

TechVouchers

All Delivery Partners have reserved TechVouchers funding to use towards eligible collaborative R&D projects that accelerate commercialisation.

This reserved funding ensures that all PFROs have the opportunity to develop collaborative projects with their local ecosystem of innovative SMEs.

Approved TechVouchers projects are awarded 50% of the total eligible project costs in match-funding, up to a maximum of \$50,000.

Unspent TechVouchers funding cannot be transferred to Boost Activities.

Delivery Partners that have not been able to deliver TechVoucher projects to the full amount reserved for the financial year can submit a request to DEIT to transfer their unspent funding to the following financial year TechVouchers budget. The request must detail:

- the reasons why funding was not spent
- the planned projects for the coming year.

DEIT makes the decision to grant or refuse transfer of funding to the following year.

Only one transfer can be granted for the total duration of the program.

Eligible TechVoucher businesses

To be eligible for the TechVouchers, businesses must:

- have an ABN registered in NSW and be based in NSW
- employ fewer than 200 employees, as defined by the Australian Bureau of Statistics, at the time of application
- not be a subsidiary of a revenue generating business locally or overseas. If part of a group, the parent company or entity must apply on behalf of the consolidated entity and meet all eligibility requirements
- not be owned, employ, or have any financial ties of any kind with any of the proposed researchers for the project
- the rights to commercialise their products or services and/or do not infringe on existing protected IP
- demonstrate adequate matched funding (no in-kind) has been secured for the project
- is not, and will not be receiving any other grant or subsidy for the same project from a State Government or Commonwealth agency or department
- work in industry sectors or technologies identified in the NSW Industry Development Framework. They are:
 - Clean energy and waste
 - Medical and life sciences
 - Digital systems and software
 - Defence and aerospace
 - International education
 - Visitor economy
 - Agriculture and agrifood
 - Resources
 - Digital technologies
 - Advanced manufacturing
 - Biotechnology



Eligible TechVoucher projects

To be eligible for TechVouchers funding, projects must:

- start within three months of submission for validation and approval to DEIT and completed within twelve months from the start
- incur active collaboration between an eligible business and one of the PFROs delivering TechVouchers
- have a defined commercialisation outcome.

Three-months start date

A project's start date is the day when the first invoiceable expenditure is incurred for the project.

A start date will typically be specified in the project plan and include a range of activities such as for example:

- a kick-off meeting between projects' participants
- the first day or half-day of desk-based research work
- the purchase of equipment or consumables to be used in the project
- a booking for a research facility
- a travel expense related to the project.

Active collaboration

Collaboration can occur at various stages of the project or be continuous through the R&D process. Different types of collaborative projects are eligible. They are:

- **Contract research.** The business has a particular commercialisation problem that needs to be solved. Once the project has been precisely defined, scoped, and budgeted by both applicant and delivery partner, the university or research organisation conducts the research. This gives the business access to leading expertise, often while retaining the intellectual property rights.
- **Collaborative research.** The business undertakes research together with a Delivery Partner. Intellectual property is usually shared between the business and the PFRO.

- **Use of research equipment, facilities, and co-location.** The business locates its activities, part of its activities, or some of its employees on campus, alongside researchers, uses existing research infrastructures such as labs, and actively engages with the academic community to foster ideas and overcome commercialisation difficulties. This can be for a predefined amount of time, or as a permanent on-going collaboration with initial set-up costs.
- **Faculty secondment.** A researcher goes on secondment to the business for a set amount of time to gain insights, bring technical expertise and an innovative approach, to solve real-world commercialisation problem.

Defined commercialisation outcome

Commercialisation outcomes are specific to each businesses' needs. They must be specified in the project documentation before the start of each project and include the quantifiable/measurable expected innovation resulting from the project.

Commercialisation outcomes include:

- development of an innovative product or service, or part of an innovative product or service, with progression on the Technological Readiness Level Scale (TRL)
- solving a technical or technological problem that hinders development of a product or service and progression on the TRL scale
- improve a business' internal R&D capacities
- improvement of the business model, commercial processes, or parts of the commercial processes
- improved understanding of a complex market, for strategic fit.



TechVoucher projects selection process

First point of contact

Delivery Partners are responsible for promoting TechVouchers to prospective businesses.

In addition to that, businesses interested in TechVouchers are encouraged to contact the eligible Delivery Partner of their choice to check their eligibility, discuss their needs, identify how R&D could help them overcome commercialisation hurdles, and build a project to support their development.

If a business interested in TechVouchers contacts DEIT for information on the program, DEIT will qualify the interest and needs of the business, contact the Delivery Partners with the information, and ensure that at least one Delivery partner contacts the business to discuss their project.

All Delivery Partners are part of the BBIP network and can refer businesses to the most appropriate research organisation based on needs, expertise, capacities, and availabilities. A list of contacts can be found at the end of this document.

Projects development

Delivery Partners and interested businesses need to co-develop their collaborative R&D project with a commercialisation outcome. Together they determine all aspects of the project including but not limited to, goals, R&D tasks to be undertaken, personnel involved in the project, milestones and timeframes, key performance indicators, financial terms, overheads and intellectual property rights arrangements.

Proposals Eligibility and Assessment Form Once a project has been planned, the delivery partner and the business must complete and submit the project Eligibility and Assessment Form (the Form) to DEIT.

The Form comprises an eligibility section and a project assessment section.

Delivery partners certify in the Form that they have conducted the assessment process in a fair and impartial manner following their respective institutions' policies and procedures on governance, transparency, and accountability. They also certify that no member of the assessment panel had any conflict of interest in evaluating projects.

Projects assessment

Delivery Partners must assess projects according to the following criteria:

- **Deliverability:** how strongly the project team can demonstrate that the project will commence within three months and be completed within 12 months.
- **Active collaboration:** the degree to which this project will generate collaboration-related benefits.
- **Commercialisation:** The extent to which the project will achieve one or more of the commercialisation aims of TechVouchers.

Projects must be assessed by a panel of independent assessors. The Delivery Partners are responsible for assembling the assessment panel. Assessors can be employed by the Delivery Partner or be external. Assessors can be chosen for their business, scientific, engagement expertise, or involvement in Boost Activities, for example.

Assessors cannot be involved in the project or have any financial or other interest in the project.

Written records of assessment panel membership, conflicts of interest, discussions and decisions must be maintained by the Delivery Partners and provided to DEIT upon request.

For detailed guidance on assessment criteria and process, please refer to the Form, available from DEIT or each of the Fourteen Delivery Partners.

Validation and approval of proposals

Delivery Partners must submit their Project Eligibility and Assessment Forms to DEIT for validation and approval.

- **Validation.** DEIT will check each Form to ensure that participating business and project meets eligibility criteria and assessment process requirements for TechVouchers funding. DEIT may seek probity advice, carry out further enquiries or require additional documentation before validation.
- **Approval.** Validated proposals are submitted to the DEIT decision-maker for approval, currently, the Director for Innovation and Entrepreneurship. DEIT will notify Delivery Partners of the decision.
- **Publication of successful projects.** DEIT will maintain a public list of all awarded TechVoucher projects, with the names of recipient businesses, collaborating Delivery Partners, money awarded for the project, and a brief description of the project. The list will be published on the NSW Government Grant Finder Website (www.nsw.gov.au/grants-and-funding).

TechVoucher projects execution

Delivery partners are responsible, with the participating business, for the timely conduct of the projects approved for funding.

Variations

If there is a substantial variation to the project, such as changes in start dates, expected delays, changes of outcomes or type of collaboration, the Delivery Partner must inform DEIT as soon as the variation is known or deemed probable to occur.

The DEIT decision-maker for TechVoucher variations, currently, the Director for Innovation and Entrepreneurship, upon recommendation from the Program Lead, will either accept the variation or decide to withdraw the TechVoucher, after a thorough review of the circumstances affecting the project, taking into account the importance of the variation and its consequences on the intended outcomes of the project and the program as a whole.

Project start date

Projects must start within three months of submission of the proposal to DEIT.

If a project is initially planned to start within three months of submission but is delayed, Delivery Partners must submit the reasons for the delay to DEIT as soon as delay is known.

DEIT can accept the delay as a variation or can decide to withdraw the TechVoucher and after a thorough review of the circumstances affecting the project, taking into account the importance of the delay, its consequences on the intended outcomes of the project and the new timeline for project completion.

Project end date

Projects must be completed within twelve months of Approval of the proposal by DEIT.

If a project is delayed, or is cut short, Delivery Partners must submit the reasons for the delay or early end to DEIT as soon as circumstances are known.

DEIT can accept the delay or early end as a variation or can decide to withdraw the TechVoucher, in accordance with the Governance Plan, and after a thorough review of the circumstances affecting the project, taking into account the importance of the delay and monies and time already expanded on the project.

Projects promotion by DEIT

DEIT will promote and reward completed projects through:

- a dedicated annual showcase event involving SME and Delivery Partner staff
- publication of success stories through DEIT's digital channels
- tailored advice on accessing local and international markets.

Reporting

Reporting enables DEIT to measure the outcomes of each project and clearly identify their link to the objectives intended outcomes of the TechVouchers.

Reporting is aimed at providing transparency, accountability, and contributing to program outcomes evaluation at the end of the funding cycle.

Delivery Partners are responsible for reporting. Reporting requirements are specified in the funding agreement, with number of reports to be provided and detailed financial information on money spent to date on the project.

Final reporting is done upon completion of the project, through a reporting template provided by DEIT, and must include:

- a brief description of the collaboration undertaken during the project
- a summary of the innovation and commercialisation progression achieved, with quantifiable/measurable data
- a brief statement of the project's value towards the program's intended outcomes
- evidence of invoicing and payments effectively incurred by the participating business to the Delivery Partner.



TechVouchers payment

TechVoucher value

Approved TechVoucher projects are awarded 50% of the total eligible project costs in matched-funding, up to a maximum of \$50,000.

This is specified in a funding agreement with a Delivery Partner for each TechVoucher project.

Delivery Partners must invoice the collaborating SME for the full cost of the project minus the value of the associated TechVoucher.

TechVouchers payment to Delivery Partners

The value of each TechVoucher is then refunded by DEIT to Delivery Partners in one instalment, upon:

- proof of project completion
- satisfactory final reporting
- proof of SME payment to the Delivery Partner for the project
- correctly rendered invoicing from the Delivery Partner to DEIT.

The amount effectively paid by DEIT is:

- up to the agreed value specified in the funding agreement
- no more than 50% of the total eligible costs effectively incurred.

Non-completed TechVoucher projects

If a project could not be completed as initially intended, the Delivery Partner must provide final reporting through the reporting template, detailing the reasons for ending the project before its initial term. Evidence of invoicing and payments must be included. Unless otherwise notified, DEIT refunds the total effectively spent on the project, up to the initial value of the TechVouchers funding.