



**Australian Government**

---

**Department of Health**

**Flexible Fund Guidelines**

HEALTH SOCIAL SURVEYS FUND

January 2014

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>1</b>	<b>Introduction</b> .....	<b>1</b>
1.1	Fund guiding principles, objectives and priorities .....	1
1.2	Fund background.....	2
1.3	Fund scope and operating parameters .....	2
1.4	Roles and responsibilities.....	3
1.5	Fund timeframe .....	4
1.6	Fund value.....	4
<b>2</b>	<b>Eligibility</b> .....	<b>4</b>
2.1	Who can access the Fund? .....	4
2.2	What is eligible for funding? .....	5
<b>3</b>	<b>Probity</b> .....	<b>5</b>
3.1	Conflict of interest .....	5
3.2	Confidentiality and protection of personal information.....	5
<b>4</b>	<b>Fund application processes</b> .....	<b>6</b>
4.1	Access to funds .....	6
4.1.1	<i>Open Tendering</i> .....	6
4.1.2	<i>Select Tendering</i> .....	6
4.1.3	<i>Direct Tendering</i> .....	6
4.2	Fund Underexpenditure.....	6
4.3	Procurement processes .....	6
4.4	Decisions.....	7
<b>5</b>	<b>Conditions of funding</b> .....	<b>8</b>
5.1	Contracting arrangements .....	8
5.2	Specific conditions .....	8
5.3	Payment arrangements .....	8
5.4	Reporting requirements.....	8
5.5	Monitoring .....	8
5.6	Evaluation .....	8
<b>6</b>	<b>Glossary of terms</b> .....	<b>9</b>
	<b>Attachment A – Fund priorities and assessment requirements</b> .....	<b>10</b>

# **1 Introduction**

The Health Social Surveys Fund (the Fund) is an Australian Government initiative administered by the Department of Health (the department) designed to support the collection, analysis and dissemination of social health data through a consistent, national approach.

The Government committed to establish 18 flexible funds as part of the 2011-12 Federal Budget. The Health Social Surveys Fund is one of the 18 Funds that came into operation from 1 July 2011. As this is a procurement-only Fund, the department will not be offering grants under this Fund and the procurement process will follow the Commonwealth Procurement Rules.

Establishing the Health Social Surveys Fund will enable the Australian Government to be more strategic and flexible in developing, implementing, monitoring and evaluating evidence-based policies that are designed to improve Australia's health system and the population's health status. It will also provide data to inform whole-of-government policies, such as the social inclusion and Closing the Gap initiatives, and to assist in identify emerging Government priorities.

## **1.1 Fund guiding principles, objectives and priorities**

The key objective of the Fund is to establish a comprehensive evidence base that will underpin the development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of relevant health policies.

To assist in meeting this objective the Fund's guiding principles are targeted at procuring health social survey related activities that:

- are responsive to, and aligned with, the Government's social health data needs;
- facilitate comparable data collections to enable comparisons between Australia and other countries, Australian jurisdictions and regions, and population sub-groups and to monitor trends over time;
- include sufficient sample sizes and appropriate sample-frames to provide meaningful estimates;
- ensure that survey participant's individual data remain private and confidential;
- adhere to relevant ethical research standards and privacy principles and are conducted through culturally sensitive and appropriate approaches;
- ensure that rigorous, valid and best-practice health social survey infrastructure and methodologies are developed and employed;
- provide opportunities for data linkages where possible; and
- support the access, dissemination, and uptake of social health data both within Government and the wider public-health community.

The following activities have been identified as priority areas to achieve the Fund's objectives and translate its key principles into practice:

- a. collection, analysis and interpretation of cross-sectional population health data (self-reported and objective) to understand the health status, attitudes and behaviours of the population, and population sub-groups of interest;
- b. collection, analysis and interpretation of longitudinal data (self-reported and administrative) to better understand trends and environmental and social influences on male and women's health status, attitudes and behaviours;

- c. establish high-quality infrastructure and methodologies to support health social survey implementation; and
- d. support the dissemination of the social health data and information collected under the Fund to suit a wide range of stakeholders' needs.

These Fund priorities are further described at Attachment A. These may be adjusted from time to time to take into account evidence about the effectiveness, efficiency and appropriateness of Fund activities, as well as emerging population health challenges.

## **1.2 Fund background**

The Fund was established on 1 July 2011 through the consolidation of the administrative and funding arrangements for the department's major health social surveys.

The establishment of the Fund followed a strategic review of the administrative arrangements in the Health portfolio commissioned by the Government in 2010. The review identified an opportunity to improve the management of existing programs through consolidating them into larger, flexible Funds, in order to reduce red tape, increase flexibility, and more efficiently provide funding for the delivery of health outcomes. Further information about the strategic review and the establishment of the Flexible Funds is available on the [department's website](http://www.health.gov.au) at: [www.health.gov.au](http://www.health.gov.au)

Consolidating health social survey funding in this way creates more flexibility to address current and emerging social health data needs, and strengthen the evidence base in this area. It also provides the opportunity for the health social surveys to share intelligence and infrastructure between existing collections and future collections where appropriate, thus introducing greater efficiencies and a more consistent, strategic and systematic approach to social health data collection, analysis and dissemination.

## **1.3 Fund scope and operating parameters**

The Fund is procurement-only, and will not disburse funding through grant processes.

Accordingly, all procurements will be subject to the Commonwealth Procurement Rules (CPRs).

Activities under the Fund will be targeted on the collection, analysis and dissemination of social health data through a strategic and consistent approach. This may include, but not be limited to: developing, testing and validating data collection instruments and methodologies; establishing and maintaining health social survey infrastructure (such as food composition databases or data repositories); recruiting/maintaining samples; enumerating social health surveys; analysing and linking social health data; and disseminating and analysing data.

As funding becomes available, it will be allocated by the Minister for Health (the Minister) through a strategic and systematic approach to the Fund's priorities and activities. Funds will be deployed as set out in these guidelines.

The funding committed to particular Fund priorities and supported activities may be varied over time to take into account:

- availability of funding;

- evidence, including from evaluation activities, of the effectiveness, efficiency and appropriates of Fund activities; and
- emerging population health challenges.

## **1.4 Roles and responsibilities**

### **The Minister for Health**

The Minister will be responsible for reviewing/setting priorities for the Fund and the allocation of funding against these priorities. These priorities will at all times reflect the objectives of the Fund but may change over time to address emerging issues relating to the collection, analysis and dissemination of social health survey data.

### **Department of Health**

The Department of Health will be responsible for identifying gaps and overlaps in social health survey needs and strategically and systematically procuring health social survey related activities in order to achieve the objective of the Fund within the priority areas. Final decisions on procurement outcomes will be made by the appropriate departmental delegate.

The department will also be responsible for establishing, managing and monitoring contractual arrangements under the Fund such as:

- developing contractual arrangements
- establishing mechanisms to seek and provide technical advice to funded organisations on project planning and implementation
- monitoring the performance of projects to ensure the conditions of the contractual arrangement are met and outcomes are achieved
- assessing performance and undertaking follow up activity as necessary
- making payments on acceptance of milestone reports as specified in the contractual arrangement
- undertaking evaluation activities as appropriate
- providing feedback to contracted entities on the overall project following the conclusion of activities.

### **Contracted entity**

The contracted entity is responsible for the efficient and effective delivery of the services in accordance with the obligations contained in any contractual arrangement entered into under the Fund including:

- ensuring they meet the specifications of the contractual arrangement
- ensuring the project is managed in a cost effective and efficient manner
- maintaining contact with the department and advising of any emerging issues that may impact on the performance outcome of the project
- reporting on project performance in accordance with the contractual obligations
- assisting with evaluation activities as necessary

## **1.5 Fund timeframe**

The Fund is an ongoing initiative available from 1 July 2011. The duration of funding provided for activities supported under the Fund will vary depending on Fund priorities and the nature of the activity. Timeframes for activities associated with the procurement processes undertaken within the Fund will be clearly specified in the tender documentation for that process.

## **1.6 Fund value**

The total value of funds available under the Fund, as announced in the 2011 Federal Budget, is \$31.838 million over the four years ending 30 June 2015. This amount includes funding that has been committed to the existing activities that were consolidated into the Fund.

The department will review activities under the Fund on an annual basis and provide advice to the Minister on emerging challenges, to allow for the adjustment of the funding allocation priorities and to ensure that emerging specific social health data needs of the public health community are addressed where possible.

## **2 Eligibility**

### **2.1 Who can access the Fund?**

Unless specified otherwise for a specific procurement and as permitted under the CPRs, tenders will be open to all potential suppliers. This will include:

- incorporated Associations (incorporated under State/ Territory legislation, commonly have 'Association' or 'Incorporated' or 'Inc' in their legal name);
- incorporated Cooperatives (also incorporated under State/ Territory legislation, commonly have 'Cooperative' in their legal name);
- companies (incorporated under the Corporations Act 2001 – may be not-for-profit or for-profit proprietary company [limited by shares or by guarantee] or public companies);
- Aboriginal Corporations (incorporated under the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Act 2006 and administered by the office of the Registrar of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Corporations);
- organisations established through a specified piece of Commonwealth or State/ Territory legislation (many public benevolent institutions, churches, universities, unions, etc.);
- partnerships;
- trustees on behalf of a Trust;
- Commonwealth, State/ Territory or Local Governments; and
- individuals jointly or separately.

Should a procurement have restricted eligibility requirements, this will be clearly specified in the tender documentation for that procurement.

Tenderers may be able to apply for any procurement under this Fund, subject to any conditions which may be attached to that procurement. They may also be able to apply for funding under other flexible Funds, and are also encouraged to apply to the department for other, non-Fund activities.

Tenderers are not required to have had a prior funding relationship established with the department to be eligible for any procurement under this Fund.

## **2.2 Property and services to be procured**

A range of property and/or services that contribute to meeting the objectives, guiding principles and priorities of the Fund may be procured. The precise property and/or services will be specified in the tender documentation and tenders must only cover the property or services specified in relevant tender documentation.

## **3 Probity**

The Australian Government is committed to ensuring that the process for providing funding under the Fund meets the requirements for transparency ethics and probity applying to Australian Government agencies and any specific requirements in the published Fund Guidelines. Documentation for each individual procurement will contain detailed guidance on the specific requirements for that procurement..

*Note: Fund Guidelines may be varied from time-to-time by the Australian Government as the needs of the Fund dictate. Amended Fund Guidelines will be published on the department's website.*

### **3.1 Conflict of interest**

Each Tenderer will be required to declare as part of each procurement process, any actual or perceived conflict of interest that might or might be perceived as impacting on the selection process or the implementation of the services under any contractual arrangement entered into with the Australian Government.

A conflict of interest may exist, for example, if the Tenderer or any of its personnel:

- has a relationship (whether professional, commercial or personal) with a party who is able to influence the tender assessment process, such as a department staff member;
- has a relationship with, or interest in, an organisation, which is likely to interfere with or restrict the Tenderer in carrying out the proposed activities fairly and independently; or
- has a relationship with, or interest in, an organisation from which they will receive personal gain as a result of the provision of funding.

Where a Tenderer subsequently identifies that an actual, apparent, or potential conflict of interest exists or might arise in relation to their tender , the Tenderer must inform the department in writing immediately.

The department will ensure that all members of Tender Assessment Panels under the Fund will be required to provide a statement detailing any relationship they may have with tenderer(s). All panel members will be required to sign a Conflict of Interest form.

### **3.2 Confidentiality and protection of personal information**

Tenderers will be required to declare as part of their tender, their ability to comply with requirements for confidentiality and the protection of personal information to be included in the contractual arrangement to be entered into with the Australian Government.

The confidentiality clause in any subsequent contractual arrangement imposes obligations on the contracted organisation with respect to certain categories of information collected, created or held

under the Agreement and as specified in the Agreement. Tenderers must obtain the Commonwealth's consent in writing before disclosing Confidential Information.

The Protection of Personal Information clause requires the contracted organisation to:

- comply with the *Privacy Act (1988)* ('the Privacy Act'), including the 11 Information Privacy Principles (IPPs), as if it were an agency under the Privacy Act, and the National Privacy Principles (NPPs); and
- refrain from engaging in direct marketing (s 16F of the Privacy Act), to the extent that the NPP and/or s 16F apply to the Funded organisation.

Obligations in respect of confidentiality and protection of personal information will apply to any subcontractors engaged by the tenderer to assist with the provision of the property or services under the agreement.

The specific clauses covering these requirements will be contained in the contractual arrangement that will form part of the request documentation provided to potential Tenderers.

## **4 Fund tender processes**

### **4.1 Access to funds**

The Fund is a procurement-only Fund and is fully committed for current health social surveys until the end of 2012-13, with significant commitments through to 2014-15. When future funding becomes available, health social survey related activities will be procured in accordance with the Commonwealth Procurement Rules (CPRs) and the objectives and priorities of the Fund.

Such procurements will be strategically and systematically undertaken to ensure that previous health social survey investments are effectively utilised and that gaps in social health survey related activities are addressed. Procurement activities will be consistent with the principles and objectives of the Fund and the Government's social health data requirements.

### **4.2 Fund Under expenditure**

The Fund is currently fully committed until the end of 2012-13, with significant commitments through to 2014-15. Funding allocations will be monitored throughout the year with potential underspends identified and allocated to activities identified as being the most appropriate method of meeting the aims and objectives of the Fund.

From time to time, the Australian Government may direct additional or supplementary funding to activities under the Fund. For example procuring activities where evidence shows that there is a need.

These Fund Guidelines will form part of the tender documentation and must be met in all circumstances where procurement arrangements are entered into under the Fund.

In urgent or unforeseen circumstances the eligibility criteria may be varied.

### **4.3 Procurement processes**

The department will choose the most appropriate process for each procurement depending on the nature of the required services, the value, the market and the requirements of the CPRs. This may

include “Open” tendering, “Select” tendering or “Direct” sourcing. (For further information on procurement method options see the CPRs at the [Department of Finance website](#).)

All “Open tenders” and, where possible, “Direct” and “Select” tenders, will be made available on the [AusTender website](#) ([www.tenders.gov.au](http://www.tenders.gov.au)) and advertised on the [department’s website](#) [www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/Listing+of+Tenders+and+Grants-1](http://www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/Listing+of+Tenders+and+Grants-1)

## **4.4 Decisions**

### **Approval of procurement outcomes**

For each procurement the department will establish a Tender Assessment Panel to assess tenders against the statement of requirements to select a supplier. The Tender Assessment Panel will consist of officers from the department and technical experts as appropriate.

Following the assessment of tenders by the Tender Assessment Panel for that procurement process, advice will be provided to the Funding Approver (Approver) about the merits of the tender/s. The final decision about the approval of a procurement outcome will be made by the Minister or agency Chief Executive (including a Chief Executive’s delegate).

Tenders will be selected on the basis that they will make efficient, effective, ethical and economical use of Commonwealth resources and will achieve value for money. Selection will also consider any specific requirements. Approvals will be at the discretion of the Approver but will be subject to the requirements of the FMA Act and Regulations.

### **Advice to tenderers**

Tenderers will be advised of the outcome of the tender process following the successful negotiation of a contract with the preferred supplier.

The department will notify all unsuccessful tenderers once the contract with the successful supplier has been signed. All tenderers will be offered the opportunity for a debrief.

In accordance with the Commonwealth Procurement Rules contracts will also be listed on Austender.

### **Complaint handling**

The department’s Procurement and Funding Complaints Handling Policy applies to complaints that arise in relation to a procurement or funding process. It covers events that occur between the time the request documentation is released publicly and the date of contract execution, regardless of when the actual complaint is made. The department requires that all complaints relating to a grant or procurement process must be lodged in writing. Further details of the policy are available 'About Us' page on the [department’s internet site](#) ([www.health.gov.au](http://www.health.gov.au)).

Any enquiries relating to decisions on procurement under this Fund, should be directed to the Fund mailbox [hssfund@health.gov.au](mailto:hssfund@health.gov.au).

## **5 Conditions of funding**

### **5.1 Contracting arrangements**

Successful Tenderers contracted under the Fund will be required to enter into a contractual arrangement with the Commonwealth (represented by the department).

A copy of the document which will form the proposed contractual arrangement will be included in the tender material provided to suppliers..

### **5.2 Specific conditions**

Any specific conditions required for the services will be identified in the tender documentation..

### **5.3 Payment arrangements**

Payments arrangements will be set out in the contractual arrangements between the Commonwealth and the contracted entity. Payments will usually be made on achievement of agreed milestones.

Before any payment can be made, contracted parties will be required to provide:

- a tax invoice for the amount of the payment
- evidence of meeting the obligations of the contractual arrangement.

Where payments are linked to the achievement of specific milestones, payments will only be made after the department is satisfied that those milestones and associated obligations of the contractual arrangement have been met.

### **5.4 Reporting requirements**

Contracted organisations will be required to provide progress reports on the agreed milestones. The timing of progress reports will be negotiated and form part of the final contractual arrangement.

The contracted entity will be required to actively manage the delivery of the project. The department will monitor progress against the contract through assessment of progress reports and by conducting site visits as necessary.

### **5.5 Monitoring**

The contracted entity will be required to actively manage the implementation of the project. The department will monitor progress against the contract through assessment of progress reports and other mechanisms as appropriate.

### **5.6 Evaluation**

An evaluation by the department will determine how the funding contributed to the objectives of the Fund. Contracted entities may be required to provide information to assist in this evaluation for a period of time, as stipulated in the contract, after funding has been provided.

## 6 Glossary of terms

*CONFLICT OF INTEREST* - arises where a person makes a decision or exercises a power in a way that may be, or may be perceived to be, influenced by either material personal interests (financial or non-financial) or material personal associations.

*CONTRACTED ENTITY* - means any entity that has been successful in a procurement process under the flexible Fund.

*EVALUATION* - process of reviewing the overall efficiency, effectiveness and economy, as well as the appropriateness, of a Funded activity. This can take place either during routine management review or as the subject of a specific program evaluation.

*FLEXIBLE FUND* – means the Health Social Surveys Fund as described in Section 1 of these Guidelines

*FUNDING APPROVER*- means the office or individual identified in any procurement documentation as the decision maker in any procurement process undertaken within the Fund.

*HEALTH SOCIAL SURVEYS*- means either longitudinal studies and cross sectional surveys that collect data on social determinants of health, health actions/behaviours and health outcomes from samples of the population.

*HEALTH BEHAVIOUR*- means a behaviour performed by an individual that influences their health status. This may include nutrition, physical activity, taking medications, accessing health services or engaging in health risk behaviours such as smoking, taking illicit drugs or excessive alcohol consumption.

*HEALTH STATUS*- means a measure of an individual's health, this may include factors that affect an individual's health such as risk factors, disability, and presence of disease.

*SOCIAL HEALTH DATA*- means data on social determinants of health, health actions/behaviours and health outcomes collected from samples in the population that can be analysed and interpreted to provide reliable and meaningful information on the health of the Australian population.

*SOCIAL HEALTH INFORMATION*- means social health data that has been interrogated and interpreted. This information underpins the Government's work in health policy development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation and are also used widely within the public health community.

*SURVEY INFRASTRUCTURE*- means systems and processes that support and facilitate health social survey related activities. These may include, but are not limited to sample frames, data collection instruments, food composition databases, data repositories, and data access platforms.

*TENDERER* – means any entity that applies for funding under the flexible Fund as part of a procurement process

## **Attachment A – Fund priorities and assessment requirements**

### **FUND PRIORITIES:**

- a. Collect, analyse and interpret cross-sectional population health data (self-reported and objective) to understand health status and health behaviours of the population;***

Large nationally representative cross-sectional surveys are fundamental in measuring and monitoring the prevalence of health conditions, behaviours, service usage and risk factors within the population, and particular population sub-groups such as children, low socio-economic groups or Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. They also can enable the exploration of inter-relationships between different health indicators, such as nutrition and physical activity for example.

Cross-sectional studies are also important for ongoing surveillance activities, including collecting data to report against performance measures set by the Council of Australian Governments and establishing national benchmarks.

- b. Collect, analyse and interpret longitudinal data (self-reported and administrative) to better understand trends and influences on male and women's health status and health behaviours;***

Collecting longitudinal data is essential for understanding and identifying health influences, determinants and trajectories. While repeated cross-sectional surveys can be used to monitor trends and changes in the population as a whole, they do not provide information on the complex interaction of factors over an individual's life course that ultimately contribute to population level changes.

Linking self-reported and administrative data (such as Medicare data or data on hospital admissions) in longitudinal studies enhances the value of the data as it provides the opportunity to better understand relationships between individual's health status, life stage, and use of health services and the associated health expenditure.

- c. Establish high-quality infrastructure and methodologies to support health social survey implementation;***

Collecting and interpreting robust and meaningful health social survey data relies on high-quality survey infrastructure and methodologies, such as data collection instruments and methods of analysis. The Australian Government is currently investing in this priority area by ensuring that surveys supported through this Fund develop and employ valid and reliable infrastructure in order to ensure that data are robust and comparable between different health social surveys, both nationally and internationally.

Within this priority area, leveraging infrastructure between health social surveys is encouraged where appropriate in order to maximise efficiencies and value for money.

*d. Support the dissemination of the social health data and information collected under the Fund to suit a wide range of stakeholder's needs.*

Given the Australian Government's considerable investment in collecting, analysing and interpreting social health data, ensuring that these data and information are widely disseminated, presented in a meaningful way and accessible through a wide range of platforms is fundamental to maximise value for money and inform policy decisions. Timely data dissemination, analysis and publication through means appropriate to a wide range of users' requirements is also critical for facilitating information uptake and translating evidence into policies and programs.

Data must be disaggregated in such a way so as to protect survey participants' confidentiality and privacy. Arrangements are in place to ensure that the results of the health social surveys supported through this Fund are accessible to Governments, population health researchers, policy makers and other users, while ensuring that individual participant's data remain confidential and are treated with the strictest privacy.

**BROAD ASSESSMENT REQUIREMENTS (For all Fund priorities)**

The first level of assessment for any procurement process will be a preliminary compliance check, to identify tenderers that meet any mandatory eligibility requirements, and to reject ineligible tenderers.

Tenders that are eligible for further consideration will then be subjected to a more detailed assessment to determine the capacity of the tenderer and tender to meet the purpose, scope, priorities objectives and outcomes of the Fund.

A comprehensive set of documentation detailing the specific requirements of this process will form part of any procurement processes undertaken within the Fund.

The second level of this assessment will be against a range of specific criteria that directly relate to the activities being procured within the priority area. This may include, but is not limited to:

- The tenderer's ability to meet the department's requirements set out in the request for tender documents;
- Detailed Project Plan and Budgets, including value for money;
- Details of the tenderer's experience or expertise in undertaking the projects;
- Tenderer's financial viability; and
- Consideration of referees' comments.