



TONGA DIRECT AID PROGRAM GUIDELINES

OVERVIEW

The Direct Aid Program (DAP) is a competitive, flexible small grants program funded by the Australian Government and managed by the Australian High Commission in Tonga. The DAP invites proposals up to \$50,000 pa'anga that demonstrate a strong development focus and that complement the broader Tonga Australia relationship.

WHO CAN APPLY

The DAP is available on a not-for-profit basis to community groups, NGOs and other entities conducting development activities in Tonga. International organisations and National Government Ministries are not eligible to apply. If a community organisation has received DAP funding before and did not successfully complete the activity, they cannot re-apply.

ELIGIBLE ACTIVITIES

Activities that are primarily aimed at achieving practical and tangible outcomes of high development impact are eligible to apply for the DAP. We favorably consider projects:

- that have a focus on gender equality, disability equity, environment and climate change, or income generation and livelihoods;
- that take place on the outer islands of Tonga;
- where applicants and communities make a significant co-contribution to the project;
- that have a clear plan for ongoing maintenance costs;
- that have a letter of support from relevant government representatives or community leader.

Organisations must have a focal point and an active bank account who can provide progress reports and financial acquittals to the High Commission. Your application must have a clear budget. Projects must have a timeframe of one year or less.

If you wish to discuss your proposal before submitting, please make an appointment with the DAP coordinator to discuss. You can contact them by phone on 20424 or email at daptonga@dfat.gov.au

WE DO **NOT** FUND THE FOLLOWING:

- cash prizes, micro-credit schemes or loans
- commercial ventures
- improvements to an individual's house/land or purchase of major assets for individuals
- international travel or overseas study tours
- routine or recurring operational costs or administrative expenses such as office rental, utility costs or staff salaries (including training/facilitation fees)
- payment for catering or meals

KEY DATES FOR DAP 2025-26

	ROUND 1	ROUND 2
Applications Open	13 October 2025	9 February 2026
Applications Close	31 October 2025	28 February 2026



HOW TO APPLY

There are three ways to apply for the Direct Aid Program.

Option 1: Online (preferred method)

- Go to dap.smartygrants.com.au to register an account on the online system
- After you have made an account, select the Tonga Direct Aid Program round
- Answer each application question according to the instructions provided
- Submit your application electronically via smartygrants before applications close

Option 2: Softcopy (if you cannot access the online application)

- Request an application from daptonga@dfat.gov.au
- Answer each application question according to the instructions provided
- Submit your application to daptonga@dfat.gov.au before applications close

Option 3: Hardcopy

- you can collect a hardcopy from the Australian High Commission, Salote Road, Nuku'alofa
- complete each application question according to the instructions provide and ensure your writing is clear and easy to read
- drop off the hardcopy to the Australian High Commission before applications close

Please contact the DAP Coordinator at daptonga@dfat.gov.au if you have any questions about the application process.

To strengthen your application, you should consider the following:

- How will you maximise the number of people that will benefit from your project?
- If the community can contribute to the project (land, material, labour, partial funding).
- How can the project continue to provide a benefit to the community after the funding has been spent?
- Provide a clear and detailed budget, and if relevant attach various quotes for proposed purchases.
- Provide a letter of support from a community leader or government representative
- Make sure you have thoroughly considered gender and disability equality and climate change in your application

Examples of Projects we have funded previously:

- Fabric and supplies for sewing classes
- Renovations to community halls
- Tapa making machines for women's organisations
- IT equipment and books for public libraries
- Bathrooms and water tanks for schools
- Planting trees for coastal resilience
- Renewable energy water pumps for community water tanks
- Education supplies and playgrounds for preschools



TONGA DIRECT AID PROGRAM – FAQ

WHO IS ELIGIBLE TO APPLY?

The DAP is available on a not-for-profit basis to community groups, NGOs and other entities conducting development activities in Tonga. International organisations and National Government Ministries are not eligible to apply. If a community organisation has received DAP funding before and did not successfully complete the activity, they cannot re-apply.

WHAT KIND OF PROJECTS DO WE FUND?

Almost anything! If a project is for the broader benefit of the community and has a tangible development outcome with a clear plan for the future then it's the type of project we want to fund. We favour projects that have a focus on gender equality, disability equity, environment and climate change, or income generation and livelihoods. Projects that have strong community co-contributions or take place on the outer islands are more likely to be selected.

DO I HAVE TO PROVIDE A LETTER OF SUPPORT WITH MY APPLICATION?

It is not compulsory to provide a letter of support with your application. Please be aware that applications that have a letter of support provided by a relevant government representative or community leader will be given greater consideration. Relevant government representatives and community leaders include (but are not limited to) Members of Parliament, District Officers and Church leaders.

DOES MY COMMUNITY NEED TO CONTRIBUTE?

Activities must demonstrate some sort of community contribution (funds or in-kind support). Applications with stronger community contributions will be given greater consideration.

DO I NEED TO PROVIDE A QUOTE?

Yes, if your activity proposes making a purchase. Where possible, provide 2-3 quotes for consideration with your application. Please note that applications must submit a budget for the activity. Applications that do not submit a budget will not be considered.

IS THERE A MINIMUM OR MAXIMUM AMOUNT FOR EACH PROPOSAL?

You can apply for any amount up to the maximum of \$50,000 pa'anga.

HOW CAN FUNDS BE USED?


The funds can only be utilised for purposes agreed upon by the applicant and the Australian High Commission. If the project changes as it is implemented, any reallocation funds of grant funds must be submitted to the Australian High Commission in writing for approval. Building or construction related projects should meet Australian and Tongan standards.

CAN I HAND IN A HARD COPY OF MY PROPOSAL?

Yes, you can collect a hardcopy from the Australian High Commission, 82 Salote Road, Nuku'alofa. You must complete each application question according to the instructions provided and drop off the hardcopy to the Australian High Commission before applications close. If submitting a hardcopy application, ensure your writing is clear and easy to read.

CAN I SUBMIT A PROPOSAL THAT BENEFITS JUST MYSELF, MY FAMILY OR MY BUSINESS?

Projects must benefit the community or community members at large and cannot be used for profit



by an individual or their own family. Any application that solely benefits an individual or an individual's private business will not be considered.

HOW WILL YOU NOTIFY SUCCESSFUL APPLICANTS?

All applicants will be notified via email of the outcome of their application within three weeks of the closing date.

MY APPLICATION WAS NOT SUCCESSFUL, WHY? CAN I SUBMIT THE APPLICATION AGAIN?

Unfortunately, due to the large number of applications received the Australian High Commission cannot provide feedback on individual applications. We encourage you to submit your application again in future rounds. To strengthen your application you may want to:

- Check that your organisation is eligible to be a DAP recipient and that your proposed activity meets the eligibility criteria.
- Ensure that your proposed budget is comprehensive and you have quotes for any proposed purchases.
- Gather further support from the community to make or increase the co-contribution
- Increase the focus of the activity to include gender and disability equality and climate change
- Ensure that the project can be completed within one year

MY APPLICATION WAS SUCCESSFUL, WHAT NOW?

Congratulations! We will reach out to you, usually via email, to organise a meeting so that together we can:

- Negotiate what can and cannot be included in your grant (for example, if you requested TOP20,000 but that included a request for items that are not eligible, we will work with you to negotiate the final amount).
- Complete a due diligence assessment, if your activity includes children then we will need to see your Child Protection Policy.
- Discuss reporting requirements and timelines
- Get your bank details
- Sign the grant!

MY ORGANISATION RECEIVED A GRANT, WHAT ARE OUR OBLIGATIONS?

DAP recipients have three reporting obligations after receiving their grant, they must:

- Submit a “halfway” **progress report**. Grants usually run for 12 months, and at the 6 month mark the Australian High Commission requires the applicant to submit a progress report outlining what has been achieved in those 6 months and what the timeframe is for completion. If your grant timeline is shorter than 12 months then you are required to submit the progress report at the halfway mark.
- During the implementation of your activity, your application focal point must be **responsive** to the Australian High Commission seeking updates or visits to the site.
- At the end of your activity, you must provide the Australian High Commission with a **financial acquittal** outlining all the costs incurred and expensed on the project.

If the progress report and the financial acquittal are not submitted, your organisation will not be eligible to receive future DAP grants!