

Regional Growth — Environment and Tourism Fund

Frequently asked questions

August 2018



Cultural Walk Trail →

The Living Desert and Sculptures, Broken Hill
Photo | Destination NSW

Q Who will be consulted about the value of my project to the local region?

A The NSW Department of Premier and Cabinet, and Infrastructure NSW will consult with relevant stakeholder groups, which may include other NSW and Commonwealth government agencies, local councils, Members of Parliament, Destination Networks, Joint Organisations, independent experts and other external parties.

Q How much money is available?

A The NSW Government is allocating up to \$100 million for the Regional Growth — Environment and Tourism Fund in Round Two. This is divided into two streams:

- **Stream One:** Up to \$50 million for regionally iconic tourism activation projects, such as the Wagga Wagga Riverside Precinct Rejuvenation and the Jenolan Caves upgrade of visitor facilities
- **Stream Two:** Up to \$50 million for projects from eligible applicants who were unsuccessful at the Expression of Interest stage in Round One.

Q Who can apply for Stream One?

A Project applications are invited from:

- local government agencies
- community groups registered as incorporated associations
- non-government organisations.

The NSW Government encourages proponents to work together through their relevant Joint Organisation of Councils, Regional Organisation of Councils, Destination Networks and local tourism organisations to identify projects that involve more than one local government area and have been identified as regional priorities.

Q Who can apply for Stream Two?

A To be eligible for this stream, applicants must have:

1. submitted an Expression of Interest to Round One Regional Growth — Environment and Tourism Fund (closed 20 April 2017)
2. not been invited to submit a full business case
3. meet all eligibility criteria in Round One (explained in guidelines, fact sheet and below)
4. have been assessed by the Department of Premier and Cabinet as having the potential to achieve a benefit-cost ratio above 1.

The Department of Premier and Cabinet will invite eligible proponents to apply directly.

Q What kinds of projects are eligible?

A Eligible projects must be for new or enhanced regional infrastructure that will drive growth in the visitor economy including growing regional visitor numbers, increasing overnight visitor expenditure and extending visitor overnight stays.

Projects should demonstrate that they achieve the criteria listed in the program guidelines, meet the Regional Growth — Environment and Tourism Fund objective to grow and further diversify NSW regional economies, and also meet the purpose of the Restart NSW Fund.

Stream One applicants will need to demonstrate their projects are for regionally iconic tourism activation. Examples of iconic regional tourism activation from Round One include the Wagga Wagga Riverside Precinct Rejuvenation, the Jenolan Caves upgrade of visitor facilities, and the Tamworth Astronomy/Science Centre, Planetarium and Café.

Q What projects would not be eligible?

A The Regional Growth — Environment and Tourism Fund will not support projects:

- from private organisations or individuals
- which have exclusive private benefits
- that are on private land unless there is a clear public benefit
- that are not in an eligible location
- requiring ongoing funding from the NSW Government or Commonwealth Government
- with requests for additional funding for the same outcome and that have previously accessed other NSW Government funding
- relating primarily to operational expenditure, including but not limited to regular repairs and maintenance
- to engage or pay permanent employees
- to buy or upgrade equipment which is not fixed to a particular site
- for administrative or running costs that are normally the responsibility of businesses, state or territory agencies, or local councils
- for marketing, advertising or product promotion.

Q What kind of project activity will not be funded?

A Project costs not funded include:

- activities, equipment or supplies that are already being supported through other sources
- financing costs, including interest
- capital expenditure for the purchase of assets for everyday business activities such as office furniture and equipment, motor vehicles, computers, printers or photocopiers

- costs involved in the purchase or upgrade/hire of software (including user licences) and ICT hardware (unless it directly relates to the project)
- costs such as rental, renovations and utilities
- staff training and development costs
- insurance costs (the participants must effect and maintain adequate insurance or similar coverage for any liability arising as a result of their participation in funded activities)
- debt financing
- costs related to obtaining resources used on the project, including job advertising and recruiting, and contract negotiations
- depreciation of plant and equipment beyond the life of the project
- maintenance costs
- opportunity costs relating to allocating resources to the agreed grant project
- routine operational expenses, including communications, accommodation, office computing facilities, printing and stationery, postage, legal and accounting fees, and bank charges.

Q Do applicants need to make a co-contribution?

A Yes. Applications must have a minimum financial co-contribution of 25 per cent of the total grant amount. The co-contribution must be from sources other than the NSW Government and commitments must be confirmed before detailed applications are assessed.

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, published by the Australian Bureau of Statistics.

Other considerations may 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 Are organisations required to provide a cost-benefit analysis?

A No. The Department of Premier and Cabinet will conduct a separate cost-benefit analysis on your detailed application. All Regional Growth – Environment and Tourism Fund detailed applications must include a business case and data sheet using templates provided on the web page nsw.gov.au/rgetf.

Q What information do I need to lodge?

A Prospective applicants for Stream One must download and lodge an Expression of Interest form and data sheet before the closing date. Late or incomplete applications, or applications that have used a form other than the prescribed form, will not be accepted.

The Expression of Interest form and data sheet is located at on the web page nsw.gov.au/rgetf.

Please ensure that you have read these FAQs and other relevant documents, including the program guidelines and fact sheets provided on the web page nsw.gov.au/rgetf to establish whether your project is eligible.

Eligible applicants who submitted an Expression of Interest and were previously unsuccessful in Round One (Stream Two) will be invited to submit a detailed application. A business case and data sheet template for detailed applications is located on the web page nsw.gov.au/rgetf.

Q What happens after the Expression of Interest is submitted?

A Infrastructure NSW with assistance from the Department of Premier and Cabinet and other agencies will assess all Expressions of Interest for regionally iconic tourism activation projects received by the closing date.

Expressions of interest will be assessed by:

- program staff to determine eligibility and strength against Restart NSW Fund assessment criteria
- the Investment Appraisal Unit within the Department of Premier and Cabinet, which will undertake a preliminary cost-benefit analysis
- a senior officer group chaired by the Department of Premier and Cabinet.

The Department of Premier and Cabinet will consult on applications with relevant stakeholder groups, which may include other NSW and Commonwealth government agencies, local councils, Members of Parliament, Regional

Development Australia, independent experts and other relevant external parties.

Recommended projects will then be formally reviewed by Infrastructure NSW in accordance with Restart NSW Fund requirements.

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

A All projects will be independently assessed by Infrastructure NSW, assisted by the Regional Independent Assessment Panel, against the objectives of **Restart NSW** and the eligibility criteria set out in the guidelines. Infrastructure NSW engages a probity advisor as part of the assessment processes.

Q What will happen if my application is successful?

A If you are successful, you will receive a written offer, including any specific conditions attached to the grant. A funding deed must be executed before any payments can be made. Organisations must not make financial commitments for funded activities until deeds have been executed.

The information provided in the detailed application will be used to create:

- a funding and reporting schedule based on key milestones
- key performance indicators
- material prepared by the NSW Government.

Successful applicants must submit reports in line with the funding deed. The amount of detail provided in reports should be relative to the project size, complexity and grant amount and in line with the funding deed.

The funds must be spent on items or costs directly related to the project as specified in the application and funding deed.

Payments are made on the basis of progress claims for works completed and monthly reporting is required.

Any project saving remains with the Restart NSW Program Fund.

The NSW Government recognises that unexpected events may affect project progress. In these circumstances, successful applicants can submit a change request to their funding deed to Infrastructure NSW, for:

- changing project milestones
- extending the time frame for completing the project
- changing project activities.

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

A Infrastructure NSW administers the Restart NSW Fund deeds with successful applicants. A sample deed is available on our website. Payments are made in arrears, in accordance with the deed requirements.

Q Will the information supplied in the application remain confidential?

A All information submitted by the applicant may be provided to other organisations for the purposes of eligibility and project appraisal.

Summary information about the project application will be posted on NSW Government websites unless you advise that you do not agree to its publication.

Applicants should identify any information submitted which they wish to be considered as confidential, supported by reasons for the request. Except as disclosed, Infrastructure NSW 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.

Q Can a proponent invited under Stream 2 apply for funding for a project different to the one listed in the invitation?

A No. Stream Two is only available for eligible applicants with strong projects that were submitted but unsuccessful at the Expression of Interest stage during Round One. Applications are by invitation only.

As Stream 2 invitees were invited based on the potential of the project submitted in Round One, the substance of the project needs to remain the same.

In reviewing applications, the Assessment Panel may consider changes in the costs or benefits of the project, or reasonable changes to its scope where these have been made on reasonable grounds (e.g. regulatory requirements) or to deliver greater benefit. These applications will be considered on a case-by-case basis and applicants should ensure the Detailed Application provides sufficient information to substantiate the reason for any changes.

Applications where the scope of the project has changed substantially (e.g. the original application was to construct a walking track and the Round Two application is to construct a tourist centre) are unlikely to be considered eligible.

Q What kinds of entities are considered as being 'NSW Government' for the purpose of determining eligibility?

A NSW Government agencies are not eligible for funding under Streams One and Two of the Regional Growth – Environment and Tourism Fund. However, given that there are different types of government agencies that operate under different funding and reporting mechanisms, there is no single rule for determining whether an organisation is eligible for funding.

Key indicators that may be taken into account include whether the organisation derives operational or other expenditure from the general NSW Government budget or through Treasury/ Treasurer grants; is subject to Ministerial or departmental reporting requirements; or is included in relevant schedule listings as being a government agency.

The Assessment Panel will make a determination on eligibility after applications are submitted.

Q Will funding from NSW Government agencies be accepted as a source of funding to meet the 25 per cent co-contribution requirement under Streams One and Two?

A Under the Regional Growth – Environment and Tourism Fund, the 25 per cent co-contribution must be from sources other than NSW Government. Funding commitments must be confirmed before detailed applications are assessed.

In general, co-contributions will not be accepted if they are from entities that derive operating and other expenditure from the general government budget. State Owned Corporations are considered an eligible source of co-contribution.

Q Can I submit multiple projects as part of one application?

A Applicants can submit more than one application. Projects can also be bundled into one application both for the purpose of meeting the minimum grant amount and for larger-scale projects where delivery will occur in stages. There should be a logical connection or synergy between bundled projects.

Q If my project involves partnering with another organisation, do I list both organisations in the applicant detail section of the Expression of Interest?

A Yes, all applicants for joint applications need to be listed in the Expression of Interest form or in the Detailed Application.

Q If my project is currently being considered for funding under another NSW Government fund, can I still submit an application to the Regional Growth – Environment and Tourism Fund?

A Yes. However, if your current application is successful in securing funding for the project you will no longer be considered eligible for funding under the Regional Growth – Environment and Tourism Fund.

Q Where can I get more information about how to apply?

A For further information regarding any aspect of the application process for Regional Growth – Environment and Tourism Fund funding, please refer to the program guidelines and fact sheets provided on the web page nsw.gov.au/rgetf.

For anything further, please contact your local Department of Premier and Cabinet Regional office.

Email: regionalsw.business@dpc.nsw.gov.au

Phone: 1300 679 673