Decision

The Minister for Agriculture and Food makes the final decision on who will receive vouchers under this Program based on the information contained within the assessment report provided to them by DPIRD. There is no appeal process for this Program.

Notification of application outcomes

All applicants will be informed of the outcome of their application. Application evaluation and notification times are dependent on the number of applications received and are subject to change. Applicants will be advised of any changes to the scheduled dates.

Payment arrangements

Payment for the value of the voucher will be directly to the approved professional service provider following confirmation from the recipient that the services, advice or expertise has been fulfilled, and the applicant has met their co-contribution requirements. DPIRD will not pay the recipient of the voucher.

DPIRD will pay the professional service provider when it has received:

- A compliant tax invoice from the approved professional service provider addressed to the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development, for services as described in the approved quotation and amount stated on the voucher;
- A Statutory Declaration (Service Completion Form) signed by the recipient that states that the project has been completed and evidence (such as receipted invoice, or copy of bank transfer receipt) that the professional service provider has received the recipient's cash co-contribution;
- The Service Completion Form has been completed in sufficient detail to the satisfaction of DPIRD including any additional evidence requested; and
- The applicant provides proof that they have paid their co-contribution.

GST will be paid in addition to the voucher value where applicable. DPIRD will contribute 50% of the cost of the quoted work up to the value of the voucher. If for example, the total cost of the work is \$11,000 (GST inc.) and the voucher has been issued for \$5,000, DPIRD will pay \$5,000 (plus GST) and the recipient of the voucher will pay \$5,000 (plus GST).

Any upfront payments must be covered by the applicant out of their co-contribution to the project.

Reporting and monitoring requirements

The reporting arrangements for this scheme include provision of the Service Completion Form and any other acquittal information as requested by DPIRD. Reports are to be submitted online on or before due dates.

Tax information

Applicants are encouraged to seek tax advice on the potential implications of obtaining funding.

Personal Information and disclosure of information

Applicants are informed that DPIRD is subject to the *Freedom of Information Act 1992 (WA)*, which provides a general right of access to records held by the State Government agencies and local governments.

Intellectual Property

Any intellectual property rights that may exist in an application will remain the property of the applicant or the rightful owner of those intellectual property rights.

Any part of an application considered to contain any intellectual property rights should be clearly identified by the applicant. The applicant grants to the State (and will ensure that relevant third parties grant) a non-exclusive, irrevocable licence to use and reproduce the intellectual property for the purpose of administering the fund.

Contact Information

Enquiries prior to one week of the closure date may be directed to Mr Tilwin Westrup, Development Officer at the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development, 0467 787 133 or email DPIRD's Food branch Foodindustryinnovation@dpiird.wa.gov.au

Glossary of Terms

Applicant - the entity who makes the application for funding.

Application - an application (or relevant part of an application) made under the Program

AWST - Australian Western Standard Time

DPIRD - Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development

Guidelines – are the guidelines for the scheme, this document

Key Contact – the applicant person to contact if there are any queries or information required in relation to the scheme.

Program – the WA Agrifood and Beverage Voucher Program – Round 4

SmartyGrants – is the online grant management software tool used by DPIRD.

SME – a small to medium enterprise (business)

Voucher – a non-transferable voucher provided to approved applicants in this program. The approved Professional Service Provider is paid directly by DPIRD when the voucher is successfully redeemed. Vouchers have no cash value.

Important Disclaimer

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