



DIRECT AID PROGRAM PRETORIA GUIDELINES 2026-2027

WHAT IS THE DIRECT AID PROGRAM?

The Direct Aid Program (DAP) is a flexible small grants program funded from Australia's Official Development Assistance (ODA)¹ budget and managed through the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) overseas Posts.

The program aims to support projects with a strong development focus that complement Australia's broader aid program which contributes to sustainable economic growth and poverty reduction. DAP projects should promote a distinctive and positive image of Australia.

The DAP provides funding to community and grass-roots development projects which provide direct, immediate, tangible and high-impact outcomes for beneficiary communities.

DAP provides:

- ✓ funding for locally led projects that deliver practical and tangible development outcomes in ODA-eligible countries²
- ✓ support for Australia's longer-term bilateral and multilateral development priorities
- ✓ opportunities for posts to leverage outcomes to achieve public diplomacy and foreign policy objectives

WHO CAN APPLY?

DAP funding is available to a range of organisations working in local communities on activities that support sustainable and equitable development.³

The Australian High Commission in Pretoria disburses DAP funding to projects in **Angola, Botswana, Eswatini, Lesotho, Mozambique, Namibia, and South Africa.**

Projects must be located in one or more of the above countries.

Potential funding recipients include:

- Local community groups and community-based organisations
- Local and international non-government organisations
- Educational institutions
- International and multilateral organisations, including United Nations agencies
- Research organisations and other not-for-profit entities
- Government entities, where funding is consistent with DAP objectives and ODA requirements
- Individuals
- Other entities engaged in development activities

¹ ODA is defined as 'government aid that promotes and specifically targets the economic development and welfare of developing countries.

² See the Organisations for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) website for more information: <https://www.oecd.org/en/topics/sub-issues/oda-eligibility-and-conditions.html>

³ DAP rounds run annually based on the Australian financial year calendar (2025-26FY: 1 July 2026 to 30 June 2027). DAP funds are disbursed in accordance with the Australian financial year.

The eligibility of a recipient organisation does not automatically make a project suitable for DAP funding. All DAP applications are assessed on their individual merits to ensure the proposed activity is ODA-eligible, supports economic development and welfare outcomes, and is an appropriate use of DAP funding.

WHAT ACTIVITIES ARE ELIGIBLE FOR DAP SUPPORT?

Priority thematic areas for the 2026-2027 year include (in alphabetical order):

- Bridging the digital divide
- Climate, weather and early warning systems
- Conflict prevention
- Disability equity and rights
- Education
- Food security
- Gender equality, youth, women and girl's empowerment, social inclusion
- Health and biosecurity systems
- Human rights
- Ocean and marine ecosystems
- Protection of humanitarian workers
- Sport
- Water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH)

PROJECT LENGTH AND VALUE

There is no minimum amount a single DAP project can receive but the maximum value is **AUD 100,000.00**⁴ and DAP projects can run for **up to two years**.

Please note that the High Commission may not be able to offer the full amount requested, dependent on available funding.

Competitive applications will:

- address multiple thematic areas in a single project;
- support vulnerable and marginalised communities;
- clearly articulate the positive change and impact that would occur following project implementation; and
- provide strong public diplomacy opportunities for the High Commission.

Consideration will be given to activities in which the beneficiary community makes a significant contribution in terms of:

- labour;
- material or funds;
- act as a catalyst for additional development of the community or a model of similar development activities elsewhere;
- direct links with Australia will also be welcomed.

Projects that demonstrate a high level of local involvement or partnership with other likeminded organisations (financially and/or in kind) are also encouraged.

⁴ AUD: Australian Dollar. Budgets can be submitted in local currency, USD or AUD.

WHAT ACTIVITIES CANNOT BE FUNDED?

DAP cannot fund activities where any of the following objectives are the primary purpose or key focus of the project:

- supporting commercial ventures/purposes. For example, funding activities with the aim of making a profit.
- supporting ongoing operational costs such as utilities (power and water), rental of land.
- salaries and operational costs will be considered on a case-by-case basis but cannot surpass 20% of the total budget.
- purchase and/or operation costs for vehicles/properties or other operational assets such as buildings.
- sponsoring a major sporting tournament or cultural displays that do not have a clear development benefit.
- construction projects that use asbestos or other materials that are hazardous to human health.
- promoting Australian interests, with limited or no identifiable development outcomes for local communities.

HOW TO APPLY?

Stage	Date	Round	Description
1 CONCEPT NOTES	21 September to 4 October 2026	Open	This first stage is to ensure the projects fit within the DAP parameters, and we can seek any clarification (or suggest amendments if required) before organisations fill out the more comprehensive online application. The High Commission cannot guarantee that your organisation will be invited to apply in the next stage, but a strong concept note will assist the DAP team in considering whether your proposed project may be shortlisted. Interested organisations can submit via email a brief 1–2-page concept note, which includes a brief project description, indication of beneficiaries and timeframe, and overview of the grant amount being sought and draft budget. Send the concept note via email to the Pretoria DAP inbox: dap.pretoria@dfat.gov.au. If your project involves direct, sustained or significant contact with children, you will be required to submit a Child Protection Policy.
2 CLOSED APPLICATION	12 to 31 October 2026	Closed (by invitation only)	The concept notes/EoIs are screened by the DAP Managers and DAP Committee. The High Commission invites selected organisations to submit a full application with further detail including references and a detailed budget. Selected applicants will receive an email with the closed link for this application round. Unsuccessful submissions (from stage one) will be contacted with the outcome but will not be provided with individualized feedback.

			The DAP application form must be completed by the applicant via an electronic online form, powered by the SmartyGrants system, when the official application round is opened. For financial year 2026-2027, the application round will be open for invited organisations from 12 to 31 October 2026. Late applications will not be accepted. Please click the submission button in the application portal to ensure that we receive your application.
3 SHORTLISTING	November 2026	N/A	Applications for DAP funding are screened by the DAP Managers (this includes, but it's not limited to, due diligence checks and risk assessments). The High Commission's DAP Committee considers applications received before making recommendations to the High Commissioner for funding approval. The DAP application process is highly competitive, and the High Commission is only able to fund a small portion of applications received each year. All applicants are contacted regarding the outcome of their application. Due to the high number of applications received, we are unable to provide individualised feedback to unsuccessful applications.
4 AGREEMENTS	December 2026	N/A	Successful organisations sign a grant agreement with the High Commission and funds are allocated accordingly. Successful applicants are required to report regularly on the progress of implementation and provide financial acquittal in accordance with the individual DAP funding agreement.

Important note: DAP guidelines and application requirements can change from year-to-year. Please do not rely on information that does not appear on the High Commission's website or that you did not receive directly from the Australian High Commission recently regarding the application rounds.

Should you experience technical difficulties in accessing the online application form during the application round or if you have any questions on the DAP process, please email dap.pretoria@dfat.gov.au for assistance.

GET IN TOUCH

For any questions on DAP, please contact the Australian High Commission's DAP team at: dap.pretoria@dfat.gov.au

For additional information:

<https://www.dfat.gov.au/people-to-people/direct-aid-program/direct-aid-program>

<https://www.dfat.gov.au/development/australias-development-program>

CONNECT WITH US

Website: <https://southafrica.embassy.gov.au/>

Facebook: @AuHCSouthAfrica - <https://www.facebook.com/AuHCSouthAfrica>

Instagram: @AuHCSouthAfrica - <https://www.instagram.com/auhcsouthafrica>

X: @AuHCSouthAfrica - <https://x.com/AuHCSouthAfrica>

LinkedIn: Australian High Commission South Africa: <https://www.linkedin.com/company/18128911>