



AUSTRALIAN EMBASSY IN SERBIA, NORTH MACEDONIA & MONTENEGRO

DIRECT AID PROGRAM (DAP) GUIDELINES for FY 2025-26

The Australian Embassy in Belgrade invites eligible entities in Serbia, North Macedonia and Montenegro to apply for funding through the Direct Aid Program (DAP) for financial year 2025-26.

What is the Direct Aid Program?

The Direct Aid Program is a flexible small grants program funded by the Australian Government and managed by the Australian Embassy in Belgrade. The program aims to support projects with a strong development focus that complement Australia's broader aid program, contribute to sustainable economic growth and lead to poverty reduction. DAP supports projects that provide direct benefits to those most in need in the local community, including vulnerable or disadvantaged groups, women, children and youth and people with disabilities. DAP projects should help to promote a positive image of Australia's cooperation with our countries of accreditation.

Who can apply?

DAP is available to non-profit and civil society organisation, community groups and other entities engaged in development activities in Serbia, North Macedonia and Montenegro.

What activities are eligible for DAP support?

DAP activities should primarily be aimed at achieving practical and tangible outcomes of a high development impact, including capacity building programs in the areas of governance and human rights engagement. Guidelines to the Direct Aid Program can be found on the following website: <https://www.dfat.gov.au/people-to-people/direct-aid-program/direct-aid-program>

In FY 2025-26, priority will be given to projects that:

- Promote human rights, media freedom and good governance.
- Promote gender equality and empowerment of women and girls.
- Foster education opportunities and employment of youth with disabilities.
- Promote youth mental health.

Projects must be self-contained, with a timeline beginning no earlier than 1 January 2026 and concluding no later than 31 December 2026.

Priority will be given to projects influencing policies, practices and institutions that manage the way people live together, make decisions and exercise rights.

Projects that foster partnerships that allow larger projects with more than one donor or act as a catalyst for additional development of the community or as a model for similar developments elsewhere will also be welcomed. Furthermore, activities in which the recipient entity makes a significant contribution in terms of labour, materials or financing are particularly well-received.

What are the requirements?

- Application forms must be submitted through the online grants management system, Smartygrants.
- Have definite timelines including a work plan.
- Have a value of up to AUD 20,000.

- Have clearly defined with specific achievable and sustainable outcomes that will help vulnerable target groups.
- Projects should address gender issues in their implementation.
- Projects must be self-contained, with a timeline beginning no earlier than 1 January 2026 and concluding no later than 31 December 2026.
- Project acquittal documents should be sent one month after the end date of the project.

Applications must:

- Include a clear and fully itemised and fully costed project budget in AUD outlining the development benefits of the proposal.
- Demonstrate the applicant's capacity to effectively implement the proposed project.
- Demonstrate that the project conforms with the objectives of the Direct Aid Program.
- Demonstrate that the project is technically feasible.
- Demonstrate the applicant's capability and capacity to manage any identified project-related risks.
- Final report must be uploaded onto Smartygrants using the acquittal form. Any receipts and expenditure should be attached to the acquittal report.

Recipients of the DAP funding must:

- Have a current child protection policy or code of conduct if the projects include work with children. In case the organisation does not have such a policy adopted, the Embassy will be able to assist in this process.
- Comply with the Preventing Sexual Exploitation Abuse and Harassment (PSEAH) Policy of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
- Ensure that no support or resources are provided to any entity subject to sanctions (by the United Nations Security Council or the Australian Government); and
- ensure that the work conducted in relation to the project funded is undertaken in a safe manner and complies with all applicable local laws, standards and policies that relate to health and safety.
- Provide advice on their Work, Health and Safety policies, if required.

We will generally NOT fund the following:

- Cash grants or micro-credit schemes or projects that involve the return of money.
- Commercial ventures.
- Purchase of vehicles.
- Australian or overseas study tours.
- International travel.
- Sponsorship of major sporting tournaments or cultural displays that do not have a clear developmental benefit.
- Staff salaries.
- Routine, recurring running costs and administrative expenses including office rental and utility costs, spare parts, routine maintenance.

Expectations for accountability, transparency and reporting

We require a high degree of transparency and accountability in all projects. Applications must demonstrate that the risk of wastage, administration costs and other costs not delivering direct benefit to the target community will be minimised.

Should your project be successful, you will be required to:

- Sign a contract specifying the terms and conditions of the grant.
- Keep full financial records of all expenditure, including receipts.
- Submit a final report one month after the project's completion. Final report must be uploaded onto Smartygrants using the acquittal form. Any receipts and expenditure should be forwarded with the final report.
- Allow and facilitate a visit by Australian embassy representatives to the project site.

Application process

Funding under the Direct Aid Program is limited therefore we are looking for high quality, well targeted project proposals. After the submission deadline, the DAP committee will assess the applications against the following criteria:

- The costs and the development benefits of the project.
- Whether it has achievable and sustainable outcomes.
- The soundness of the project's objectives and design.
- The practicability of the proposed implementation arrangements.
- Whether the project conforms to the objectives of the Direct Aid Program.

Only successful applicants will be contacted between eight to ten weeks after the application deadline.

For further information, please email: grants.belgrade@dfat.gov.au