AUSTRALIAN EMBASSY IN SERBIA, NORTH MACEDONIA & MONTENEGRO

DIRECT AID PROGRAM (DAP) GUIDELINES for FY 2026-27

The Australian Embassy in Belgrade invites you to apply for funding through the Direct Aid Program (DAP) for financial year 2026-27.

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.

DAP priorities in 2026-27

- **Support initiatives that contribute to inclusive green transition.**

This may include initiatives that:

  - Inform policy development at the local or national level;
  - Activities implemented in partnership with other donors.

- **Strengthen women's and girls' participation in the green economy by expanding access to the skills, knowledge and leadership opportunities.**

This may include initiatives that:

  - Build technical, digital and STEM skills relevant to the green economy;
  - Support women's and girls' leadership and entrepreneurship in green industries, including through training and mentoring.

What are the requirements?

- Application forms must be submitted through the online grants management system, Smartygrants via the link provided.
- Have definite timelines including a work plan.
- Have a value of up to 10,000 EUR.
- Projects should address gender issues in their implementation.
- Projects must be self-contained, with a timeline beginning no earlier than 1 January 2027 and concluding no later than 31 December 2027.
- Project acquittal documents should be sent one month after the end date of the project.

Priority will be given to projects that demonstrate potential to influence policies, strengthen institutional cooperation, improve community participation in environmental decision making.

We will favour the strongest project proposals, which demonstrate a clear theory of change and sustainability, focusing on priority thematic areas.

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.

Applications must:

- Include a clear and fully itemised and fully costed project budget in EUR 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

The deadline for submission of the application is **6 December 2026**.

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 by **24 December 2026**.

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