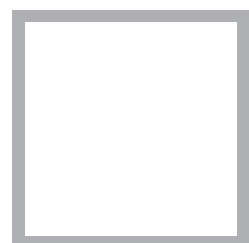
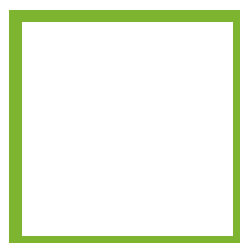
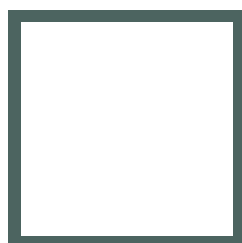


Program Guidelines
VG15028 Vegetable Industry Education & Training Initiative

Version 3 – January 2017



This page is intentionally blank

Contents

1	Introduction	5
1.1	Key contacts	5
1.2	Training service provider mailing list	5
1.3	About the Australian vegetable industry	5
1.4	About training and education	6
1.4.1	Education	6
1.4.2	Training	6
2	About VegPRO	7
2.1	Background	7
2.2	VegPRO aims and objectives	7
2.3	VegPRO training services	8
2.4	Features of VegPRO training services	8
2.5	Other components of the VegPRO Initiative	9
2.6	Measures of success	9
3	VegPRO training procurement process	11
4	VegPRO training procurement guidelines	14
4.1	Target audience for these guidelines	14
4.2	Who is the target audience for training services?	14
4.3	What type of training services are eligible?	14
4.4	What types of costs can be funded?	15
4.5	Are there training topics that will be given priority for funding?	15
4.6	How much funding is available for each training service?	16
4.7	What are the assessment criteria?	16
4.8	Who can apply and how to apply	16
4.8.1	Levy payers, stakeholders or vegetable supply chain participants	16
4.8.2	Training service providers	17
5	Preparing an Open Call Concept	18
5.1	How to submit your Open Call Concept	18
5.2	What will happen with the information provided?	18
5.3	How we will inform you of the outcome	18

6	Preparing a Proposal	19
6.1	How to submit your Proposal?	19
6.2	How will proposals be assessed?	19
6.3	How we will inform you of the outcome	19
7	Preparing a Response to an RFP	20
7.1	How to submit your Response to an RFP using the Proposal Form	20
7.2	How will RFPs be evaluated?	20
7.3	How we will inform you of the outcome	20
8	Conditions of engagement	21
8.1	Reporting	21
	8.1.1 Monitoring and evaluation	21
8.2	Deliverables and outputs	21
8.3	Nominated personnel	22
8.4	Confidentiality	22
8.5	Changes to proposals	22
9	Frequently asked questions	23
	Attachments	24

1 Introduction

These Guidelines set out the procurement requirements and processes for VG15028 Vegetable Industry Education & Training Initiative (VegPRO). Horticulture Innovation Australia Limited (Hort Innovation) funds the Initiative via vegetable industry levies and matching funding from the Australian Government.

Relevant information about the Initiative's background, objectives and guiding principles are included in this introduction to these Guidelines. The report VG14061 Vegetable Industry Education & Training Gap Analysis provides full background documentation.

RM Consulting Group Pty Ltd (RMCG) is coordinating VegPRO through a dedicated VegPRO Coordinator with project management from RMCG and input from Applied Horticultural Research(AHR).

The key purpose of the VegPRO initiative is to provide targeted training programs as requested by vegetable levy payers aimed at effectively upskilling people at all levels in the industry.

1.1 Key contacts

For further information about VegPRO, please contact:

Sophie Lapsley
VegPRO Coordinator
RM Consulting Group Pty Ltd (RMCG)
E sophie@rmcg.com.au
P 03 6437 2264
M 0426 200 996

Or

Bianca Cairns
R&D Manager,
Horticulture Innovation Australia Limited
P 07 3198 6757 |
M: 0429 529 655 |
E bianca.cairns@horticulture.com.au

All enquiries concerning these Guidelines must be made via the above key contacts.

1.2 Training service provider mailing list

To join our training service provider register and receive email notifications of new opportunities, register using the registration form found on the VegPRO website.

1.3 About the Australian vegetable industry

The Australian vegetable industry is one of Australia's largest horticultural industries with an estimated gross value of production of \$3,703 million annually in 2013/14. It is a multifaceted industry producing a wide range of crops under diverse conditions (soils, climate, water availability, distance to market) across Australia. Production systems, business sizes and structures, levels of mechanisation and the need for manual labour vary.

Labour needs are mainly seasonal; labour availability, and attracting and maintaining skilled staff are one of many challenges. A large proportion of seasonal labour is multinational. Many businesses have a high employee turnover from season to season.

Education attainment levels and attitudes towards education and training vary. Currently, field days, workshops and conferences are the main training events vegetable producers attend. Tailored formal training services for vegetable producers and their staff and the supply chain are limited.

Further information about the Australian vegetable industry can be found here:

<http://ausveg.businesscatalyst.com/resources/industrystatistics.htm>

State peak industry bodies for the vegetable industry and relevant government agencies can provide further information on the industry in each state and region.

1.4 About training and education

1.4.1 Education

Education is defined as a learning process that takes place before a person enters the workforce. In the VegPRO context, the term 'education' is used for teaching learners who have already completed compulsory schooling (to year 12). This is not meant to detract from the importance of including agriculture / horticulture subjects in school curriculums. It only means that primary and secondary education in agricultural subjects is outside the VegPRO scope. The inclusion of agricultural subjects in school curriculums is currently addressed by other initiatives and organisations.

1.4.2 Training

Training is associated with 'the world of work', i.e. training activities are aimed at people already in the workforce or about to join a particular workforce, and who need to acquire specific skills and knowledge to perform well or step up in their career path.

Formal training is delivered by registered training organisations (RTOs) or by higher education providers e.g. universities. The formal knowledge and skills development of apprentices or trainees falls under formal training. Formal training is controlled by federal and state regulations and receives funding. People who complete a formal training course and have successfully passed the required proficiency assessment, receive a certificate to verify their level of attainment (achievement of an officially accredited qualification, or part thereof).

Informal training can take many forms and is delivered on various levels by a range of organisations or individuals that are not registered as RTOs; it is usually fully funded via course fees paid for by participants or can be informal learning on the job. People who undertake informal training are, in the main, not required to complete a proficiency assessment for that training and do not receive a certificate to verify a level of attainment. Sometimes a 'certificate of participation' is obtained. In the VegPRO context, extension may fall under 'informal training' if it meets the Guidelines (in this document).

2 About VegPRO

2.1 Background

Intensive consultation and background research summarised by VG14061 led to the conclusion that many of the current training services available to vegetable producers and their staff or the supply chain are not well aligned with needs on many levels (e.g. content, relevance, format, delivery, quality, timing, location, and trainer skills).

Production horticulture¹ courses on offer are broad and many skills taught are not relevant to vegetable production, others are lacking. Vegetable and fruit production are combined together, even though there are many great differences between producing annual vegetables and perennial fruit crops. Training services that are available are often not well communicated to potential students or trainees. Cutting edge, transformational technologies and science are usually not included in training. Information provided on university, VET or web based courses is often difficult to find or follow, career paths are commonly not clear, and presented career options often look unattractive. Education and training services do not represent the reality or the breadth of the opportunities that exist in the vegetable industry. Refer to <http://training.gov.au/> for further information on production horticulture training packages.

As a result of the shortfall in relevant training opportunities, **the levy² vegetable industry decided to invest in targeted training services to help achieve its strategic objectives and consequently created the Vegetable Industry Education and Training Initiative (VegPRO). In short, funding is available for demand driven, industry tailored training.**

2.2 VegPRO aims and objectives

The overall VegPRO goal is: “Australian vegetable businesses have the capacity to successfully manage challenges and adapt to constant change.” This aligns with the vegetable industry’s strategic objectives to contribute to the profitability of vegetable businesses.

The main aim of VegPRO is that:

- Vegetable producers (levy payers) and their staff, as well as supply chain members and their staff, have access to and participate in industry tailored training and education, that has a positive impact on them / their businesses.

Specific objectives are that:

- VegPRO branded training is recognised for the high quality of professional, proficient, and progressive people it produces
- Training is delivered that is tailored to the vegetable industry in content and delivery i.e. it meets essential criteria of relevance, ease of access, responsiveness and flexibility (as well as further specific attributes and principles identified in Section 2.3)
- People who have attended VegPRO training are recognised via a ‘training passport’, certificates or similar, that helps in their career development

¹ ‘Production horticulture’ is businesses that produce fresh and dried fruit and vegetables for local markets, processing and exporting; distinct from ‘amenity horticulture’ which is the section of horticulture involved with growing plants for recreational or ornamental purposes.

² The National Vegetable Levy applies to **all vegetables** with the following **exceptions**: asparagus; garlic; hard onions (being bulbs of the species *Allium cepa*); herbs (other than fresh culinary shallots and parsley); melons; mushrooms; potatoes (other than sweet potatoes); seed sprouts and tomatoes.

- VegPRO training has a positive effect on participants and/or their business
- Training providers are engaged and in-tune with evolving needs in the vegetable industry and use new insights to meet these in content and delivery approaches
- The value of VegPRO education and training is recognised by vegetable producers, stakeholders and training providers
- Leadership development is fostered across the industry
- Education pathways and interesting jobs and careers are created and or promoted.

2.3 VegPRO training services

The essential aspect of VegPRO is, a producer and needs-driven approach to training design and delivery. Fundamental VegPRO knowledge areas have been identified, and current training gaps have been collated by VG14061. The actual training services that will be delivered, will be in response to demand from producers and supply chain stakeholders. Training supported through VegPRO will be tailored and not 'top down'. The VegPRO training gaps and needs register will be updated regularly based on new information provided by producers, stakeholders and service providers. It will be available on the VegPRO website (www.vegpro.com.au). An overview of gaps is provided as Attachment 1.

Relevant training **content** for vegetable producers and their staff in many cases, already exists. Levy funded research has contributed to this body of knowledge. Therefore, a VegPRO focus will be on addressing design and delivery aspects to meet the essential criteria of relevance, ease of access, responsiveness and flexibility, as well as further requirements which have been identified by the vegetable industry via VG14061, including principles of adult / farmer learning. Requirements will be reviewed regularly by the VegPRO project team and the Project Reference Group and adapted to changing needs. Special attention will be paid to the quality of training provision and outcomes / impacts of training (via evaluation).

Information on suitable training design and delivery methods and 'trainer training' will be made available via the VegPRO website.

Training will not be limited to particular topics or formats. If a valid training need and industry benefit can be demonstrated for a specific knowledge / skills area in an appropriate delivery format, and a sufficient number of committed participants exists, the training may be provided and funded via VegPRO.

As part of the project, opportunities for developing accredited courses for the vegetable industry will be explored and implemented where feasible.

2.4 Features of VegPRO training services

Training has to be tailored to the needs of specific groupings within the industry, rather than using a 'one-size-fits-all' approach. **The most important attributes of training content and delivery for the vegetable industry are relevance, ease of access, responsiveness and flexibility.** A further imperative is that content and delivery are driven by the needs of those who want or need to learn, not by those who want to conduct the training. Important attributes and principles for vegetable producers and staff are listed below.

Expected attributes of VegPRO training:

- Relevant, addressing impediments to farm businesses, driven by learners' needs, building on the target audiences' existing knowledge and experience (not generalised)
- Using industry language, not trainers' language
- Easy to access (local, regional or web based)

- Responsive, engaging and flexible, adaptive in content delivery and assessment, using multiple training methods appropriate for adults, i.e. no focus on classroom style delivery
- Well designed, using respected, trusted, quality trainers
- Short and / or with suitable timing
- Using small group training, peer led learning
- Focussed e.g. on specific skills, practical ('learning on the job'), experiential, self-directed, adoptable, problem / solution focus
- Providing access to new technologies and opportunities of R&D adoption and innovation
- Addressing different levels of needs (basic through to advanced)
- Self-directed and appropriate, supportive, rewarding and respectful
- Motivating, providing feedback, reflection and reinforcement, fostering aspiration
- Helping to understand complexity
- Providing opportunities to network and stay connected (e. g. in person and digitally)
- Enjoyable.

Principles:

- Ensure clarity of training objectives and alignment with vegetable businesses' needs
- Identify expected training outcomes and how they can be measured
- Understand motivations for participation in training and expectations
- Utilise a range of appropriate training methods
- Consider the range of different learning styles
- Appreciate complexity of decision making
- Focus on capacity building, enabling, empowering and inspiring (e.g. via problem / solution and project based training).

Whenever possible, training participants should work through a project that entails applying the learned content to the vegetable business whether employee or owner / manager e.g., active, experiential training approaches should be used as a preference.

2.5 Other components of the VegPRO Initiative

Other components of the overall VegPRO project include:

- Development of a mentoring program
- Trainer training
- Development of a training brokerage network including helping those who seek training for themselves or their staff to find suitable existing training services, as well as promoting education and training opportunities to the vegetable industry
- Development of a legacy for ongoing service beyond this initial 3-year VegPRO project.

Further background information can be found via www.vegpro.com.au.

2.6 Measures of success

Appropriate outcomes can include:

- Short term
 - Training participants report increased understanding, skills and knowledge in the knowledge area covered by the training

- Trainers understand needs as identified in these guidelines (knowledge areas, guiding principles and criteria training must meet), via their own involvement with the vegetable industry and or VegPRO trainer training
- Medium term
 - Training participants successfully apply lessons learnt in their business / workplace
 - Training participants return to VegPRO for further training
 - Trainers use methods that meet needs of the vegetable industry, they exchange tips and tricks
- Long term
 - VegPRO training has a positive effect on participants and their businesses and or employees
 - Training providers are in-tune with evolving needs and use new insights to meet them.

Whether short, medium or long-term outcomes are to be achieved by a specific training service depends on the duration and timing of training delivery.

3 VegPRO training program process

Targeted training services will be procured via two main program processes:

- Open Call
 - Eligible applicants submit an application for funding (open and ongoing until early 2019. All services including reporting to be completed by April 2019)
 - Ideas and concepts can be submitted for feedback and further development
- RFPs
 - A bidding process. Requesting proposals from training providers for delivery of specific training services to a nominated audience who will participate in the training.
 - RFPs will be administered through Horticulture Innovation Australia via our procurement function and listed on Tenders.NET

The audience may be nominated in the RFP or by the training provider. Grower groups may approach a training provider to jointly develop a proposal in response to an RFP or the Open Call process. RFPs will be called for in identified areas of need (refer to Attachment 1). Attachment 1 will be updated based on advice taken from industry organisations, the VegPRO project reference group (PRG) and needs identified via the Open Call process (Section 0).

Open call and RFP applications can be made via the 'HIA MRT document' available from the VegPRO website.

The procurement process is outlined in the following table (Table 1) and diagram (Figure 1).

Table 1: Outline of VegPRO training program for Open Call and RFPs

Item	OPEN CALL	RFPs
Knowledge area, topics / focus	Any training topics (e.g. as identified in your business, region, state or nationally)	Each RFP is for a specific training service and identified topic(s) / need(s) / target audience / potential locations e.g. <i>design and / or deliver a (pilot) training course with the following focus for xxx in yyyy.</i>
Not funded	Topics covered by existing training services that can be accessed by those in need of training (brokering may be required)	Existing courses (unless they have to be adapted in content and method to meet criteria and be taken up – application and budget needs to reflect this)
Required	Explanation of why the training is needed, who would attend and where, and how many may attend	Need to meet VegPRO criteria set out in guidelines Need to have commitment from those who want to be trained Need to show cost/participant in budget
Timeframe for call	Open Call is ongoing – submit an application anytime	As specified in each RFP document
Who to submit	Growers, stakeholders, supply chain, training providers	Training providers with the right credentials – informal and formal
What to submit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concept (preliminary proposal / idea) from producers, stakeholders, supply chain or training providers; or • HIA MRT document (full proposal) most likely from training provider <p>A concept could lead to a full Proposal or an advertised RFP</p>	HIA MRT document and any other information requirement set out in RFP
Timeframe for training delivery	As agreed. Suggest a timeframe in the HIA MRT document	As specified in each RFP
Assessment process	Assessment against VegPRO criteria. See diagram below. The VegPRO Coordinator can provide feedback on your concept or proposal. A revised Proposal Form can be submitted as appropriate and within the Guidelines.	

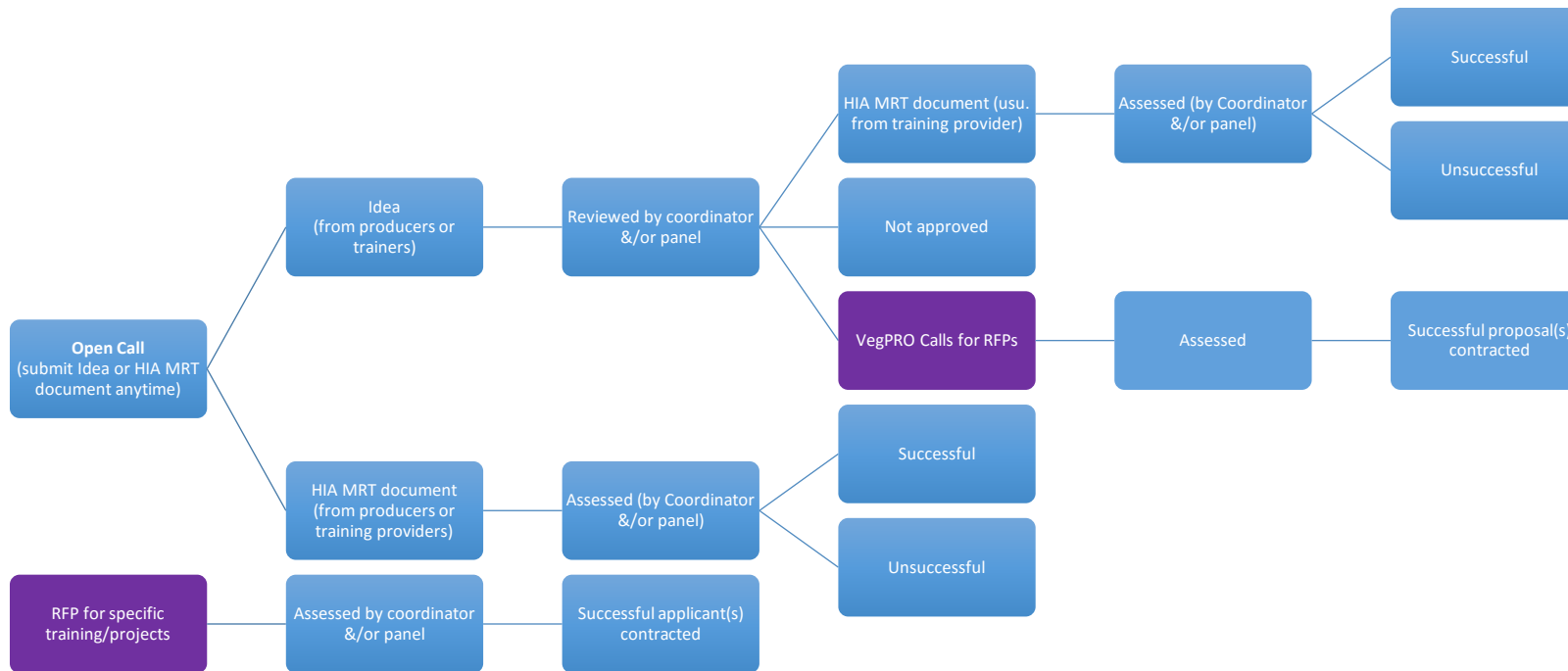


Figure 1: Diagram of VegPRO training program process

4 VegPRO training program guidelines

4.1 Target audience for these guidelines

These guidelines are for:

- Training providers who want to submit a Proposal or respond to a RFP
- Levy payers (producers), producer groups and industry stakeholders who want to submit a training idea or want to engage a training provider to deliver a VegPRO training activity.

4.2 Who is the target audience for training services?

The primary target audience for VegPRO training services is:

- Vegetable levy payers³ and their staff.

Secondary audiences are:

- Vegetable industry stakeholders and vegetable value chain members – where there is a clear benefit to the industry and levy payers.

4.3 What type of training services are eligible?

VegPRO will invest in:

- **Training:** design, development and delivery of activities that are aligned with the criteria, attributes and principles outlined in Section 2
- **Resources:** development of training resources e.g. videos, online materials/tools e.g. that can be used by vegetable growers, their staff or other training providers.

Examples of eligible training services include, but are not limited to:

- Development of training resources that producers and/or managers can use to train staff e.g. food safety videos or e-learning that is aligned to food safety QA needs, training resources for WH&S or post-harvest management, use of certain technologies
- Delivery of a master class for producers e.g. in particular regions, on particular topics and/or vegetable crops e.g. use precision farming technologies, e.g. developing irrigation and fertigation plans
- Business focussed programs tailored to businesses members' / staff members' needs including follow up support to implement plans e.g. managing cost of production, new business planning, product development and commercialisation, adaptation of specific technologies
- Short courses e.g. on communication, conflict management, staff management, managing growth or change management, managing succession.

Use of project or problem solving and decision supporting delivery styles as well as engaging resources will be considered favourably; so will be smart evaluation concepts that can show training outcomes.

³ The National Vegetable Levy applies to **all vegetables** with the following **exceptions**: asparagus; garlic; hard onions (being bulbs of the species *Allium cepa*); herbs (other than fresh culinary shallots and parsley); melons; mushrooms; potatoes (other than sweet potatoes); seed sprouts; tomatoes.

The following is not eligible for VegPRO funding:

- Existing training courses that are required by law (compliance) or for established quality assurance programs e.g. obligatory Freshcare training, Chemical handling training etc.
- Existing training services that are adequately covered by other initiatives e.g. Australian Institute of Company Directors, Company Directors Course, TAFE Cert courses, University courses, on-line courses.

The following items are considered to be out of scope for VegPRO funding:

- Marketing and promotion (e.g. developing marketing materials and specific programs for a business, business to customer activities)
- Agripolitical and advocacy activities (e.g. providing commentary on government policy, advocating industry positions and writing submissions on behalf of an industry association)
- Industry association business (e.g. driving industry association membership, managing industry association websites and newsletters associated with agripolitical and advocacy activity, organisation of AGMs and industry association meetings)
- Training delivered by an organisation with an agenda be it political or religious.

4.4 What types of costs can be funded?

The following costs can be included in your proposal for funding:

- Training service provider time (salary / consulting time) for:
 - Design, development, delivery, evaluation, and
 - If justified: follow up training can also be funded e.g. if participants in a certain training activity want to advance their knowledge and skills
- Training service providers' reasonable travel costs
- Production of training materials if not already available e.g. resources and tools, workbooks, videos, checklists, apps, e-learning
- Justifiable consumables.

VegPRO funding cannot be used for:

- Cost of preparing Applications or Proposals
- Cost of participant / trainee time (e.g. salary / wages) to attend training
- Purchase of equipment.

4.5 Are there training topics that will be given priority for funding?

Initial priority topics identified by several surveys were collated through project VG14061 (Refer to Attachment 1). These will be addressed, at least partly, through RFPs. Furthermore, topics will be identified via an open survey process throughout the duration of VegPRO, personal access to the Coordinator and the Open Call process which can be used by individuals, businesses or organisations. The project Reference Group (PRG) may also suggest topics. The table in Attachment 1 will be reviewed and republished as topics have been covered by training and new needs emerge.

There currently is no priority **content** / topic for Open Call Applications. Applications will be assessed against the assessment criteria (Section 4.7), expected attributes and principles (Section 2.4). Demonstrated need and commitment from participants to take part in the training or use the training

resources for their staff are especially important. The Open Call process is designed to quickly react to needs in a straightforward manner.

The procurement process may be adapted in subsequent versions of these guidelines, depending on feedback.

4.6 How much funding is available for each training service?

Funding is available for up to 100% of the eligible costs as per section 4.4.

4.7 What are the assessment criteria?

All Proposals and responses should address the following assessment criteria:

- Alignment with the objectives, principles and criteria of VegPRO (as listed in Section 2)
- Design and training delivery methodology including consideration of VegPRO's features (as outlined in Section 2) and its target audiences
- Demonstrated need
- Commitment from vegetable business(es) or their staff or others in the supply chain to attend
- Training that builds on existing initiatives, clearly improving its relevance, ease of access, responsiveness and flexibility for specific industry sectors or regions may be eligible. Linkages or leverage with existing formal or informal programs may be eligible.
- Value for money (including costs per participant, level on in-kind support, and cash contributions from non-levy payer stakeholders)
- Vegetable industry benefits including legacy
- Organisation capability and past performance
- Service provider expertise in:
 - Design and delivery of training and resource materials
 - The targeted knowledge area
 - The targeted industry segment / audience
 - Adult learning and or project / problem based teaching / training
 - Appropriate training tools such as videos, interactive websites / e-learning, webinars
 - Others where relevant e.g. working with LOTE growers, cultural understanding
- Use of available information developed in Vegetable R&D programs is desirable and may be specifically requested, rather than the use of general or generic information and resources.

4.8 Who can apply and how to apply

Vegetable levy payers (producers, producer groups), vegetable supply chain participants / stakeholders, and training providers can access VegPRO funding (refer to Section 4.1).

Funding will be paid to the service provider upon completion of the requirements as set out in the HIA MRT document or as otherwise agreed with Hort Innovation.

RFPs will be administered through the Horticulture Innovation Australia procurement framework

Service providers must have an ABN, an appropriate business structure and current insurance.

4.8.1 Levy payers, stakeholders or vegetable supply chain participants

Levy payers and industry stakeholders can access funding / training through the following:

- **Open Call – Call for Ideas:** If you have identified required training but have not identified a training service provider you can submit a Concept to the VegPRO Coordinator via the VegPRO website or make direct contact with the Coordinator. The Coordinator will establish the wider need for the requested training and may prepare an RFP, if sufficient need exists; or may match the levy payer / stakeholder with providers who currently deliver the required training or who can submit an HIA MRT document. Open Call Concepts or Call for Ideas can be submitted at any time.
- **Open Call – HIA MRT document:** If you have identified a training service provider, an HIA MRT document can be submitted via the VegPRO Coordinator. This Proposal Form will usually be submitted by the training provider but can be submitted by the levy payer. Open Call Proposal Forms can be submitted at any time.
- **RFP Responses:** Levy payers, stakeholders or those in the vegetable supply chain can respond to RFPs, using the HIA MRT document, with a suitable training service provider. RFPs will be administered through the Horticulture Innovation Australia procurement framework.

Refer to Figure 2 for a diagram of the Open Call process.

4.8.2 Training service providers

Training service providers can apply for funding through the following:

- **Open Call – Call for Ideas:** If you have an idea or concept but are unsure about eligibility you can submit a Concept to the VegPRO Coordinator via the VegPRO website or make direct contact with the VegPRO Coordinator. The Coordinator will establish if the activity is eligible, will provide feedback and may recommend that a HIA MRT document Form is submitted. If a wider need exists, VegPRO may call for RFPs released through the Horticulture Innovation Australia procurement process (publicly calling for proposals).
- **Open Call – HIA MRT document:** An HIA MRT document can be submitted via the VegPRO Coordinator at any time. This HIA MRT document will usually be submitted by the training provider but requires a demonstrated commitment from levy payers or other stakeholders to participate.
- **RFP Responses:** Service providers can respond to RFPs using the HIA MRT document.

To join our training service provider mailing list and receive email notifications of the new opportunities, register using the registration form on the VegPRO website.

Providers can partner with other training providers so that, together, they meet the requirements (Sections 2 and 4). If training providers partner or form consortia, the proposal has to provide information about how the parties propose to work together to co-ordinate their services, access or develop and deliver the proposed training and present a single interface to VegPRO. The training proposal and associated budget must identify which provider will perform each task.

I

5 Preparing an Open Call Concept

5.1 How to submit your Open Call Concept

Ideas and concepts can be submitted using the Call for Ideas survey on the VegPRO website and social media pages or via email to the VegPRO coordinator.

5.2 What will happen with the information provided?

VegPRO, with permission of the person or organisation who submitted the Concept / Idea, may use the Concept / Idea submitted under the Open Call to develop an RFP. The Coordinator will contact those who submitted a Concept prior to a development process to get the permission of the organisation or person submitting the Concept / Idea. Any commercial in-confidence, IP or otherwise sensitive information will not be included in a public RFP.

If the Concept contains commercial in-confidence, IP or otherwise sensitive information held by the person or organisation who submitted the Concept, a public RFP process will not occur. The person or MRT document).

5.3 How we will inform you of the outcome

The VegPRO Coordinator will provide feedback on Open Calls within 2 weeks. This may include any combination of the following:

- Feedback on how to improve the concept
- Feedback on why it is not eligible
- Recommendations for submitting a Proposal Form
- Discussion on whether and how it may be included in future RFPs.

6 Preparing a Proposal

6.1 How to submit your Proposal?

Complete the HIA MRT document Form for a full application (Attachment 2).

Submit the HIA MRT document via email to the VegPRO Coordinator (sophiel@rmcg.com.au).

Include a covering letter signed by an authorised person acknowledging acceptance of all terms and conditions in the guidelines.

6.2 How will proposals be assessed?

All proposals will be reviewed by an assessment panel convened by the VegPRO Coordinator against VegPRO criteria.

6.3 How we will inform you of the outcome

- Service providers, successful or otherwise, will be officially notified through Horticulture Innovation Australia

7 Preparing a Response to an RFP

7.1 How to submit your Response to an RFP using the Proposal Form

Each RFP is to be read in conjunction with these Guidelines. If any aspects of the RFP differ to the Guidelines, the RFP will override the Guidelines with respect to that aspect.

Complete the HIA MRT document, [Mandatory Response Table]

Submit the HIA MRT document through tenders.net and cc sophiel@rmcg.com.au by the date and time specified in the RFP.

Include a covering letter signed by an authorised person acknowledging acceptance of all terms and conditions in the guidelines and the RFP.

7.2 How will RFPs be evaluated?

Following Horticulture Innovation Australia's procurement framework proposals will be evaluated against VegPRO criteria by an assessment panel convened by the VegPRO Coordinator.

Following an initial review, we may ask you to clarify any issues that are unclear. The evaluation panel will assess the proposals against the assessment criteria in these Guidelines and in the RFP. Non-conforming RFP proposals or those with insufficient information to assess their suitability may not be considered further.

Each RFP will specify if a single preferred provider will be engaged or whether a number of providers will be engaged e.g. to cover different regions.

Hort Innovation reserves the right to decide not to contract with any proponent if Hort Innovation feels none of the proposals fulfil the criteria set out in an RFP. The procurement process will be managed in accordance with probity protocols established for the purpose of maintaining fairness in treatment of prospective proponents.

7.3 How we will inform you of the outcome

Following Horticulture Innovation Australia's procurement framework unsuccessful applicants will be advised in writing. They will receive a short explanation as to why the proposal was unsuccessful. Debriefing meetings may occur with any short-listed proponents who presented their proposal and were unsuccessful.

Unsuccessful proponents will have no further rights or claims. They may review and resubmit a proposal if the reason for its lack of success was that certain Guideline criteria were not met.

8 Conditions of engagement

The following conditions will apply to all Training Services funded by VegPRO.

8.1 Reporting

Reports are made to the Coordinator as outlined below:

Status reports will concisely report on activities, challenges and how they have been or will be overcome.

Progress reports provide information on the key training activities (development and delivery), level of industry participation as well as feedback on the quality and potential impact of training. They will report on challenges, opportunities and changes (improvements) made or planned based on participants' feedback and / or new insights by the training provider (e.g. after participating in VegPRO trainer training). [Refer to template at Attachment 3]. These should be submitted to milestones@horticulture.com.au

A final report is required at the conclusion of the training service. The Final Report should communicate clearly the industry impact of the training investment by including a section on Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E, refer to Section 8.1.1). Training plans, manuals, resources / tools and delivery guides (programs) developed / used in training delivery will be submitted with the final report to create a legacy for the initiative. [Attachment 4].
The final report is to be submitted to the Coordinator for review and approval before submitting to Hort Innovation via milestones@horticulture.com.au.

Concise reports are preferred rather than lengthy reports.

These reports must align with Horticulture Innovation Milestone and Final Report Template

Following the acceptance of the final report, Hort Innovation requires a Final Reconciliation of Training Service Funds to be submitted to the Coordinator for review and submitting to Hort Innovation.

8.1.1 Monitoring and evaluation

Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) is an important part of the training service. Monitoring refers to the routine and systematic collection of data that may be used for management and / or evaluation purposes. Evaluation refers to the "systematic collection and analysis of data about processes, outputs and outcomes to allow you to make statements, judgements, claims and conclusions which have the potential to impact on current and future decision-making" (Patton, Q. M. 1997. Utilization Focused Evaluation: The New Century Text (3rd Ed.), London: Sage Publications). Monitoring and evaluation refers to the process of bringing together ongoing monitoring activities and intermittent evaluation studies into one overarching system.

Key Evaluation Questions for training services should address training effectiveness, relevance, process appropriateness and efficiency as per the VegPRO Monitoring and Evaluation Guidance document (Attachment 5). An evaluation of training outcomes and outputs i.e. feedback from participants of each training session or training product, should be included.

8.2 Deliverables and outputs

Hort Innovation will hold copyright to the work created under VegPRO engagements.

Where applicable, the training plans, manuals, resources / tools and delivery guides (programs) are to be provided in original software format using Microsoft Office wherever possible. Any materials for publishing should be provided to Hort Innovation in high resolution to allow for re-printing and updating

as required in the future. Images used in materials for publication must have secured permissions from third parties (including reprints). If non-print outputs are generated e.g. video clips, copies should also be provided to Hort Innovation in formats that allow for continued distribution and / or updating.

All outputs must follow Hort Innovation Publication Guidelines available at www.horticulture.com.au

8.3 Nominated personnel

Only the personnel nominated in the proposal or application are to provide the services unless VegPRO agrees in writing (and acceptance may be given or withheld at VegPRO and Hort Innovation's absolute discretion) to alternative personnel providing the services.

8.4 Confidentiality

The training service provider engaged, and its nominated personnel may be required to sign a deed of confidentiality prior to commencement of services.

8.5 Changes to proposals

Proponents must inform the VegPRO Coordinator immediately if there is any material change to the information included in a Proposal. The proponent must disclose if there is any aspect of the proposal the proponent is no longer able to deliver or commit to.

This must align to Horticulture Innovation Australia's variation process and will be submitted to Horticulture Innovation Australia after a preliminary screen by the VegPRO coordinator

9 Frequently asked questions

Can a levy payer submit a proposal as a service provider?

Yes, provided the levy payer meets the conditions of engagement outlined in Section 8.

I have identified a need for training but I'm not sure if it is eligible for funding?

We suggest that you contact the Coordinator or submit a Concept via the VegPRO website.

I have identified a course that is available interstate. Can VegPRO fund the costs for my staff to attend?

If the course is already available 'off the shelf' it might not be eligible. If the course can be delivered in your region, and tailored to the vegetable industry / your region / your business, it may potentially be eligible for VegPRO funding. Contact the Coordinator to confirm.

Can I submit more than one Proposal in the Open Call?

Yes, you can submit more than one Proposal in the Open Call so long as only one Proposal per service i.e. not double dipping. If an application is unsuccessful it may be recommended for revision / updating and re-submission. There is no limit to the number of Proposals you can submit over the course of the Initiative or the number submitted at any given time.

Is there a limit to funding per business or per participant?

No, there is no limit per business or per participant. However, the Coordinator and assessment panel will consider value for money.

I would like the training to include follow up one-on-one coaching support. Can VegPRO funding cover the cost of follow up support?

This may be eligible for funding depending on the need demonstrated for this level of support. Contact the VegPRO coordinator for advice.

I would like to attend a training course in California. Can I access VegPRO funding for the course cost and / or associated travel costs?

International training is not covered under the current scope of the project.

Attachments

- A1 Knowledge & skills areas and focus topics for VegPRO training service delivery
- A2 HIA MRT document
- A3 HIA Milestone and Final Report Template
- A4 VegPRO Monitoring and Evaluation Guidance Document

Attachment 1: Knowledge & skills areas and focus topics for VegPRO service delivery

The below table gives an overview of knowledge & skills areas and focus topics that have been identified through several rounds of industry consultation. *(NB.: Having articulated a certain area or topic as a training need does not necessarily constitute a commitment to participate in training.)*

Knowledge & skills areas	Focus topics examples
Technology	Information Technology, Machinery & equipment, Precision horticulture, Spatial technology, Remote sensing, GPS/GIS, Vision/sensing technology (e.g. for grading or in the field), Robotics, Irrigation technology, Spray application technology, Waste management, Energy efficiency
Production environment	Climate/ Climate change, Landscape / Land capability / site selection, NRM/ sustainability, Water resources / quality, Resource use efficiency, Emission management, Carbon Farming, Environmental sustainability, Site selection
Field production, Advanced crop management	Soil management, Crop nutrition / fertilisers, Plant health and crop protection, Machinery & equipment, Irrigation management, Integrated crop management, Agronomy, Sustainable production, Variety selection, How to conduct on farm trials
Protected Production/ hydroponics	Structures/ crop covers, Hydroponics, Greenhouse soil / substrate management, Nutrition management / fertilisers, Plant health and crop protection, Climate and atmosphere control, Machinery & equipment, Irrigation management, Integrated crop management
Postharvest management	Grading, Cool chain management, Post-harvest physiology, Packaging, Storage, temperature and atmosphere control, Logistics, transport/ shipping, distribution, Food safety, Waste Management
Managing the vegetable business	Strategy, Financial management, Business planning/management, Cost of production, Record keeping, Investment decisions, Commercialisation, Managing growth, Compliance (legislative / regulatory), Quality systems, Managing risks
Products to Markets	Understanding markets and consumers, Marketing / promotion / selling, Exporting, Product development, Supply chain management, Product development
People	Leadership & management, Conflict management/ Negotiation, WH&S / OH&S, Managing staff, Mentoring, People development, Managing apprentices, Labour management, Communication
Information transfer	Adult learning, Consulting, Extension methodologies, Facilitation, Communication e.g. via public media, public speaking

Revision History

V.	Date	Author	Description	Status
1	16.09.2016	Doris Blaesing	Creation of document	Final
2	10.11.16	Doris Blaesing	Amendments following review by HIA	Final
3	30.11.2016	Sophie Lapsley	Amendments following PRG meeting 21.11.16	Draft