



PALLADIUM CHALLENGE FUND

GUIDELINES 2026

Water for Prosperity
Safeguarding and
maximising the value
of water resources

Palladium and Kyeema

For the past 20 years, Palladium has committed 1.5% of our profit before tax to supporting entrepreneurs, start-ups and innovative organisations to advance the communities, economies, and societies in which we work. Many of our initiatives are managed by our partner, Kyeema Foundation.

We provide direct financial support to innovative positive impact initiatives across the globe, encouraging employees, colleagues, entrepreneurs, partners, affiliates, and non-profits to apply.

We deliver grants through three windows:

- Palladium Challenge Fund (up to AU\$100,000): Funded activities are solicited and assessed following a challenge fund model against an annual theme with priority given to proposals that test or demonstrate innovation.
- Our Communities Fund (up to AU\$30,000): The fund supports locally identified solutions to local problems identified and submitted by Palladium staff.
- Humanitarian Relief Fund: The fund is open to Palladium staff supporting communities impacted by natural disasters.

About Palladium

Climate change. Conflict. Inequality. Palladium works with governments, businesses, investors, and communities to solve the world's most pressing challenges. For 60 years, our clients have trusted us to design and implement complex, large-scale programs in any environment, creating lasting impact where it's needed most.

Our work has improved the lives of over 150 million people across 90 countries worldwide.

About Kyeema Foundation

Kyeema works to improve the health and prosperity of marginalised communities and their environments. Kyeema works in partnership with purpose-led organisations to catalyse innovations and enrich lives by supporting and working with local partners to champion innovative, inclusive approaches that lead to transformative and sustainable change in communities.

Kyeema does this in three key portfolio areas:

- Nutrition, Health and Livelihoods
- Building Resilient Communities
- Catalysing Innovation

Kyeema receives funding from a number of donors but has a close relationship with Palladium, who have been a supporter since Kyeema's inception in 2003. Kyeema was founded by a group of Australian veterinary and agricultural scientists, many of them former Palladium employees. In November 2003, Palladium (then GRM International) helped to set Kyeema up as a registered not-for-profit, and since then has continued to support Kyeema both financially and with volunteer and overhead support.

The Palladium Challenge Fund

The future demands new thinking, new approaches, and new solutions. The Palladium Challenge Fund brings in ideas from our network in over 90 countries and partnership with over 1,600 organisations globally to source innovative responses to global challenges.

Using a challenge fund model and operating against an annual theme, we fund organisations and initiatives that:

- Pilot new technologies and innovative approaches
- De-risk start-up ventures
- Deliver outcomes from innovative financial mechanisms
- Support the convening of innovation challenges

This document details the Palladium Challenge Fund principles, eligibility for the fund and the application processes used to select grantees. Grant management protocols including the grant agreement are available on request by email to palladium@kyeemafoundation.org.

Principles

All grants awarded must align with the principles set out below.

- **Innovation:** Funded programs should be innovative – a new solution or an improvement or scaling of an existing solution.
- **Impact:** Funded programs must create enduring and measurable social and economic impact against the annual theme.
- **Sustainability:** Funded programs must be sustained beyond the end of the grant.
- **Scalability:** Funded programs must show potential for scale or roll-out to new project areas.
- **Inclusion:** Funded programs must consider all aspects of inclusion, including but not limited to gender, ethnicity, race, and sexuality.
- **Realism:** The funded organisation must have necessary governance, technical, and financial capacity to implement the initiative transparently, accountably, and practically.
- **Value for Money:** Funded programs must deliver the most advantageous combination of cost, quality, and sustainability to meet their objectives.
- **Additionality:** Funding must not substitute or replace an organisation's core funding, or crowd out other funding sources. Initiatives must show additionality by ensuring that outcomes would have been delayed or not achieved without support from Let's Make it Possible.
- **Do No Harm:** Funded activities must not cause environmental harm or have negative social impacts within the target community.

Eligibility

The Palladium Challenge Fund is open to applications from all types of organisations. We particularly welcome applications from small and/or start-up organisations that demonstrate innovation and scalability.

We appreciate that some organisations, such as small and/or start-up organisations do not always have a lengthy track record and we will not award grants based on organisational criteria of longevity of organisation. We require, however, that any organisation—large or small, established or start-up—abide by ethical business practices as enshrined in both Palladium and Kyeema's Codes of Conduct.

Eligibility Criteria

The application process (for referring projects for funding) is both open and accessible to employees, external partners, and other interested parties.

Only applications presented in the Palladium Challenge Fund Application Form and related to the annual theme will be considered. Any other letters of requests for grant support cannot be considered.

Applications to the Palladium Challenge Fund are deemed eligible for funding if they are:

- From a for-profit, non-for profit or grassroots entity including small and/or start up organisations;
- For single year activity however multi-year applications are considered on a case-by-case basis;
- For funding of no more than AU\$100,000.

All applicants must:

- Adhere to Palladium and Kyeema's ethical business practices;
- Ensure the appropriate approvals are in place to deliver activity in any target countries;
- Not have been the subject of any proceedings or other arrangements relating to bankruptcy, insolvency or financial standing in the last 5 years;
- Have fulfilled all obligations relating to the payment of income tax and/or sales tax or other tax contributions within the country;
- Declare any conflict of interests which impact the application – both perceived and real – and include details of how any conflict of interest concerns can be mitigated.

Exclusions

Applications will be deemed ineligible if they are:

- Of benefit to an individual only;
- In support of an organisation that discriminates based on race, religion, gender or sexual orientation;
- For retroactive funding, debt retirement or reserves;
- For conferences, symposia, annual events, or travel to/attendance at such events, tickets, tables, benefits, raffles, souvenir programs, advertising or fundraising dinners – where these are not specifically and reasonably essential to the development of the proposed initiative;
- To cover the cost of fundraising activities;
- For religious organisations that serve primarily their membership and/or their direct religious purposes – unless the community at large will benefit significantly;
- For endowment grants from government bodies; or

- From organisations whose Senior Directors or Senior Managers have been convicted of, or are the subject of any criminal proceedings, including those relating to:
 - » Participation in a criminal organisation;
 - » Environmental crime;
 - » Illegal land transactions and acquisitions;
 - » Corruption including the offence of bribery;
 - » Fraud including theft;
 - » Professional misconduct; and
 - » Money laundering and financing of terrorist organisations.

Conflicts of Interest

Applicants must report any conflicts of interest during the approval process or at any time during the implementation process to either the Palladium Sponsor or the Palladium or Kyeema management team. Where conflicts of interest are identified, appropriate mitigating measures must be submitted and approved in accordance with Palladium's Code of Conduct and associated policies. See also Kyeema's Fraud Control and Anti-Corruption Policy and Conflict of Interest Policy.

Application Process

The Palladium Challenge Fund operates annually against the timetable set out below. Applications will not be accepted outside of these timelines.

2 March	Applications for Concept Note open
1 April	Shortlisting complete, successful concept notes invited to submit full application
18 May	Applications submission deadline
15 June	Shortlisting complete for pitch stage
20 July	Successful applicants notified
3 August	Grant agreements signed

Application Steps

Concept Note Submitted	Via email: palladium@kyeemafoundation.org
Application Submitted	Via email: palladium@kyeemafoundation.org
Applications Screened	Rejection of incomplete or ineligible applications
Online Pitch	Shortlisted applicants will be asked to present to selection committee followed by a brief Q&A
Applications Scored	Selection of the preferred applications and feedback to unsuccessful applicants
Due Diligence Completed	Due diligence undertaken in line with Palladium and Kyeema protocols
Applications Ratified by the Kyeema PME Sub-Committee	Ensure adherence to Kyeema's Developing Country Relief Fund obligations and Deductible Gift Recipient status
Grant Agreement Signed	Include acceptance of Kyeema Code of Conduct, Policies and Procedures
Project Activity Commences	Disbursement of tranche one payments

Submission of Concept Note

The concept note is a very short summary of your idea designed to enable us to understand the problem you're addressing, what impact your solution will deliver and how Palladium funding can enable, accelerate, or scale up your project or initiative.

Concept Notes Shortlisting

Our Grant Selections Committee will review and assess all concept notes to produce a shortlist for detailed application.

Submission of Application Forms

Application forms are available on the Palladium website. To apply, please email your completed application to palladium@kyeemafoundation.org.

Applications are open to start-ups and emerging organisations as well as established organisations. We want to uncover the best innovative ideas to address our global theme and want to avoid selection only of those applications that are well written by established organisations with specialist capability in funding raising or bidding. If you need help framing your application, our team are happy to provide reasonable guidance.

Pre-Screening

An initial screening of applications is conducted to ensure that all applications are eligible and complete. The eligibility screening will be applied as a pass/fail test against the framework below.

MAIN CRITERIA	ASSESSMENT
Completeness	Have all mandatory sections of the application been completed?
Alignment to the Annual Theme	Does the application address the annual theme challenge?
Financial Request	Does the amount of funding requested fall below the AU\$100,000 limit?
Multiple Grants	Is the applicant a prior or current recipient of a Palladium grant or being fully financed under another funding mechanism for the same initiative? An applicant may only receive one grant from Palladium at a time, whilst not prohibiting an applicant who has applied unsuccessfully at a prior date. An applicant who has successfully applied can only subsequently apply to scale up their project or implement a new project, so long as the initial project was effectively and correctly implemented.
Environmental Impact	Have all likely negative environmental impacts been identified and mitigated?
Social Impact	Have all likely negative social impacts been identified and mitigated?
Conflict of Interest	Have all conflict of interests have been declared and appropriate mitigations put in place?
Exclusion	Have any concerns in relation to the exclusion grounds set out in these guidelines been addressed?

Scoring

Applicants of the Palladium Challenge Fund are assessed against the following criteria in line with the annual theme by the Grants Selection Committee, comprising three Palladium staff members appointed by application.

MAIN CRITERIA	SUB-CRITERIA	WEIGHTING
Innovation	The innovation is new and/or offers an improvement to an already existing concept	15
	The proposed innovation has potential for scale up	15
	Criteria Sub Total	30 / 100
Development Impact	Project impact is clearly outlined and measurable	10
	Proposal has clear plan for maximising impact and sustainability	10
	Criteria Sub Total	20 / 100
Viability	Proposal is feasible and can be expected to work within target context (and beyond) given specified financial and technical parameters	10
	Initiative addresses a market gap and is tailored to needs of target communities. Where applicable, the initiative would be appealing to future funders	10
	Criteria Sub Total	20 / 100
Organisational Capability	Initiative is sustainable in planned form i.e., doesn't require significant external intervention once established.	10
	Organisation demonstrates capacity (staffing, governance, commercial and operational structures) to deliver project aims	10
	Criteria Sub Total	20 / 100
Outcomes Management	Project has a clear and methodical plan for reporting, monitoring impact, lesson learning and continuous improvement.	5
	Project incorporates UN SDGs, as well as principles of Gender Equality, Disability and Social Inclusion (GEDSI)	5
	Criteria Sub Total	10 / 100

Scoring Scale

A weighted score for each criterion is generated using the weight assigned to a criterion and the score allocated. The overall weighted score is an aggregate of these individual criteria weighted scores.

SCORE	CRITERIA
5	The response fulfils all requirements of the evaluation criteria, and there is a high degree of confidence that the idea will be delivered with a high-quality input. The response provides an innovative, clear, and sustainable plan for the future.
4	The response fulfils most of the requirements of the evaluation criteria but could be tailored further to meet all the criteria. The response is feasible, and it demonstrates a good level of confidence that they will deliver proposed results.
3	The response meets most of the requirements of the evaluation criteria however its feasibility could be further improved. The response demonstrates some level of confidence that it will deliver proposed results.
2	The response fulfils some of the requirements of the evaluation criteria, however there are some misunderstandings of the issues related to the key delivery of the proposed idea and its sustainability
1	The response shows little understanding of the evaluation criteria, and it provides little confidence that the suggested idea will be managed in line with the Grant requirements.
0	The response failed to address the Grant requirements of the evaluation criteria.

In addition to the scoring criteria, awards will be subject to the following considerations:

- To ensure a balanced portfolio, the Grant Selection Committee may draw up a shortlist list by sector or region.
- The Grant Selection Committee may not generate a complete shortlist to ensure full utilization of available funding if it finds that there are too few concept notes of the quality required.
- The Grant Selection Committee may reject a concept note if it has selected another similar concept note that has received a higher score.
- The decision of the Grant Selection Committee is not subject to appeal.
- 175 is the minimum overall total weighted score (50% score percentage) required to qualify for shortlisting.

Feedback for Applicants

Feedback is available on request for unsuccessful applicants. Please email palladium@kyeemafoundation.org.

Due Diligence and Ratification

All successful applicants are required to supply additional due diligence information in line with Palladium and Kyeema processes. This includes comprehensive background and competency checks for all recipients and ensures compliance with Australian development governing bodies standards i.e., Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), Australian Council for International Development (ACFID) and Australian Charities and Non-for Profits Commission (ACNC). Australian standards are

followed due to Kyeema's Developing Country Relief Fund (DCRF) obligations and Deductible Gift Recipient (DGR) status.

The following documents must be completed to the Kyeema Project Monitoring and Evaluation Committee before grant agreements are signed:

- Project Appraisal Form
- Partner Capacity Assessment
- Project Risk Assessment Matrix
- Child Protection Assessment
- Gender, Equality, Disability and Social Inclusion (GEDSI) Assessment
- Environmental Assessment
- Ethical Approval Checklist (if required)

A full suite of materials will be provided to all successful grantees.

Grant Agreement Signed

The approval of an application represents a 'soft commitment' to provide the requested funding support to an initiative. The signature of a Grant Agreement represents a formal commitment, setting out the activities, outputs, milestones, outcomes, tranche payment timelines and the contractual terms.

Once all approvals are in place, Kyeema will issue the successful applicants with a grant agreement, the format of which is available on request at palladium@Kyeemafoundation.org.

Delivery Expectations

Successful grantees must deliver their initiative in line with the Grant Agreement. This includes:

- Outcome reporting and monitoring as per the scheduled stipulated in the grant agreement.
- Financial reporting and monitoring of payments to ensure funds are spent for intended purposes and comply with the cost eligibility criteria detailed in the grant agreement.
- Active risk engagement and management strategies.
- Provision of communication materials such as photos, videos, and project outcome data to contribute to Palladium communication activities for social media, websites, blogs and internal newsletters.

Additional Notes

Neither Palladium nor Kyeema will cover any costs associated with the preparation and submission of applications, including information gathering, staff time and travel. Such as costs may not be included in the application.

Organisations will be excluded from participation in this funding round or grant award if they are guilty of misrepresentation of information required by Palladium and or Kyeema as a condition of participation in the call for proposals or if they fail to supply this information.

All application data is only used or disclosed for the primary purpose for which it was collected. Steps are implemented and maintained to ensure that all application data is protected from misuse, loss, unauthorised access, or disclosure. See Kyeema's Privacy Policy for further details. [P](#)