



GROWING LOCAL ECONOMIES

Frequently asked questions

Q What is the Growing Local Economies Fund?

A The Growing Local Economies Fund is designed to deliver economic growth and productivity in regional NSW. The objective of the fund is to support projects of economic significance in regional NSW, which draw on the strengths or potential strengths of each functional economic region.

Q How much funding is available?

A Up to \$500 million is available under the Growing Local Economies Fund. The minimum grant amount is \$1 million and there is no maximum grant amount.

Q 2018 Fund Guidelines - what are the key changes?

A The new Growing Local Economies Fund guidelines (2018 Fund Guidelines) replace the previous fund guidelines. The headline changes are:

- amendments to the list of eligible applicants
- the introduction of a minimum grant amount of \$1 million
- the introduction of a financial co-contribution requirement. This co-contribution must be at least 25 per cent of the total grant amount, must be from a source other than the Restart NSW Fund, and must be confirmed. An exemption may be granted where a project is located in a disadvantaged area of NSW.

These are outlined in more detail below and in the 2018 Fund Guidelines.

Applications will be assessed according to the 2018 Fund Guidelines.

Applicants deemed ineligible or unsuccessful under the previous fund guidelines may reapply under the 2018 Fund Guidelines.

Q Who can apply for funding?

A Funding is available for projects located in regional NSW, outside of Sydney, Newcastle and Wollongong.

Eligible applicants include:

- local councils or Joint Organisations of Councils
- Aboriginal Land Councils
- infrastructure providers such as telecommunication, energy or water companies
- peak bodies such as incorporated business, industry and community associations
- cooperatives
- educational institutions
- incorporated not-for-profit organisations.

Applications involving public–private partnerships or leveraging other funding streams (such as Commonwealth or local government funding) are encouraged.

Q Are NSW Government departments and related entities eligible to apply?

A NSW Government departments and other agencies (e.g. State Owned Corporations and Public Trading Enterprises) can apply for funding under the Growing Local Economies Fund if:

- the department or entity is able to demonstrate reasons why the project cannot be funded under its usual capital budgeting process, and
- the project has the support of key regional stakeholders.

Projects that were eligible but not funded under different NSW Government funding programs (e.g. Fixing Country Roads or Fixing Country Rail) can also be considered if they meet the above requirements.

Q Do applicants need to make a co-contribution?

A Yes. All projects must have a minimum financial co-contribution of 25 per cent of the total grant amount. The co-contribution for the project must be from sources other than the Restart NSW Fund and must be confirmed.

An exemption from the minimum 25 per cent co-contribution may be granted where a project is located in a disadvantaged area of NSW. Applicants must submit a case for the exemption, with evidence demonstrating the disadvantage. The starting point for measuring disadvantage for this fund is the Socio-Economic Index for Areas (SEIFA), published by the Australian Bureau of Statistics.

Other considerations include:

- impact of significant industry decline or business closure
- recovery from a significant natural disaster
- significant recent change in population or community demographics
- other exceptional circumstances.

Q What types of projects will be funded?

A The Growing Local Economies Fund is designed to deliver economic growth and productivity in regional NSW.

Projects must be for infrastructure that:

- is for the use and benefit of multiple organisations or businesses
- enables or brings forward investment or productivity improvements for new or existing industry

- delivers a net economic benefit to residents and business located in NSW.

Examples of eligible infrastructure projects include:

- service infrastructure (e.g. water, sewer, electricity, gas) to unlock the potential for new or existing employment areas
- road or rail upgrades
- multi-user/shared research and development facilities
- expansion or upgrading of multi-user, open-access facilities
- telecommunications infrastructure that enables economic growth or increases productivity for multiple businesses.

Q Are private projects eligible?

A The Growing Local Economies Fund targets public infrastructure that is for the use and benefit of multiple organisations or businesses – for example, electricity or gas infrastructure that would be used by and benefit multiple businesses. The Growing Local Economies Fund will not support projects that are on private land unless there is a clear public benefit.

Q How are applications for funding made?

A Applying for the Growing Local Economies Fund is a two-step process. Contact the Office of Regional Development (within the NSW Department of Premier and Cabinet) to discuss your project. If your proposed project is eligible, the Office of Regional Development will invite you to submit an expression of interest and a brief data sheet for assessment.

If your expression of interest is successful, the Department of Premier and Cabinet will invite you to submit a financial business case and data sheet for consideration. At this stage, applicants will be required to provide significantly more detail regarding their project, including evidence to substantiate project benefits outlined in the initial expression of interest.

Q When do I need to lodge my application?

A Applications opened on 17 August 2017. The fund will remain open for applications until funding has been fully allocated.

Q Do I need to provide a cost-benefit analysis as part of my application?

A No. The Department of Premier and Cabinet's investment appraisal team will conduct a cost-benefit analysis of the project.

Q Who will be consulted during assessment?

A The Department of Premier and Cabinet, and Infrastructure NSW will consult with relevant stakeholders. These may include other NSW and Commonwealth government agencies, local councils or Joint Organisations of Councils, Members of Parliament, Regional Development Australia independent experts or other external parties.

Q How do I know my application will be fairly assessed?

A Projects will be assessed against the objectives and eligibility criteria set out in the program guidelines and fact sheet. The Department of Premier and Cabinet, and Infrastructure NSW will engage a probity advisor as part of the assessment process.

Q How will the funding be administered and how will payments be made?

A Infrastructure NSW will negotiate a funding deed with successful applicants. Payments are made in arrears upon completion of the milestones set out in the funding deed.

Q Will the information supplied in the application remain confidential?

A All information submitted by applicants may be provided to other organisations for the purposes of determining eligibility and project appraisal. Summary information about project applications will be posted on NSW Government websites unless applicants advise that they do not agree to its publication. Applicants should identify any information that they want to be kept confidential, supported by reasons for the request. Except as disclosed, the Department of Premier and Cabinet will keep all information confidential and secure. Any request made under the *Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009* for access to an application, including information marked 'confidential', will be determined in accordance with the Act.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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