

DBS Foundation Social Enterprise Grant Programme

Frequently Asked Questions

General

How many grantees a year does the DBS Foundation pick?

We give out finite number of grants every year but there is no fixed number that we aim to fill. The number of grantees we pick depends on the quality of applications received.

Is the grant programme open through the year?

The grant programme typically opens in June and applications close in early August.

When will I know the results?

Applicants will be informed out the outcome of their applications in November.

What timeframe am I given to use the grant that has been disbursed?

In your application you have to state how and when you would be using the grant amount. The time frame is not prescribed but has to be reasonable based on the proposal at hand. We recommend not exceeding 18 - 24 months.

Will I have to provide reports during work implementation?

Yes, the grantees are expected to share their progress at regular intervals.

How will the grant be disbursed?

The DBS Foundation will discuss with grantees to determine the funding need of each grantee before milestones are set. Grants are disbursed upon achievement of these mutually agreed milestones.

Can the grant be used to fund past activities?

The grant cannot be used to fund past programmes/events. It can only be used for expenses which are incurred after the grant agreement had been signed.

Does DBS Foundation take up equity in the grantees?

Under the generic grant mechanism, DBS Foundation does not take up equity in the grantees. That said, in exceptional cases, DBS Foundation may also facilitate loans or investments by third parties upon consent from the social enterprise.

Application

My business is not a social enterprise, can I still apply?

The grant programme is for social enterprises only. Please see below to understand how social enterprises are defined.

Social enterprises are businesses that have a social mission at their core and use sustainable commercial models to achieve this social mission. Their primary objective is to achieve positive social, cultural, community economic and/or environmental outcomes. As such, income generation should play a key supporting role to achieve their social mission. They sustain themselves with earned revenue, with no reliance on philanthropic giving for their operations. Traditional commercial models focus on delivering profits to shareholders, and may contribute a portion of excess profits for social good; social enterprises focus on centering their operating models around achieving their social mission. Profits generated are committed towards strengthening their ability to create positive social impact, and be able to clearly demonstrate such impact with measurement and reporting.

Mature social enterprises that have obtained other forms of investment should remain majority controlled in the interest of its social mission. Social enterprises should also be independent entities that are autonomous of the state. While social enterprises should be able to sustain themselves through their own commercial operations, we recognise that some reliance on grants in the early pilot/start-up stages is common.

If I have already obtained a grant from another organisation, will it limit my chances of being selected for this programme?

No, the grants you have previously received will not influence your application to DBS Foundation Grant Programme but you are required to disclose this information in the application. Your application should strongly substantiate how the grant from us can be prudently used to achieve the outcomes you intend.

Can I apply to this programme even if I am a past / existing grantee of DBS?

Yes, the focus of the DBS Foundation's Grant Programme is to grow successful and impactful social enterprises. If you can substantiate how the DBS Foundation's grants will help grow your social enterprise to the next stage, you can explore this opportunity by applying to the grant programme, with the understanding that it needs to make a strong case for further support from DBS Foundation. Being a former grantee does not guarantee a grant under this programme. Each application will be assessed on its merit.

Can I apply for more than one type of grant?

Applicants can apply for only one type of grant in any one year. However successful grantees that have achieved their milestones may consider applying for another grant in following years.

You can pick a grant depending on the stage of growth your social enterprise is in and one that best suits your needs. Please refer the table below to assess which type of grant is best suited for you.

I am interested in the...	
Prototype grant	I have just incorporated my business. I am currently developing / enhancing a prototype. I have a prototype ready to be tested.
Organisational grant	My business has been in operation for more than 2 years. I am looking to use the grant to strengthen my business capabilities
Scale-up grant	My business has been in operation for more than 3 years. I have audited annual financial reports available. My balance sheet is positive. I am using the grant to grow my current business for more social impact.

How do I know the information that I have submitted to the Foundation is safe?

The DBS Foundation is governed by the Personal Data Protection Act and the information you provide will be secure. By participating in the Grant Application process, you are indicating consent to DBSF collecting and using personal particulars (including but not limited to name and contact details) for purposes of the DBS Foundation Grant - Call for Proposal. DBS Foundation will not use the personal particulars for any other purpose. All personal particulars provided to DBS Foundation for the Call for Proposal will be kept secure and processed in accordance with all applicable laws.

How will I know if my grant application has been received?

You will receive a confirmation email from the DBS Foundation within a week after submission of your application. We will be in touch with you for any further clarification required.

Can someone help me with my proposal submission?

As the Call for Proposal is a competitive call, it would be unfair, or could be perceived to be unfair, for DBS Foundation to help any applicant in the submission. You may refer to the grant proposal guidelines provided along with the application form. As much as possible, we will clarify with applicants should we need further information during the evaluation process. Please note that incomplete or vague applications where applicants failed to complete all sections of the application or not provide substantial information for our assessment will be rejected.

Evaluation

How does DBS Foundation decide on the Grant Awardees?

The approach we take in selecting grantees can be found on our website. Please read through carefully so you are ready with the necessary information before filling the application form. Specific evaluation criteria will vary based on the kind of grant applied for, but the key criteria of our evaluation remain the same. We have a committee comprising of internal and external experts who decide on the grant awardees for the year based on the strength of the applications.

If I am not selected this year, can I apply again next year? How do I appeal?

The decision of the evaluation panel is final. Yes, you can apply again next year.

My application had been unsuccessful. Can I get feedback or meet up with a DBS Foundation representative to explain my application?

Due to the overwhelming responses that we typically receive, it would be a challenge for us to meet each applicant to provide detailed feedback. However, we can certainly be in touch over email to provide feedback.