

Safeguarding Australia Technology Challenges

2021

Frequently Asked Questions

How much money is available for each project?

Projects are invited to seek funding for amounts up to \$200,000, exclusive of GST, with projects of 18 to 24 months duration.

Will a project be funded for each challenge?

While the intention is to fund at least 3 projects, one in each challenge, this will be dependent on the quality of proposals received. DSTG reserves the right to fund projects in any one, two or all three of the challenges, or to fund no proposals, in accordance with the quality of the proposals received. DSTG also reserves the right to not fund any projects if no proposals of sufficient quality are received.

Is there a limit on the number of proposals an organisation or an individual can submit or be a part of?

No, but you must ensure that if all projects were selected you would be able to meet the commitments and that direct costs (salary, on-costs) of staff involved are not double-counted across the projects.

Do I need to have identified everyone who will work on the project as part of the application? What if I want to use the funds to employ someone to work on the project that hasn't been identified or recruited yet?

If you want to use the funds to employ a research fellow to work on the project, you just need to identify them in the proposal and budget as yet to be appointed. When recruiting to fill the position you will need to keep in mind the citizenship and residency requirements, and the fact that they may be required to undergo a security assessment.

Can we have people working on the project that are here on a Temporary Work Visa and are in the process of applying for permanent residency or citizenship?

No. People working on the project must have already received their citizenship or permanent residency status.

Can students be involved in the project?

Students can be involved in the project, subject to the same citizenship and security conditions as other personnel. Funds cannot be used to pay stipends for students involved in the project, but they can be used to employ them in a casual or part-time capacity or pay for consumables etc. Projects in areas that are deemed to be sensitive may not be suitable for students to work on due to possible restrictions on publication.

I collaborate with someone from DSTG and would like them to be part of the project – can they be involved?

Yes. DSTG staff can be part of the project. They need to be clearly identified so that conflicts of interest can be managed. Also, direct costs (salaries, on-costs) associated with DSTG contributions to the project cannot be funded under this Challenge.

Will we need to undergo any security checks?

DSTG will undertake a sensitivity assessment of all projects which are selected for funding, which will determine if security clearances are required for personnel and if security controls will need to be applied to the project. If it is decided a national security clearance is required, only Australian Citizens will be able to work on the project. Security clearances will be undertaken by the Australian Government Security Vetting Agency ([AGSVA](#)). DSTG will sponsor the security clearance if necessary, but your organisation will be responsible for paying the associated fees. Baseline clearance fees are currently \$884 per person (incl GST).

Does this call involve classified research?

No. However, some proposals may include work that Defence and National Security agencies identify as potentially sensitive, in which case they may wish to engage with you outside this program, require security clearances and further citizenship restrictions, apply security controls, place limits on publication or request changes to the proposed project.

What are the expected deliverables at the end of the project?

Projects are expected to deliver an output at minimum [Technical Readiness Level](#) (TRL) 5 - 7, which can be assessed for further development and implementation. TRLs 5 - 7 represent the development and validation of prototypes in a representative environment following proof of concept demonstration.

Each project will be required to provide 6-monthly progress reports, a final technical report, demonstrate the prototype in an appropriate environment and provide the prototype and training in its use so that it can be fully assessed.

You may also nominate additional deliverables if they are appropriate for your project.

Conference and journal papers for submission will not be acceptable as deliverables for the project.

What can the funds be spent on? Is there anything that it can't be used for?

There are very few restrictions on the use of the funds. They can be spent on items such as salaries, consultants, consumables and components, bench fees, minor equipment, software, manufacturing costs, travel to meet with collaborators. All expenditure items are to be justified in the proposal budget.

Funds cannot be used for student stipends or to fund people who are in Australia on temporary visas.

Can my organisation recover indirect overheads from the money?

Yes. For industry and PFRO led projects, please use your standard rates. For university led projects, indirect overheads will be paid using the DSTG multiplier of 1.4 x direct costs for DSP Standard Research Projects.

Do I need to have any sort of co-contribution secured – either cash or in-kind?

No. Co-contribution is not an eligibility requirement. However, the National Security S&T Centre is looking to partner with organisations that are wanting to be involved in addressing Australia's national security requirements in an ongoing capacity, as well as maturing our national capability. If you are able to make a co-contribution, that will help to demonstrate your willingness to be a long-term participant in this space and the alignment between this project and your strategic priorities.

Will this be a new annual program?

At the moment there are only funds available for this call. There are currently no plans to run the program in later years.

How many / what proportion of proposals will get funded from this call?

As this is a new, one-off program we cannot make any predictions about the success rate. This will depend entirely on the number and quality of proposals received, along with the amount of funding requested by each project.

Will I be able to publish results from the research?

Generally, publication is possible but it must be approved by the Commonwealth first. Some projects may be working in areas of sensitivity where publication is not desirable and permission may be refused.

What happens with intellectual property I develop as part of the project?

You, or your employer, will own any intellectual property you develop and be recognised as the creator. You must provide a licence to use the IP to The Department of Defence for Commonwealth Purposes. This will be done as part of your project agreement.

Do I need to have worked with or on defence or national security problems before to be able to apply?

No. People who have not worked on national defence and security problems before are encouraged to apply.