Australian Government
Department of Industry, Science and Resources

The Prime Minister's Prizes for Science 2027–2029 – Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Knowledge Systems Prize

Advice for responding to assessment criteria

Strong nominations will address all assessment criteria and include specific examples of nominee activities.

Nominators should fully utilise the assessment criteria to show how the nomination contributes to solving a significant challenge through the practice and preservation of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander knowledge systems.

Strong nominations will collaborate with nominees on the nomination to ensure relevant cultural Knowledges and their significance to the project are described and evidenced clearly.

Using strong evidence and examples, explain why you, as the nominator, believe the nominee should be considered for this prize.

Prime Minister's Prize for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Knowledge Systems

Assessment criterion 1

Demonstrated practice of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander knowledge systems (20 points)

Demonstrate the practice of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander knowledge systems and their application to the project.

Nominations should describe:

- the question being addressed, its significance and how the practice of the knowledge systems have benefited broader scientific understandings and processes
- how the project was conducted, including the practice of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander knowledge systems
- how the application of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander knowledge systems led to the project's success.

This may be demonstrated by:

- describing how the Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander knowledge systems were applied to solve specific challenges
- if relevant, how the knowledge systems in the project have been woven with Western science.

Individual nominations should describe:

- the role of the individual in the project
- why the prize should be awarded to an individual rather than a team or community group.

Team nominations should describe:

- the role of each team member
- why the prize should be awarded to a team.

Community group nominations should describe:

- the role of the community group in the project
- why the prize should be awarded to that community group.

Strong responses to this criterion will:

- Clearly and convincingly detail how the practice of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander knowledge systems has been applied to the project and has benefited broader scientific understandings and processes.
- Why the nominee/s should be considered for the prize. This should be supported by a range of evidence that outlines the context, challenges and outcomes of the nominee's achievements.
- Clearly describe the contribution of the individual nominee, the role of each team member, and the involvement of any community group in the project.

Examples of significant challenges the practice of knowledge systems could be addressing include (but are not limited to):

- restoring and/or conserving the environment
- medical and/or pharmaceutical knowledge translation
- innovative engineering knowledge translation
- sustainable food production knowledge translation
- economic self-determination for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Assessment criterion 2

Demonstrated benefit (10 points)

Demonstrate how this project has benefited communities and/or place.

Nominations should describe:

- the demonstrated benefit to place and/or community and/or the contribution to culture
- the benefit, or potential benefit, to Australia more broadly.

This may be demonstrated by:

- including case studies and narratives describing the benefits of the project
- including project assessments from Elders, community leaders, end-users, stakeholders or sponsors
- the benefits to community and/or place throughout the project's duration
- the direct and/or indirect economic benefits of the project to community and/or place
- describing the scale, reach and continuity of the project, for example, providing participant numbers, frequency of community engagement and the size of governing bodies involved

- describing how knowledge systems are widely shared, passed across generations and maintained within the community
- other metrics as appropriate.

Strong responses to this criterion will:

- Clearly and convincingly detail the impacts and benefits of the project, with evidence to support these claims. Including both current benefits and possible future benefits of the project will support the strength of the nomination.
- For projects that have occurred some time ago, a timeline of long-term impacts, connections to the beginning of the project, and ongoing outcomes should be demonstrated.

Examples of benefits to communities or place could include (not are not limited to):

- the number of Indigenous job opportunities the project has created
- voices from communities that show benefits from an Indigenous point of view
- how profits made from a project are benefiting communities
- metrics that outline environmental benefits of the project over time.

Assessment criterion 3

Demonstrated cultural governance (10 points)

Demonstrate the cultural governance of the project.

Nominations should describe:

- the respectful adherence to cultural governance protocols to demonstrate the legitimacy and significance of the project
- the project's authority to protect, use and share the Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander knowledge systems, in accordance with the cultural authority owners' direction and (where relevant) systems to facilitate cultural governance.
- If applicable, details on the storage conditions for Indigenous data collected and/or used as part of the nominated project, including accessibility for knowledge owners, security measures and server location.

This may be demonstrated by:

- confirmation of the Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander knowledge systems, including, where possible, identifying the Traditional Custodians, and the moral and intellectual right of the individual, team or community group to build on and apply the knowledge systems
- a statement explaining how the collective cultural responsibility and rights of the Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander knowledge systems has been addressed

- letter(s) of support from a relevant cultural authority and/or a regional Indigenous representative body about the project and the extent to which respectful connection with communities and/or place have been fostered to support cultural governance
- if the nominee is associated with a university, a memorandum of understanding or research agreement between the associated university and the cultural authority owners
- the application of the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS) Code of Ethics for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Research.

Nominations should provide sufficient evidence to demonstrate the cultural governance of the project, which may require multiple relevant and appropriate sources.

Strong responses to this criterion will:

- Clearly and convincingly describe the cultural governance of the nominee's project.
- Include multiple attachments of supporting evidence.

Consider including a short video showcasing the knowledge system being practiced in the project. This could showcase:

- the nominator and nominee talking about the project
- the community where the knowledge system is practiced
- the place where the knowledge system is practiced
- Elders and/or knowledge holders working with the nominee/s.

Supporting evidence attachments (including video attachments) can only be provided at stage 2 of the nomination process.