



Food Innovation Vouchers

Application Guide

Food Innovation Vouchers help businesses become investor ready, innovate, diversify, improve productivity and take new products to market.

VOUCHER OPTIONS

Vouchers can be used to access facilities, services, advice or expertise from Registered Service Providers. There are three voucher types.

1. Early stage feasibility and testing

For a problem that needs an innovative solution.

Voucher: Up to \$10,000

Types of activities supported:

- initial feasibility plans
- stress-testing of early concepts
- identifying and mapping pathways between businesses and innovation service providers (e.g. a research institute).

Applicant is required to contribute at least one hour of time in-kind for every \$1000 of voucher funds.



2. Process innovation, product development, research, market positioning and labelling

For applied research projects with an innovation service provider.

Voucher: Up to \$50,000

Types of activities supported:

- product testing, validating, prototyping and verification
- automating existing processes or operations and streamline internal processes
- consumer science, research and testing of new product design
- small volume production to test commercial viability of new hardware, technology or products.

Suitable for emerging projects from the early stage feasibility voucher. Applicant is required to co-contribute at least 1:1 in cash.

3. Prepare for and attract investment

To increase investment into the food and agriculture sector by supporting businesses to become "investor ready" and attractive to investors.

Voucher: Up to \$50,000

Types of activities supported:

1. Assessing options, developing a business plan to allow potential investors to understand the opportunity.
2. Preparing for investment by documenting financial arrangements, ownership/tax structures, legal aspects and governance arrangements for potential investors.
3. Development of prospectus materials to assist in delivering the pitch or proposition to the investor.

Applicant is required to co-contribute at least 1:1 in cash.

Businesses can partner with accredited industry experts through the voucher program.



CASE STUDIES

Altering ingredients to increase nutrition



The applicant is a producer and manufacturer of cereals in Victoria. The company's business plan is to increase its brand position as a health food company, and wants to increase the nutrition density in its cereals.

The company is aware that some Australians are lacking in Vitamin B12 and magnesium. Adding this to cereals, could increase demand and improve their products' Health Star Rating.

Under an 'Early Stage Feasibility and Testing Voucher', the business works with an innovation consultant to stress-test the idea, assess possibilities and determine how the business may work with an R&D provider for potential commercialisation.

Product innovation meet healthy eating guidelines



The applicant is a vending company/ food manufacturer for large organisations such as hospitals, universities, sport and recreation centres and large workplaces. Most customers want to provide healthy options to align with government nutrition guidelines - or to meet contractual agreements that specify healthier food/ drinks must be supplied.

The applicant is aware that very few packaged products - which require a longer shelf life - meet health food requirements. The applicant is also aware that traditional unhealthy vending products are popular and generate income.

The company identified new reduced salt dip/cracker and cheese/wholegrain cracker products - that could have a longer shelf life - and uses a voucher for product development in partnership with an innovative food technologist. Testing of the product among target markets will identify any changes that need to be made before it's launched into the market as a product that meets government Healthy Choices Guidelines.

Packaging innovation to improve waste outcomes



The applicant produces safe food packaging for the catering sector. Wastage, spoilage and micro-organism growth continue to be problems.

To decrease supply chain costs, and reduce the use of plastics and food wastage, the business collaborates with an R&D facility to research and develop packaging - using paper-based degradable materials with approved food preservatives - to increase the shelf life of packaged food, without the use of induced gases.

The service provider works with the business to package, store and observe food items in these containers - to assess whether the concept works and what refinements are required.

Fresh vending innovation



The applicant makes and distributes fresh nori rolls (sushi) to retail outlets, including cafes, school canteens, train station kiosks, hospitals, recreation facilities and universities.

After a trip to Japan, the applicant has an idea to develop and pilot a vending machine to supply fresh nori rolls, most of which meet government Healthy Choices Guidelines.

The company uses a voucher to work in partnership with a vending machine manufacturer to:

- Develop a prototype machine suitable for vending nori rolls
- Adapt their existing products and packaging
- Develop supply procedures (including safety and quality assurance)
- Test market feasibility and acceptability.

The "Nori on the Run"/ "Sushi up Late?" vending machines are being trialled by several universities, and also in two large Melbourne hospitals.

WHO CAN APPLY?

Business Criteria:

- Registered business in Victoria with an Australian Business Number (ABN)
- A legal entity engaged in the food value chain - or a genuine commercial connection to the food value chain - and a member of the Victorian Food Innovation Network (refer to agriculture.vic.gov.au/foodinnovation)
- Meets industrial relations obligations in accordance with the National Employment Standards
- Operates in Victoria
- Employs 20 to 200 staff or has an annual turnover of more than \$1.5 million.

Additional Voucher Criteria:

- Co-contribute cash expenditure (or in-kind for early stage feasibility)
- Conduct majority of proposed activities in Victoria in partnership with Registered Service Provider
- Participate in future program evaluation.

Vouchers are available to small and medium-sized enterprises (SME) businesses across the food value chain¹.

Not Eligible: Industry groups, commonwealth, state and local government agencies.

¹ For the purposes of this program, 'food value chain' includes agriculture (excluding forestry and fishing) and food and beverage manufacturing.

MORE INFORMATION

For program guidelines, application forms, a list of Registered Service Providers, and opening and closing dates visit:

www.business.vic.gov.au/foodinnovation