

Early Adopter Grant Program FAQs

The NSW Government is providing up to \$3 million in total to support councils to implement AI solutions from the AI Solutions Panel through the Early Adopter Grant Program.

Latest update: 17 May 2024

Grant FAQ General

Grant FAQ publish date	30 April 2024
Grant closing date	22 May 2024 11:00pm
Contact	ai.nsw@planning.nsw.gov.au

1. Who can apply for the grant?

All eligible NSW councils can apply for the grant. Details about the eligibility and evaluation criteria can be found in the Early Adopter Grant Program Guideline (grant guideline).

2. What is the timeline for the Early Adopter Grant Program?

Grant applications are now open and close at 11pm, 22 May 2024. Details about the timeline can be found in the grant guideline.

3. How will the grants be decided?

Details about the assessment and evaluation process, including all eligibility and evaluation criteria, are set out in the grant guideline.

4. Will additional rounds of the Grant Program be available in next financial year?

There is currently only one round of funding available.

Grant FAQ Update No.1

<i>Grant FAQ update date</i>	10 May 2024
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5. What panel product licensing costs can be included as grant project eligible expenditure?

Each panel supplier will have a unique approach to calculating the cost of their licenses, and it's important to understand the terms and conditions of the license agreement to determine the total cost.

Where the licences are perpetual, annual subscription (such as a lump sum upfront cost) fees can be included within the grant request, even if the licence period extends beyond the grant period, with eligible expenditure capped at a 12 month license for the panel product.

For other licence arrangements such as monthly and pay-as-you go these should be calculated for the term of the grant only.

After the grant, licences need to be fully funded by councils including renewals and top ups.

6. Can a grant project include expenditure for more than one of the panel products?

Yes.

Eligible expenditure can include procurement of more than one product from the AI Solutions Panel subject to the Grant Program conditions and requirements.

If a council chooses to include more than one panel product in its Grant application and:

- the products are not interdependent, the Council should ensure that its application addresses the grant requirements for each product separately; or
- the products are interdependent, the Council should ensure that its application addresses the grant requirements as whole.

7. Is the grant only available for the use of the three suppliers that were present at the showcase? Or is there scope for council to put forward a business case for another provider?

Only suppliers and products specified on the AI Solutions Panel may be selected by councils in their applications for grant funding under this grant program.

8. Is it necessary that the project has to relate to pre-lodgement of application, or can it be reduction of DA assessment times as well?

The grant project must meet the eligibility criteria set out in Section D of the grant guideline. Section D at eligibility criteria 3 provides that an applicant must:

3. identify an opportunity where a supplier solution from the AI Solutions Panel can help to achieve a minimum of one of the following:

- a. decrease average timeframes associated with DA workflows*
- b. improve the DA submission to lodgement success rate*
- c. time or process efficiencies for pre-lodgement related activities*

9. Is the AI tool to be customer facing or for internal use?

The tool can be for either:

- a) customer facing use;
- b) internal use; or
- c) customer facing and internal use.

Grant FAQ Update No.2

<i>Grant FAQ update date</i>	17 May 2024
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10. If a joint application is successful but for a lesser amount than requested and therefore one of the co-applicants withdraws due to not being able to self-fund the shortfall, what would the impact be on the other co-applicant council(s) and the funding agreement?

The Department intends to assess applications on the full requested funding only and not for partial funding.

11. How can a council secure a quote for the implementation of one of the products from the AI Solutions Panel to help inform a grant application?

Councils can contact suppliers directly for a quote for the implementation of their AI Solutions Panel product.

Supplier contact information can be accessed via the Supplier List document on the project webpage: <https://www.planning.nsw.gov.au/assess-and-regulate/development-assessment/artificial-intelligence-in-nsw-planning>

12. In reference to evaluation criteria A.2, how can council show evidence of digitisation?

Refer to Appendix A of the grant guideline for response requirements to the evaluation criteria. Appendix A, at A.2 Digital readiness indicates, an applicant must:

- *Provide your response (250 words)*
- *Upload your relevant digital policies, strategies, and/or plans*

13. Can councils request an extension for submitting their grant application due to their current workloads?

Extensions to the grant application period are not possible. We strongly encourage council's best efforts to submit your grant application by the deadline (22 May 2024, 11pm) to ensure that your council has the opportunity to benefit from the grant program.

14. If we are trialling a solution that is not on the AI Solutions Panel, would this be considered as a co-contribution to the project under the overall grant objectives?

Only suppliers and products identified on the AI Solutions Panel may be selected by councils in their applications for grant funding under this grant program.

15. Who is the best contact to address the General Manager/CEO Letter of Support?

The letter of support may be addressed to:

Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure
Locked Bag 5022
Parramatta NSW 2124

Attention:

Project Director,

AI in NSW Planning project – Early Adopter Grant Program

16. Our internal procurement processes require us to run a competitive process prior to engaging an AI Solutions Panel supplier, and therefore we are unable to confirm which supplier we will engage for our grant project. Does this exclude us from applying to the grant program?

The eligibility criteria (Section D of the grant guideline) does not include the requirement for the AI Solutions Panel supplier to be confirmed or engaged by the applicant at the time of grant close. Section D at eligibility criteria 2 provides that an applicant must:

2. *commit to*

c. *engaging an identified supplier from the AI Solutions Panel using the MICTA/ICTA contracting framework with the grant funding within 12 weeks of funding distribution*

17. Can grant funding be used for AI Solutions Panel suppliers with products that address Use Case 5?

No. Grant applications can only relate to solutions that are on the AI Solutions Panel as at grant closing date (Wednesday 22 May, 2024).

18. Is a quote from a supplier on the AI Solutions Panel suitable to support Evaluation Criteria B.1 or is a bespoke quote required?

A supplier quote may be acceptable as a supporting document in response to Evaluation Criteria B.1, provided that the application addresses each of the three dot points at Section D, Table 3 on page 14 of the grant guideline.

The application:

- *is appropriately detailed in all sections*
- *clearly defines the project aim, scope (limited and/or full implementation) and outputs*
- *gives a complete breakdown of estimated costs, including attachments with relevant quotes or budget estimates from suppliers.*

19. Can a consultant working on behalf of council submit the grant application form through the SmartyGrants portal?

An authorised representative from a NSW council must complete the 'Declaration and Authorisation' section of the grant application form and submit the grant application form through the SmartyGrants portal.

A consultant working on behalf of a council may be the primary contact for the grant application.