



**BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT GRANTS COMMITTEE
GUIDELINES**



2021

1. Background

The Business Development Fund was established in 2013 to support the development of small and medium sized businesses in Niue through the provision funding support.

The Business Development Funding comes from the New Zealand Government through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Annual Funding to the Niue Chamber of Commerce.

The primary objective of the Business Development Fund is to support the private sector in increasing its contribution to the Niuean economy through:

- Increasing private sector employment and skills development in locally owned businesses
- Meeting the needs and expectations of tourists and locals
- Improving the viability and profitability of private sector businesses
- Increasing business investment and innovation
- Providing pathways to export/import substitutions
- Increasing resilience to climate change
- Developing initiatives to conduct business more sustainably and introduce eco-friendly practices.

2. Business Development Fund Administration

The Business Development Fund is administered by the Niue Chamber of Commerce. The Secretariat for the Fund is the Niue Chamber of Commerce. The grant applications are reviewed by the Business Development Grants Committee made up of:

The President of the Niue Chamber of Commerce (Grants Committee Chair)

Three members of the Niue Chamber of Commerce Board

Business Development Manager/CEO, Niue Chamber of Commerce

The Niue Chamber of Commerce Board appoints the members of the Business Development Grants Committee (Grants Committee). Efforts will be made to ensure gender and diversity in the Business Development Grants Committee. A quorum for the Grants Committee meetings is four members.

Business Development Grants Committee members must declare any conflicts of interest and these will be recorded. No member of the Grants Committee shall participate in the review or approval of any project in which that member, an immediate family member, or an organisation with which that member is associated, has an interest. In such cases, the member shall be excused from both the discussion and decision on the application. The Niue Chamber of Commerce Board shall have the right to co-opt replacement members to ensure a quorum.

Upon accepting appointment to the Grants Committee, members commit themselves to ensuring the complete objectivity and transparency of the Niue Chamber of Commerce, both in fact and in appearance. The Niue Chamber of Commerce and the Grants Committee must avoid the appearance of self-dealing, conflict of interest, or undue influence. Grants Committee members cannot benefit directly from the Business Development Grants.

Applicants have been advised that they must not lobby or endeavour to influence the members of the grants Committee directly about their Business Development Grant Application. Should this occur the Grants Committee member should declare this at the Grants Committee meeting.

3. Eligibility

To apply for a Business Development Grant, you must comply with the following:

- All applicants must be a current member of the Niue Chamber of Commerce.
- All applicants for Subsistence Grants, Business Assistance Grant, Business Diversification Grant and Business Exports/Imports Substitution Grant must be already actively trading.
- Other than Subsistence Grants all businesses must be registered businesses with the Government of Niue with a Current Business License
- All applicants must be residing in Niue.
- All applicants must be Niuean, or have at least 50% Niuean ownership, or have Niuean Permanent Residency.
- All applicants must be applying for funding for capital expenditure, equipment, assets or capacity building.

General:

- Only in exceptional circumstances will applications be accepted from businesses who have received a Business Development Grant in the preceding round.
- Business Development Grants cannot be used for debt retirement or retrospective purchases or projects.
- You are not eligible to apply for a Business Development Grant if you are a foreign investor, a non-Niuean without Permanent Residency and without a Niue Business Partner with at least 50% ownership of the business, or if you do not reside in Niue.
- NGO's are not eligible to apply for Business Development Grants.
- Businesses will not be eligible to apply for any grant if they have received grant from the Tourism Funding Grants 2021

4. Grants Available

Subsistence Grant — up to \$1000

Registered or non-registered business/trader/farmer/market stall holder, must have been trading for at least 12 months, must meet the eligibility criteria, must outline how this grant will improve their business, must supply quotes less than 30 days old and outline specifically what it will be used to fund and what financial contribution they are making to this improvement themselves.

Business Assistance Grant – up to \$4000

Must be a registered business, must meet the eligibility criteria, must supply quotes less than 30 days old and a business plan for their business which outlines how this grant will improve their business. Must have been trading for at least two years.

Business Diversification Grant – up to \$4,000

Must be registered business, must meet the eligibility criteria, must supply detailed business plan including how this grant will significantly contribute to the diversification of their business, for example an export readiness plan, expansion plan, diversification plan. Must have been trading for at least two (2) years.

Business Exports/Import Substitution – up to \$4,000

Can be a new business venture, however must meet eligibility criteria, must supply detailed business plan including how this grant will work for their business. This grant is a matching investment of dollar for dollar up to \$4,000.

5. Funding Rounds

There will be one round of grant funding for 2020-2021

Opening and closing dates will be promoted by the Niue Chamber of Commerce and Application Packs will be available from the Niue Chamber of Commerce office and website.

– Applications Close 4pm on Friday 30 April 2021

LATE APPLICATIONS WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED

6. Business Development Grants Committee Roles and Responsibilities

The Business Development Grants Committee is responsible for ensuring that the Business Development Fund meets its specified objectives by providing governance, oversight, setting guidelines and providing decisions on funding applications. The Business Development Grants Committee is responsible for:

- Reporting to the Governments of Niue and New Zealand on the performance of the fund.
- Overseeing the Secretariat operations of the Business Development Fund.
- Development of guidelines and criteria for approval of Business Development Grants.
- Monitoring of funded projects.
- Decisions on applications.
- Declaring and documenting all actual or potential conflicts of interest.

Members of the Grants Committee are not entitled to sitting fees.

7. Business Development Grants Committee Administration and Decisions

A minimum of four members of the Grants Committee must attend a meeting or be involved in confirming a decision. A unanimous or majority vote will decide the outcome of a grant application.

Decisions may be agreed to in a meeting, by email or other forms of visible or other electronic communication by a majority and shall be valid as if it had been passed at a meeting. It is at the discretion of the Grants Committee to seek from the applicant supplementary information to be made available for review.

Minutes concerning meetings in which applications are reviewed should be as detailed and specific as possible, listing each project considered and including all the Committee recommendations or observations about each project. The Committee decision about each project should be clearly noted, including any reformulations required before final approval. The list of approved projects should include the amount approved. The minutes should be signed by all Committee members present.

The Secretariat shall prepare and present meeting minutes for review and signature by the Committee within 48 hours of every meeting. Once signed by the Committee members involved, the original should be filed in NCOC office BDG Grants file and a copy used to administer the outcome advice letters to applicants and preparation of Grant Funding Agreements. Outcome advice letters shall be emailed, or where no email address is available then delivered, within seven working days of the Grants Committee meeting and decisions.

The NCOC office is the Secretariat for the Business Development Grants Committee, and is responsible for managing communication between and among Committee members, for sending out notices of meetings, and for maintaining substantive records of all meetings and actions taken, including the outcome advice letters and Grant Funding Agreements.

Meetings of the Grants Committee shall be convened by the Secretariat. Notice is to be given at least [seven days] in advance of the meetings, except in the case of special or emergency meetings, for which the notice requirement may be waived. Notice shall include the agenda for the meeting, a list of all projects to be considered at the meeting, and copies of all relevant documents and proposals.

Business Development Grants must be used within six months of the Business Development Grant Agreement being signed. There shall be no rollover of Business Development Grants past this six-month period. If allocated Business Development Grants are not used, they shall be returned to the Business Development Fund for reallocation. Businesses not using their Business Development Grant within six months shall be required to reapply to a future funding round.

8. Secretariat Role and Responsibilities

The Secretariat provided by the Niue Chamber of Commerce is primarily responsible for the daily operational management of the Business Development Grant fund. This includes:

1. Coordination and awareness initiatives for the promotion of the Business Development Grants.
2. Provides Business Development Grant application guidelines and forms on request.
3. Overall management of the application, acknowledgement, assessment, implementation, monitoring and evaluation processes to include:
 - Maintaining a database of all applications.
 - Facilitate and assist applicants, where possible, in completing applications and referring applicants to other sources of funding, if not eligible for assistance under the fund.
 - Ensure the eligibility of applicants and activities.
 - Ensure completion of relevant documents before disbursements of funds.
 - Preparation of the agendas, reports and minutes of the meetings in accordance with the Committee Administration guidelines.
 - Provision of a post Grants Committee report to the Board of the Niue Chamber of Commerce summarising the list of applicants and outcomes.
4. Prepare reports for submission to the Government of Niue and New Zealand to include a summary of grants, breakdown by sector and a fund reconciliation.

9. Confidentiality

All matters discussed at Committee meetings, together with all material provided to members of the Committee, are for the purposes of informed discussion and debate at the meeting. It is therefore not for general public release. The views of other Committee members will be treated with respect and will not be discussed with external parties. All communication with the media will be undertaken by the BDM or the Committee Chair. Committee members must refrain from making any public comment or issuing any information, in any form, concerning the Committee or the Grant Applications or the matters of interest to the Committee without authority.

The Grants Committee must keep all Committee papers, agendas and copies of all applicant's details sent to them safe and confidential, any hard copies should be taken to the meeting and handed to the Secretariat for safe disposal at the end of the meeting.

The Board of the Niue Chamber of Commerce and the staff, including the BDG Secretariat are bound to adhere to this confidentiality through their signed confidentiality agreements as Board Members and Employment Contracts as staff.