

December 2022

Women In Construction Industry Innovation Program – Guidelines



Background

The NSW Government is taking active steps to make the construction industry a more diverse, inclusive and safe workplace for women.

As part of the FY22-23 Budget, the NSW Government announced an investment of \$20.2 million over three years to attract more women into the construction industry, setting an ambitious goal of women occupying 15 per cent of trade and non-traditional roles by 2030.

To achieve this vision, the NSW Government has developed the Women in Construction strategy which includes the following complementary pillars:

- **Removing obstacles:** removing obstacles that prevent women from entering the construction industry and implement reforms to create safe and inclusive workplaces.
- **Creating desire and awareness:** creating desire and awareness to encourage women to choose a career in construction, with a focus on the benefits and opportunities construction offers.
- **Fulfilment / retention:** creating easy and clear pathways for women to apply, enter and progress in the industry and providing active support and case management to retain women in the industry; and
- **Accountability:** keeping government and industry accountable to achieve the goal of 15 per cent women in construction by 2030.

The Women in Construction Industry Innovation Program (IIP) is one of the initiatives that has been created to achieve the NSW Government's goal and deliver projects that align with the four pillars. The Program will allocate up to \$10 million in funding through 2025.

The funding available for this first round (year 1) of the Program is up to \$5 million. The NSW Government reserves the right to roll any remaining funding from this round into future rounds of the IIP.

Objective

The objective of the IIP is to support industry initiatives that will encourage female participation and retention in the construction industry throughout the whole supply chain by:

- Creating inclusive workplace cultures, including by improving employee wellbeing and supporting flexible working arrangements;
- Increasing the number of women entering and staying in the industry; and
- Supporting female leadership and female employees.

Purpose

This Guideline outlines key objectives, eligibility criteria, project criteria, assessment processes and timeframes for the Women in Construction IIP grant.

Applicants should note that the Training Services NSW Connecting Women to Trades grant program has a specific focus on trade pathways and can complement IIP initiatives.

Trade Pathways Connecting Women to Trades Grants Program <https://www.nsw.gov.au/education-and-training/vocational/vet-programs/women-in-trades/connecting-women-to-trades?deliveryName=DM38946>

Consultation

The design of the IIP has been informed through consultation undertaken by Infrastructure NSW (INSW) and the Department of Education (DoE) with NSW government infrastructure agencies and construction industry participants, including contractors, sub-contractors, trade unions and industry associations.

Probity and Governance

The IIP grant will be subject to strict governance and probity with fair and transparent assessment processes. All decisions made under the IIP grant will be made in accordance with the relevant the IIP grant guidelines and the associated assessment criteria.

An independent probity advisor will provide guidance on issues concerning integrity, fairness and accountability that may arise throughout the submission, assessment, and decision processes. This will help ensure decisions are made with integrity, fairness, and accountability, while delivering value for money for NSW against the objectives of the IIP.

The IIP grant will be administered by DoE on behalf of INSW.

Evaluation and monitoring

Evaluating government funds enables their success to be robustly assessed, provides confidence in integrity and informs future improvements. Funding recipients will be required to be evaluated and collect project specific data to measure project outcomes. Monitoring and evaluation of the IIP will be undertaken in-line with best practice to determine effectiveness of the IIP grant including the NSW Government Program Evaluation Guidelines (2016), the NSW Treasury TC18-03 Program Evaluation, and the Department of Premier and Cabinet Grants Administration Guide (2022). The evaluation will assess:

- effectiveness of the IIP grant design, implementation and delivery of the IIP objective(s)
- progress towards achieving program outcomes
- alignment of delivered program outcomes to the IIP objective(s).

Industry Innovation Program Grant

Grant Funding

Successful applicants in the IIP will be awarded grant amounts from \$30,000 up to a maximum of \$300,000.

As the IIP is being undertaken over two years, recipients of funding under this program will be limited to a maximum of \$300,000 in Year 1 of the Program. The purpose of this is to maximise the benefit and diversity of the IIP across the industry, to support a range of different projects and different parts of the construction sector supply chain.

Eligibility Criteria

Eligible applicants

Eligible applicants must:

- Be a NSW registered construction business, trade union or construction industry association in any ABS recognised construction sector
- Be a legal entity with a valid ABN or ACN
- Provide construction services in NSW or be an industry association or trade union representing members in NSW.
- demonstrate current female employment or membership if a trade union or industry association in non-traditional occupations as employees or members (refer to *Definitions* section)
- demonstrate alignment to one or more of the following IIP outcomes that will encourage female participation and retention in construction industry:
 - Creating inclusive workplace cultures, including by improving employee wellbeing and supporting flexible working arrangements;
 - Increasing the number of women entering and staying in the industry; and
 - Supporting female leadership and female employees.
- demonstrate the potential for scalability and sustainability of the proposed model post-funding
- be financially viable and have the capacity to deliver proposed services for the term of grant funding

Where an application does not demonstrate that the projects meets the above Eligibility Criteria, NSW Government will deem the application to be ineligible and may set it aside from further consideration.

Where an application comprises a consortium or partnership arrangement with more than one entity, the application needs to clearly identify the lead party that NSW Government will enter into the funding agreement with, should the application be awarded funding.

NSW Government reserves the right to seek clarification or further information from applicants for the purpose of confirming eligibility against the above requirements, within the parameters of probity and fairness.

Ineligible Applicants

Ineligible applicants are:

- NSW local government council
- Joint organisations of councils

- A department or agency of NSW Government
- NSW State owned corporations
- Commonwealth authorities

Project Criteria

In their application eligible applicants should:

- Demonstrate current female employment or membership in non-traditional occupations as employees or members (refer to *Definitions* section)
- Demonstrate alignment to one or more of the following IIP outcomes that will encourage female participation and retention in construction industry:
 - Creating inclusive workplace cultures, including by improving employee wellbeing and supporting flexible working arrangements;
 - Increasing the number of women entering and staying in the industry; and
 - Supporting female leadership and female employees.
- Demonstrate the potential for scalability and sustainability of the proposed model post-funding.

The applicant's response to the above matters will be considered as part of the merit based, competitive assessment of applications against the Assessment Criteria outlined in these Guidelines.

Examples of Eligible Projects

Innovative ideas to meet the above objectives for pilot projects are highly encouraged. The below list is provides example of eligible projects, however, this is not an exhaustive list:

- Provision of carers support initiatives such as childcare, disability care, elderly care and leave initiatives to promote workplace flexibility
- A project officer to work broadly across different construction projects to remove barriers to entry for women in construction, improve culture and increase retention on construction sites
- Review of a company's work culture and subsequent strategic planning, implementation and monitoring evaluation for improving diversity and inclusivity in workplace culture
- Gender bias training / upskilling for supervisors and employees (excluding accredited training which may be available through Training Services NSW Smart and Skilled grants program)
- Sponsorship of female employee mentorship programs, events and formal career planning or upskilling for specifically non-trade roles (i.e professional, technical and managerial roles).
- Early education in schools to change gender stereotypes of the construction industry and campaigns targeted at older students, teachers and career advisers, parents and employers.

Ineligible Projects

Ineligible projects are:

- projects that would be considered as business-as-usual company activities or operations will not be eligible for funding under the IIP grant
- projects that subsidise wages/salary costs of employees that are not directly related to delivering the program
- initiatives simultaneously funded by other NSW or Australian government grants or sponsorship

- projects that involve non-construction supply chain organisations and/or workplaces
 - projects that are not aligned to the objective(s) of the IIP grant and/or are located outside NSW.
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Eligible Costs

Eligible grant costs include:

- costs for work directly related to the delivery of eligible, requested funding activities
 - contingency costs directly related to the requested funding activities capped at no more than 20 per cent of the total value of the requested funding amount
 - costs for additional resources which are required to be engaged for the delivery of the proposed program, but not including costs for existing employees
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Ineligible Costs

Ineligible grant costs include:

- costs not directly associated with the proposed project(s)
- costs associated with the organisation's contractual obligations on existing or tendered construction projects
- costs for activities that are a legal requirement of the recipient organisation and/or can be considered as a business-as-usual costs
- repayment of existing debts or budget deficits
- retrospective costs
- ongoing operational and maintenance costs
- costs for consumables and non-fixed items unless the cost is a small component of a larger fixed project
- salary/wages and entitlements for employees not specifically engaged to deliver the project(s) other than applicant in-kind contribution
- costs funded through other NSW or Australian Government programs
- costs that require recurrent or ongoing funding from the NSW Government.

Application

Applications must be submitted electronically through the DoE SmartyGrants portal.

Applicants should note that the SmartyGrants portal will lock at the closing time and date for the IIP and, where an application has not been completed by this time, SmartyGrants may prevent the application from being submitted. Applicants are therefore strongly encouraged to commence completion of the application with sufficient time to enable lodgement prior to the closing time and date.

NSW Government reserves the right to consider or not consider applications which have not been lodged or completed in full through the SmartyGrants system at the time of lodgement.

Applicants are able to submit more than one application for different projects, however the grant funding cap of \$300,000 applies to the total of all submitted projects per organisation for this grant funding round.

DoE are available to provide IT support to help applicants submit their application if needed.

NSW Government will only accept late applications where it would not compromise the competitiveness and integrity of the process. Refer to *Key Dates* for the application closing details.

Assessment

All applications will be assessed in the same manner. Applicants will be assessed for eligibility against the Eligibility Criteria. After which applications will be assessed for merit against the Assessment Criteria.

Applications will be assessed by an Assessment Panel (the Panel). The Panel will consist of a representative from DoE and INSW, NSW Treasury and the Department of Premier and Cabinet (DPC).

During the assessment process:

- Applicants may be requested by the Panel to clarify or provide additional information to assist in the assessment process
- The Panel may obtain subject matter expert advice on the alignment of the applications with the Assessment Criteria

The Assessment Panel may, at their discretion:

- assess a project as recommend for part-funding. Applicants should provide information in their application on whether the allocation of part-funding would prevent the proposed project from being delivered
- recommend a project conditionally on the basis that an external, professional project management service with sufficient capability be engaged for the project to ensure the affordability and deliverability of recommended projects
- refer the project to other Australian or NSW Government funding programs for consideration.

While co-contribution by applicants is not mandatory, NSW Government reserves the right to assess applications which maximise the co-contribution, which may include in-kind contributions, more favourably as part of the value assessment.

Assessment Process

| Process Stage | Process Step Summary |
|---|--|
| Step 1 - Application Process | <p>Step 1.1 – Invitation to Apply</p> <p>Information about the IIP grant will be provided to relevant construction businesses, trade unions and other organisations, as well as advertised online.</p> <p>Applications will be submitted electronically through the DoE SmartyGrants portal.</p> |
| | <p>Step 1.2 – Application Support</p> <p>The delivery team will be available to support applicants with application advice and technical support to submit the applications.</p> |
| | <p>Step 1.3 – Application Submitted</p> <p>Only applications submitted via the DoE SmartyGrants portal prior to the closing time will be assessed.</p> |
| Step 2 - Assessment Process | <p>Step 2.1 – Eligibility and Alignment Review</p> <p>Applicant Eligibility Review will be undertaken by the DoE team to check applicant eligibility against the Eligibility Criteria.</p> <p>The project Alignment Review will be undertaken by the DoE team to provide an initial review of how the proposed project aligns with the IIP Assessment Criteria.</p> |
| | <p>Step 2.2 – Assessment Panel</p> <p>The Assessment Panel will assess each application based on the IIP Assessment Criteria to consider the individual merits and alignment of each project.</p> <p>The Assessment Panel will provide a recommendation for approval following assessment.</p> |
| Step 3 - Recommendation and Approval Process | <p>Step 3.1 – Recommendation and Approval</p> <p>Recommendations will be submitted to the INSW Steering Committee for consideration and approval.</p> <p>Approved projects will then be submitted via brief to DoE Deputy Secretary for endorsement of funding release.</p> |
| | <p>Step 3.2 – Applicant Notification</p> <p>Both successful and unsuccessful applicants will be notified of the outcome in writing.</p> <p>Successful applicants will be issued funding deeds required prior to project commencement.</p> |

Assessment Criteria

| Criteria | Details |
|--|--|
| Viability | <p>Applicant has demonstrated skills and capacity to deliver the project through past performance in delivering similar projects (for example, detailing managerial capability to carry out the project).</p> <p>Applicant has provided project costings and quotes, including appropriate contingency, escalation, and project management budget line items.</p> <p>Applicant has provided appropriate project design and scoping.</p> <p>Applicant has demonstrated suitability of the staff or arrangements to deliver the project.</p> |
| Alignment and impact of the project on the program objectives | <p>The project will encourage female participation and retention in the construction industry.</p> <p>The Applicant is required to clearly articulate, including relevant analysis to support this, the anticipated reach and impact of the proposed project, and how this assists to deliver the objectives of the IIP.</p> <p>The Applicant has aligned their project with the objectives of IIP in such that one or more of the following is achieved by the project:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Creating inclusive workplace cultures, including by improving employee wellbeing and supporting flexible working arrangements; ○ Increasing the number of women entering and staying in the industry; or ○ Supporting female leadership and female employees. |
| Locality | <p>If the business is located and primarily services metropolitan NSW areas (no weighting).</p> <p>If the business is located and primarily services regional and/or rural NSW areas (weighted).</p> |
| Scalability | <p>To what extent the project is scalable such that it can be expanded and/or replicated and delivered across more NSW construction businesses.</p> |
| Value | <p>To what extent the project is the best value for money proposition for meeting the objectives of the IIP.</p> <p>The Applicant is required to demonstrate the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● that there are sufficient and appropriate resources allocated to deliver the project ● that all costs throughout the life of the project have been identified, validated and included in the analysis ● Project demonstrates what, if any, co-contribution is being proposed and the composition of this e.g. financial contribution and in-kind contributions etc. <p>Milestone payments will be addressed as part of the Funding Deed negotiations.</p> |

Approval

Applications that are assessed by the Assessment Panel will then be submitted for funding approval to the Infrastructure NSW Women in Construction Steering Committee:

- Said Hirsh, Head of Strategy, Planning and Innovation
- Bryony Cooper, A/Head of Assurance
- Janine Lonergan, Executive Director, Corporate Services

Both successful and unsuccessful applicants will be notified in writing of application outcome.

Successful applicants will be required to enter into a Funding Deed with DoE prior to receiving funds.

Successful recipients will be required to:

- agree to information on the project, including the name of the applicant, name of the project and amount of funding awarded, being publicly disclosed on the NSW Government grant finder website
- enter a funding deed with the NSW Government and will be required to provide additional documentation on claims.
- agree to participate in regular reporting, monitoring and evaluation during the delivery and at the completion of the project(s). This including completing surveys and providing evidence of how projects resulted in measurable benefits consistent with the objectives of the IIP. This will be required to determine the extent to which the funded project(s) have contributed to the objectives of IIP.
- understand that the NSW Government may choose to publicly announce grant funding of projects. Successful applicants may be requested to keep the grant confidential for a period of time if an announcement is to be made by the NSW and Australian Governments.
- understand that the NSW Government reserves the right to use recipient and project information in media regarding the IIP. Information may be used in the form of press releases, case studies, promotional material and in response to media enquires relevant to the IIP.
- receive grant payments via milestone payments set out in the funding deed and timing and requirements may vary depending on the scope and timelines of the project
- pay back unspent funds or those funds which have not been spent and/or cannot be evidenced as spent in accordance with the funding deed
- understand that requests for variations or changes to the project will only be considered in limited circumstances
- understand that DoE and/or INSW reserve the right to undertake an audit of grant funding within seven years. Funding recipients are required to keep an appropriate paper trail for audit and assurance purposes.

Key Dates

| Key Activities | Date |
|--------------------|-----------------------------|
| IIP grant Launch | Wednesday 14 December 2022 |
| Applications open | Wednesday 14 December 2022 |
| Applications close | 2pm Wednesday 15 March 2023 |

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|---|-----------------------------------|
| Assessment | 15 March 2023 – end of April 2023 |
| Approval and announcement of successful projects | From May 2023 |
| Funding Deeds executed and works commence | From May 2023 |
| IIP grant projects and expenditure ends | 30 June 2024 |

NSW Government reserves the right to amend any of the above dates at any time.

Definitions

Women in non-traditional construction occupations/roles is defined as:

- Women employed in both non-trade and trade occupations/roles where women represent less than 25% of the occupational workforce and where most of their time is spent on site or site-related activities, including off-site construction activities contributing to the project.

For example, drafting, environmental or construction management, or professional occupations such as civil engineers. Includes women undertaking and employed in non-traditional traineeships and apprenticeships.

For reference the following link provides a guide showing occupations where women represent less than 25% of the workforce <https://www.nationalskillscommission.gov.au/reports/australian-jobs-2021/additional-information/occupation-matrix>.

More Information

For more information, please contact DoE via email WiC@det.nsw.edu.au.

Further information including frequently asked questions are available online at the NSW Women in Construction website.

Complaints

For any concerns about your organisation's application, or if you would like the opportunity for feedback regarding your organisation's application, please write to WiC@det.nsw.edu.au within 30 days of notification of your application outcome.

If you do not agree with the way INSW / DoE handled the issue, you may wish to contact the NSW Ombudsman via www.ombo.nsw.gov.au.

Should applicants have concerns in relation to the probity of the process, they can contact the Program's Probity Advisor directly:

Sarah Mullins, Partner

O'Connor Marsden & Associates Pty Ltd

M: 0413 443 374

E: smullins@ocm.net.au

Government Information (Public Access) Act

Potential IIP grant funding recipients should be aware information submitted and all related correspondence, attachments and other documents may be made publicly available under the Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009 (NSW). Information that is deemed to be commercially sensitive will be withheld.

The Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009 (NSW) makes government information accessible to the public by:

- requiring government agencies to make certain sorts of information freely available
- encouraging government agencies to release as much other information as possible
- giving the public an enforceable right to make access applications for government information
- restricting access to information only when there is an overriding public interest against disclosure.

The NSW Government Grant Administration Guidelines (2022) mandates the publication of information about all grants awarded no later than 45 calendar days after the grant agreement takes effect. The publication of program evaluations is also required. This information is published on the NSW Government Grants and Funding Finder website nsw.gov.au/grants-and-funding.

Disclaimer

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Funding assistance provided through the IIP grant is subject to funds being available. INSW and DoE reserve the right to make changes to the IIP grant to ensure it meets the objectives outlined in these guidelines and provides equitable funding support to potential funding recipients.

These guidelines are subject to change at any time at the discretion of INSW and DoE.

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