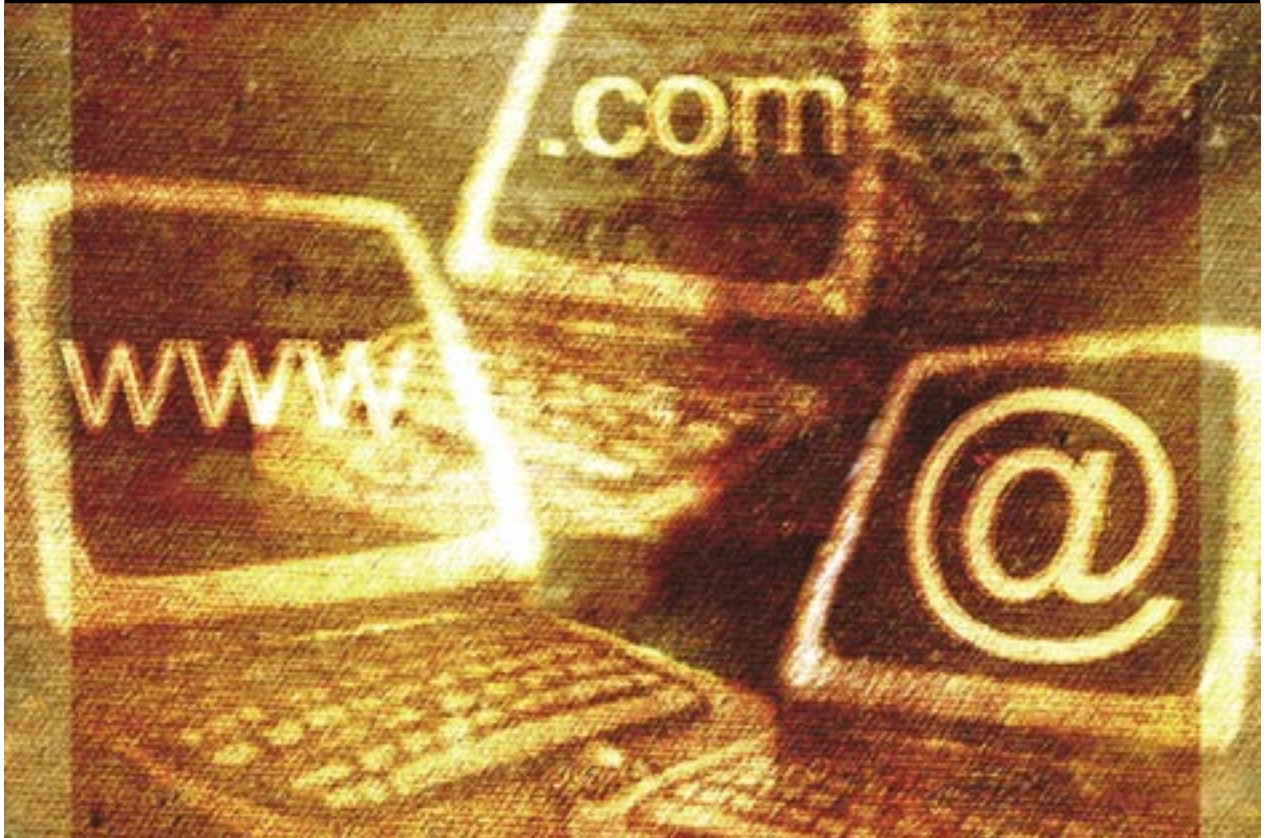





Australian Government

**Department of Communications,
Information Technology and the Arts**

AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT SUPPORT FOR THE ICT SECTOR







This booklet is a guide for information and communications technology (ICT) companies. It has information about a range of Australian Government programs which can help you to create, innovate, grow, and compete globally.

Australian Government business portals

The best place to go for information about all aspects of running an Australian business is the Australian Government business portal www.business.gov.au

It is a gateway to:

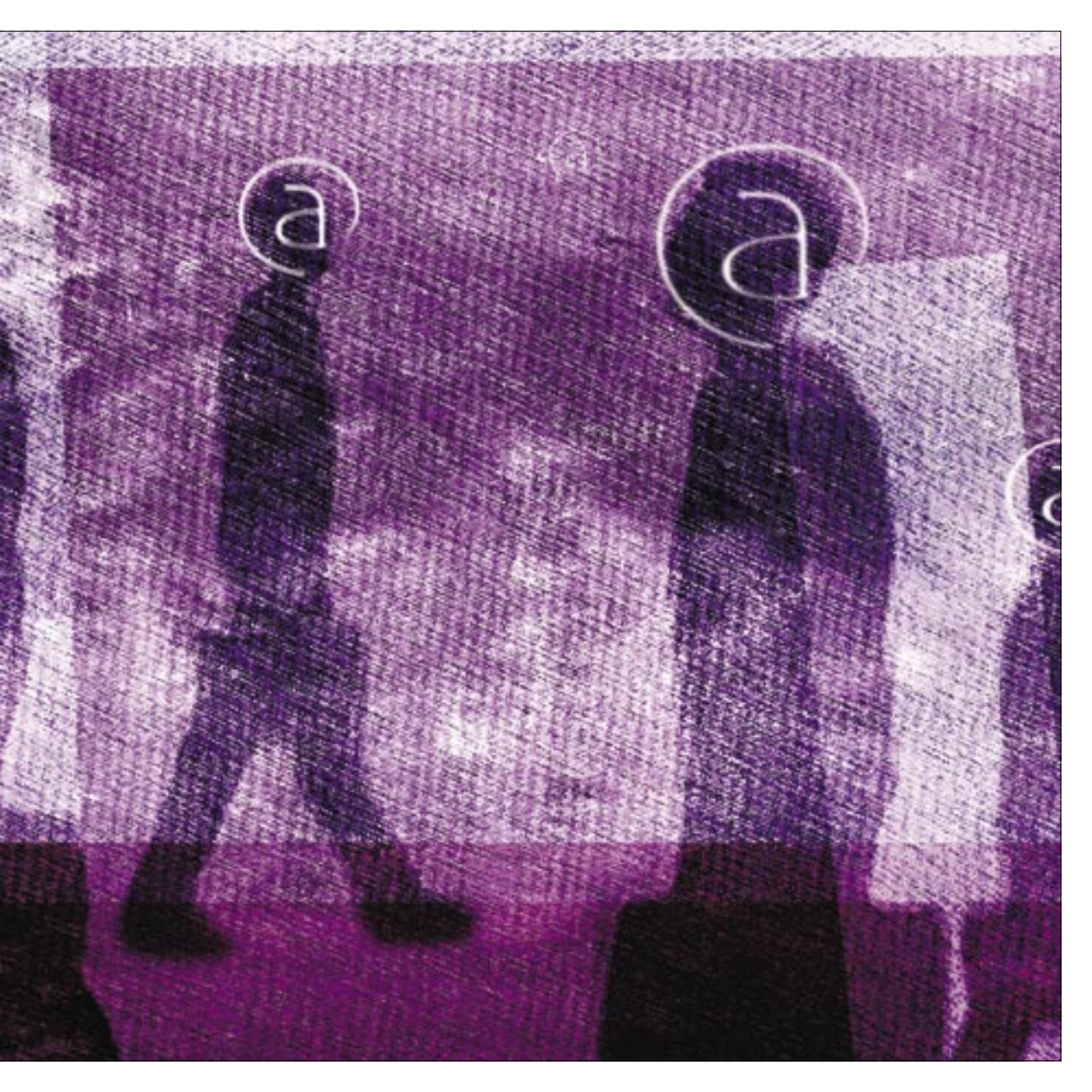
- public information on every registered Australian business
- information about the permits, licences and forms used by all levels of government for business transactions
- the latest on superannuation and taxation issues
- information about grants, tenders and contracts
- professional advice and support, and a whole lot more.

The small business portal can give you specific advice on establishing and operating a small business: www.smallbusiness.gov.au

This guide has four sections:

1. Creating new ideas and products
2. Getting advice and capital to develop the business
3. Selling to the Australian Government
4. Exporting





1. Creating new ideas and products

With its \$8.3 billion innovation package, *Backing Australia's Ability* (funded to 2010–11), the Australian Government is committed to the pursuit of excellence in research, science and technology.

The package has initiatives to help business generate ideas and apply them commercially, and to develop skills and retain them.

You can find information about *Backing Australia's Ability* at <http://backingaus.innovation.gov.au>

Key programs relevant to ICT companies include:

R&D Tax Concession

The R&D Tax Concession, administered by AusIndustry, allows companies to deduct up to 125 per cent, and in certain circumstances up to 175 per cent, of qualifying expenditure incurred on R&D activities.





Certain ICT companies that are not yet making a profit have the option of taking the tax concession as a tax offset, which provides cash to fund their R&D activities. See www.ausindustry.gov.au or phone the AusIndustry hotline 13 28 46.

Commercial Ready program

The Commercial Ready program, administered by AusIndustry, gives innovative Australian companies financial support to undertake R&D, proof-of-concept, technology diffusion and early-stage commercialisation. See www.ausindustry.gov.au or phone the AusIndustry hotline 13 28 46.

National ICT Australia (NICTA)

The ICT centre of excellence NICTA is a major ICT research institution, with \$380 million funding until 2011. It seeks alliances with Australian companies, including on the development of new products. A structured program focusing on small and medium-sized enterprised (SMEs) is being introduced. See www.nicta.com.au

Cooperative research centres (CRC) program

The CRC program provides funding to a number of CRCs to link researchers with industry to focus R&D efforts on commercialisation and technology transfer. See www.crc.gov.au

2. Getting advice and capital to develop the business

The Australian Government has a range of programs to help ICT companies turn their ideas and products into successful businesses.

Several of these programs are administered by AusIndustry:

Commercialising Emerging Technologies (COMET)

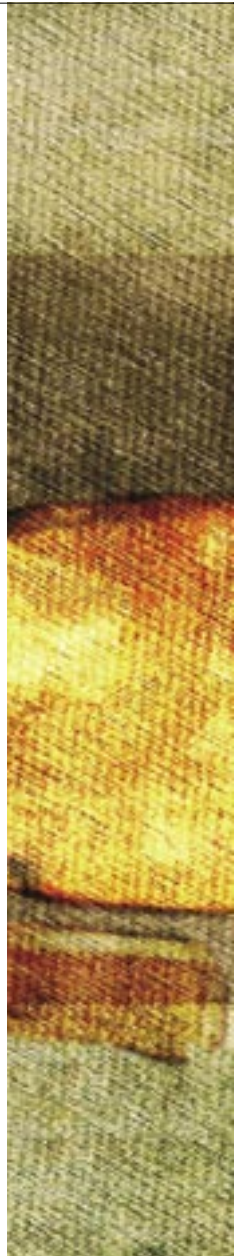
COMET provides ICT companies and other businesses with a tailored package of grant support, through private sector business advisers, to increase the commercialisation of innovative products, processes and services.


Innovation Investment Fund (IIF)

The IIF provides venture capital to small, high-tech companies at the seed, start-up or early-expansion stages of their development. The program is delivered through nine private sector venture capital funds.

Facilitating access to capital for ICT SMEs

This facilitation works by creating tax incentives for venture capital limited partnerships (VCLPs) and pooled development funds (PDFs). VCLPs are the world's best-practice vehicle





for venture capital investors. They receive tax incentives for providing equity capital to growing Australian companies. Australian investors receive similar tax incentives through PDFs.

Small business field officers

Small business field officers advise small business owners and managers across Australia, particularly in regional areas not served by existing advisory services.

Small Business Enterprise Culture Program (SBCEP)

The SBCEP provides financial grants on a rounds basis for projects which fund small business access to skills development and mentoring.

Small Business Incubator program

The Small Business Incubator program provides financial grants to not-for-profit organisations. It helps them develop incubators which assist start-up companies, providing shared premises and business support services, and funding feasibility studies.

For more information on these programs see www.ausindustry.gov.au or contact the AusIndustry hotline on 13 28 46.

The Department of Communications, Information Technology and the Arts (DCITA) administers several programs which service the ICT sector:

ICT Incubators Program (ICTIP)

ICTIP is funding eight business incubators across Australia with \$36 million until 2007–08. They provide seed capital, business advice and mentoring to ICT start-up firms with the aim of accelerating their growth. See www.dcita.gov.au > Information and communications technology > ICT incubators.

Information Technology Online (ITOL)

ITOL funds collaborative industry-based projects with up to \$200 000 for innovative e-business solutions. See www.dcita.gov.au > Information economy > Information technology online.

e-businessguide: an Australian guide to doing business online

The e-businessguide website has information and resources about e-business for small businesses in Australia and their advisers. See www.e-businessguide.gov.au

Internet Security Essentials for Small Business

The Internet Security Essentials for Small Business page has tips, checklists and links in a simple and easily digestible format. The information will help protect your business operations and information systems from online fraud and theft, viruses and spam. See www.dcita.gov.au > Information economy > E-security.





3. Selling ICT to the Australian Government

The Australian Government can help Australian companies who wish to sell ICT to the Government. The Government offers assistance consistent with achieving value for money and with Australia's international trading obligations.

AusTender

The Australian Government's tender website, AusTender, includes a notification system to inform firms of Australian Government business opportunities. See www.tenders.gov.au

Selling to the Australian Government—A guide for business

This practical guide contains step-by-step information on how the Australian Government buys and how to compete to win Government contracts. You can download the guide from the Department of Finance and Administration (DOFA) website www.finance.gov.au/ctc or order a hardcopy by emailing sme@dcita.gov.au.

SME participation levels in large ICT contracts

Australian Government agencies are required to ensure that all ICT contracts over \$20 million meet minimum SME participation levels. See www.dcita.gov.au > Information and communications technology > Australian Government procurement and industry development > SME participation in major Australian Government ICT procurement.

DOFA provides procurement policy advice and supporting services which promote efficient, effective and ethical use of Australian Government resources. See www.finance.gov.au/ctc





4 Exporting

The Australian Government actively pursues every opportunity to open up global markets for our exporters and to encourage investment flows across all sectors.

As part of this commitment, the Government has negotiated enhanced access for Australian suppliers of goods and services to key export markets through free trade agreements (FTAs). See www.fta.gov.au

Austrade's dedicated Global ICT Team provides market intelligence, international partner identification services, an electronic newsletter (the IT Export Update) and export coaching to Australian ICT companies. The Austrade IT portal www.austrade.gov.au/it has a wealth of information for ICT exporters, including upcoming international ICT promotional events, export opportunities and guidance on doing business overseas.

The following AusTrade programs are available to help Australian ICT companies sell to overseas markets:

Export Market Development Grants

These provide financial assistance that can help develop export markets. See www.austrade.gov.au/emdg

New Exporter Development Program

Austrade and the TradeStart network provide a range of free services which can help non-exporting companies start their export push. See www.austrade.gov.au/newexporters

Australian Government assistance for exporters is also available through:

Export Finance and Insurance Corporation (EFIC)

EFIC can help Australian companies obtain unsecured pre-shipment finance where they do not have sufficient security to obtain additional bank finance.

EFIC may provide a guarantee to the exporter's relationship bank, which then provides the necessary working capital funds. See www.efic.gov.au

Australian Technology Showcase (ATS)

Companies chosen to feature on the ATS may receive additional resources and support for their export programs. See www.ats.business.gov.au





Further information

If you would like more information about Australian Government support for ICT SMEs, check our website www.dcita.gov.au/ict

You can email us at sme@dcita.gov.au

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNICATIONS, INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY AND THE ARTS
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