Indigenous Languages and Arts (ILA) Program Frequently Asked Questions

May 2021

The ILA grant program invests around $20 million per annum to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to express, preserve and maintain their cultures through languages and arts activities around Australia. ILA provides funding that supports the capture, preservation and maintenance of traditional languages including supporting a network of 20 Indigenous Language Centres across the country and provides funding for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to develop, produce, present, exhibit or perform Indigenous arts projects that showcase Australia's traditional and contemporary Indigenous cultural and artistic expressions.

Tips for a competitive application

- Take the time to carefully read the program guidelines to ensure your application clearly describes the project, answers the questions, and addresses the selection criteria and program outcomes outlined in the program guidelines.
- Make your responses concise—don't provide answers with unnecessary words that do not address the criteria. Word limits are maximums only—if you can answer a question in fewer words that still provides us with the necessary details, that's great!
- Don't assume the assessors know anything about your organisation or your project. Ensure all relevant information is provided in your application.
- Make sure your project has clear Indigenous languages and/or arts outcomes that primarily benefit the targeted Indigenous group or community.
- With the demand for grant funding consistently and significantly more than what is available, it is very important that applications must be accompanied by a realistic and robust budget submission that demonstrates value-for-money.
- Construct your budget to accurately reflect funding required for the scope and complexity of the grant activity. This includes factors such as project size, complexity of methodology and location of project delivery, e.g. remote, regional or urban. Note: The maximum allowable amounts stated in the program guidelines are for guidance only and should not be used in place of a carefully considered budget.

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

We strongly recommend you read the FAQs in combination with the current *ILA Program Guidelines* and the SmartyGrants online application form. ILA program guidelines are released at the commencement of a grant funding round.

Where do I apply for funding?

The Australian Government advertises grant opportunities and access to program guidelines via the GrantConnect website. The ILA program guidelines have links back to the ILA program website and importantly to the SmartyGrants website where you will be able to lodge an online application.

What is an Open Competitive grant opportunity?

Participation in the annual Open Competitive grant opportunity is open to all eligible community-based organisations wanting to deliver Indigenous languages and/or arts activities for their community. All applications are given two independent assessments and scored against each of the three assessment criteria, with applications then ranked in order of merit.

What is a Targeted Competitive grant opportunity?

Participation in the Targeted Competitive grant opportunity is by **invitation only** from the ILA program.

When the ILA program commenced in 2015-16, a policy decision was enacted to invite established community-led organisations such as Indigenous Language Centres to apply for a targeted competitive grant opportunity. The approach to this stream of grant funding is strategic in nature and affords organisations the time needed to implement longer term strategic planning and delivery of language services to their communities. The department can only invite organisations that meet the eligibility criteria in **Section 4.1** and **Section 4.2** of the program guidelines, which includes:

- having previously received funding from the ILA program
- ability to deliver an Indigenous-led languages and/or arts activity
- demonstrated community engagement and support
- having a demonstrated capacity to deliver quality Indigenous language or arts projects
- having a demonstrated history of good governance and good financial management

Any organisations invited to apply to a targeted competitive grant opportunity are still required to address the three standard assessment criteria and applications are assessed using the same principles as the open competitive grant opportunity.

How will my application be assessed?

Applications are assessed against criteria outlined in **Section 8** under the program guidelines. Applications are assessed based on the weighting given to each criterion outlined below. The amount of detail and supporting evidence you provide in your application should be relative to the project size, complexity and grant amount requested.

Take the time to carefully read the program guidelines to ensure your application clearly describes the project, answers the questions, and addresses the selection criteria and program outcomes outlined in the program guidelines. The three assessment criteria are as follows:

- ability of the project to meet the objectives of the ILA program
- demonstrated community engagement, support and benefit to the community
- capability and capacity of the organisation to undertake all aspects of managing delivery of the project

How can I demonstrate that my project will contribute towards the outcomes under Target 16 of the *National Agreement on Closing the Gap*? (Relates to Criterion 1)

Target 16 of the *National Agreement on Closing the Gap* recognises the importance of language in reconnecting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with their culture and heritage and how this in turn contributes to improved health and wellbeing outcomes. The target states:

'By 2031, there is a sustained increase in number and strength of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages being spoken'.

Projects funded under the ILA grant program must demonstrate how they will make a valuable contribution to the outcomes associated with Target 16:

'Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and languages are strong, supported and flourishing'.

In providing a response to this criterion you should include specific examples that clearly show how the project will successfully address the ILA program's languages and/or arts objectives in **Section 3.1** and **Section 3.2** of the program guidelines *and* how the project will contribute towards the outcomes under **Target 16**.

See **Section 3.3** of the guidelines for examples of how funding allocated through the ILA program will contribute to enabling Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and languages to be 'strong, supported and flourishing'.

How can I demonstrate evidence of community support and benefit to the community? (Relates to Criterion 2)

All projects must have the support of the local Indigenous community and provide a tangible benefit to the community. You should consider how the local Indigenous community will be involved in the planning, implementation and delivery of the project. We expect to see evidence of community support and expected benefits from community representatives.

Evidence of support may be provided in letter or video format and must clearly identify:

- the role of the author and/or the organisation they represent in the community
- why the project is needed in the community and how the community will benefit from the project
- how the author and/or the organisation they represent will participate in the project, including any contributions of funding or resources (if applicable—note that this is not a requirement)

If the applicant organisation is a non-Indigenous organisation, your letters of support should also outline how the author and/or organisation they represent has been consulted in the planning and implementation, and will continue to be consulted over the life of the project.

When we assess the level of community support for your project, we will take into account the scope and scale of the project. If your project will be delivered in multiple communities, you should provide evidence that all participating communities support the project.

Some examples of organisations you might seek support from include:

- Indigenous Language Centres
- RNTBC (native title bodies)
- relevant local Aboriginal corporations, cultural arts centres, resource agencies, reference groups

- Empowered Communities Reference Groups
- other non-government agencies such as those working with young people, employment, housing, substance abuse, justice issues
- regional development organisations
- tertiary institutions
- local government organisations

Note – Letters of support must be submitted with the application. Separate submission of letters of support is not acceptable. The ILA Team will not contact applicants to confirm or validate information provided in letters or videos of community support.

What will happen during the International Decade of Indigenous Languages (2022-32) and what does this mean for Australian Government support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages?

Following the successful 2019 International Year of Indigenous Languages (IY2019), Australia will take part in the upcoming UNESCO Decade of Indigenous Languages (2022-32) (the Decade).

Activities during the Decade will increase the profile of Indigenous languages, both in Australia and overseas. It is expected that a wide range of initiatives will be undertaken over the course of the decade among sectors as varied as education, sports, agriculture, academia, music, science and literature. The Australian mainstream media is expected to have a heightened interest in Indigenous languages throughout the decade, as it did during IY2019.

The ILA program will continue to support Indigenous language activities that meet the ILA guidelines and are consistent with the themes for the Decade, which include:

- supporting the revitalisation and maintenance of Indigenous languages
- providing access to education, information and knowledge in and about Indigenous languages
- promoting Indigenous knowledge and values

The *National Agreement on Closing the Gap* and upcoming *UNESCO International Decade of Indigenous Languages (2022-32)* initiatives mean there will be a sustained focus over the coming decade, both nationally and globally, on the work of the Indigenous language centres in capturing and reviving traditional Australian languages.

Can I apply for operational funds for my organisation?

No—for projects funded through the open competitive grant opportunity, grant money cannot be used for operational funds for general organisational costs. A maximum of **10 per cent** of the total ILA grant money may be used for project administration. Project administration may include items such as report-writing, data capture and reporting (if required), book-keeping, audits and financial management. For further information on eligible and ineligible grant activities see **Section 5.1** and **Section 5.2** of the program guidelines.

Can I apply for ILA funding to support projects that provide for the innovative use of digital technology?

Yes—in **Section 3.1**—**Item (1c)** of the program guidelines one of the objectives is to promote participation in Indigenous language teaching and learning, including utilising digital technology in an innovative and culturally sensitive manner.

Can I use ILA funding to support Indigenous employment outcomes?

Applicants are expected to demonstrate how their project will provide benefits to the community, including through improved skills and opportunities for professional and/or vocational development for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people (see **Section 8.2** of the program guidelines).

However, if your project's primary focus relates to Indigenous employment and/or career development outcomes more broadly, you may wish to consider the following Australian Government programs:

National Indigenous Australians Agency—Indigenous Advancement Strategy
The Indigenous Advancement Strategy (IAS) is the way the Australian Government funds and delivers a range of programs for Indigenous Australians. Through the IAS, the Australian Government is working to improve the way the Government does business with Indigenous Australians to ensure funding achieves outcomes. The structure of the IAS supports working with Indigenous Australians, communities, industries, business and service providers. Currently under the IAS, grant opportunities are available under the Culture and Capability program.

Australia Council—Career Development Grants
Grants available from $5,000 to $25,000. These grants can support a broad range of activities such as skills and professional development, mentorships, showcases, residencies and other projects directly related to your career development. Check the Australia Council's website for details of any upcoming funding opportunities.

I am an unincorporated association. Am I eligible to apply for an ILA grant?

No—under **Section 4.2** of the program guidelines an unincorporated association without an eligible auspicing body cannot enter into contracts in its own name.

I am a sole trader/individual. Am I eligible to apply for an ILA grant?

No— under **Section 4.2** of the program guidelines ILA funding is provided for community led projects, as such, individuals are not eligible for funding through ILA. If you are a sole trader or an individual wanting to deliver a community project, and you can demonstrate the project you are proposing has been generated within, and is supported by, the community, you may be able to apply through an auspicing arrangement with an eligible organisation.

If I am applying for funding under an auspicing arrangement do I need a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the auspicing organisation?

When applying for ILA funding through an auspicing arrangement both parties should consider developing an MOU that clearly sets out the expectations for both parties. This will alleviate any confusion and will ensure a smooth delivery of the project. An example of a short form MOU can be found here: Short form MOU template.

What types of organisations are not eligible for an ILA program grant?

The following organisations are not eligible to apply:

- a Commonwealth, State or Territory government portfolio agency or state or territory portfolio agency (including government business enterprises) established through specific Commonwealth or State or Territory legislation, with further information available on the Department of Finance website
- an individual and/or sole trader
- unincorporated association without an eligible auspicing body
- overseas resident/organisation
- any organisation not included in **Section 4.2** of the ILA program guidelines

If you are an ineligible organisation mentioned above, for your application to be considered you must arrange for a legal entity that meets the eligibility criteria in **Section 4.2** of the ILA program guidelines to auspice your application. For both auspice body arrangements and consortia, the application must include a letter of support from each organisation involved in the grant.

Can I apply for funding specifically to deliver an Indigenous festival?

No –the ILA program does not provide funding to support projects for the delivery of activities specifically for festivals, or a significant one-off community celebration. However, funded activities may be included as part of a festival, or a significant one-off community celebration.

If your primary activity is a single project at a festival throughout regional or remote Australia consider if Festivals Australia meets your project objectives.

Can I use ILA funding for NAIDOC Week celebrations?

No—the ILA program does not provide funding to support projects for the delivery of activities specifically created for the celebration of NAIDOC week. However, funded activities may be included as part of NAIDOC week celebrations.

If your primary activity is an event or activity to celebrate NAIDOC week, we encourage you to consider whether National Indigenous Australians Agency funding meets your project objectives.

Can I apply for media broadcasting project funding?

The ILA program does not provide funding support for activities that fall under the Indigenous Broadcasting support provided by National Indigenous Australians Agency. Funding support is provided for Indigenous community radio broadcasting and to address the broadcasting needs of Indigenous people living in remote, regional and urban areas of Australia.

Other competitive grant opportunities providing support include the Community Broadcasting Foundation Ltd. More than $16.8 million is provided annually to help 220 community media organisations communicate, connect and share knowledge through independent radio, television and digital media. Grants are allocated twice per year, with the majority of funding allocated in the first round.

Will the Indigenous Cultural Intellectual Property (ICIP) of my activity material that contains private and/or secret and sacred Indigenous materials remain my property and/or the property of my community?

Yes—the ILA program does not, and will not, retain any intellectual property rights over any activity materials that applicants identify as private and/or secret and sacred Indigenous materials. This material is and will remain the confidential information of the relevant Indigenous person or Indigenous community.

Why is the exhibition of traditional Indigenous arts and crafts production funded but not when it comes to the conservation, exhibition or interpretation of museum artefacts?

The ILA program does not provide funding to support the conservation, exhibition or interpretation of existing artefacts in museums. However, an objective of the ILA program is to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' engagement in artistic activities that may include the teaching of skills to fashion, make or produce implements or tools and the knowledge of materials linked to tradition. These are eligible activities and may include the exhibition of materials that were produced.

What do I need to write about accessibility for people with a disability?

The application form will ask you to talk about how your project can be inclusive and accessible to people with a disability. It is not compulsory to answer this question, but you are strongly encouraged to think about how your project can include accessibility. You can write about accessibility in the box provided, or you can download and complete the accessibility form that is hyperlinked in the application. To find out more about creating accessible arts and cultural activities, visit the Arts Access Australia website.

The application will also ask you if your project is disability-led, and if anyone in your project team identifies as a person with disability. The department collects this information to understand how people with disability are participating in the arts.

What should I do if my community has a language project where revival and/or maintenance of the language is already being funded through an Indigenous Language Centre?

The ILA program does not provide funding that supports the duplication of projects currently funded for the revival and maintenance of a language. However, if you consult with the organisation or Indigenous Language Centre delivering the current language activity, and it is determined your project does not duplicate this activity, an application may be submitted for the additional investment in that language. Your application should include evidence of this consultation and confirmation that your project does not duplicate existing ILA-funded activities. A list of Language centres can be found at www.arts.gov.au/funding-and-support/indigenous-languages-and-arts-program.

Can Kriol language workshops form part of the language activities funded?

No—the ILA program provides funding to revive and maintain Australia's traditional Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages. Kriol is not classified as a traditional language, and is therefore not eligible for funding through the program. If you are unsure if your language is eligible for funding, please contact us at ila@arts.gov.au.

Who can I contact for help regarding my SmartyGrants application?

In the first instance you should email ila@arts.gov.au or phone 1800 006 992 for any advice about the ILA program including questions about submitting a grant application. If your enquiry is a technical IT SmartyGrants system issue that we are unable to assist with, your issue will be escalated to the SmartyGrants help desk for assistance.

How do I submit a grant application?

You should submit your application using the SmartyGrants online portal. If you do not have access to appropriate IT facilities, you can phone 1800 006 992 or email ila@arts.gov.au to discuss an alternative solution.

When will I know if my application has been successful?

All applicants will be notified of the outcome of their application by email at the time successful applicants are being publicly announced. Estimated timeframes for the assessment of applications is included in the ILA program guidelines.

How can I find out why my application was not successful?

If your application is not successful you will be formally advised and you may seek feedback on your application in writing, should you so desire.

What happens if only part of our funding request is approved?

It is possible that the Minister may approve partial funding under certain circumstances. If this happens, we will work with your organisation to revise the project objectives, deliverables and budget before finalising your funding agreement.