

Regional Investment Activation Fund

Stream 2 Program Guidelines



A photograph of two workers in a factory or industrial setting. A woman in the foreground is wearing a white hard hat, safety glasses, and a high-visibility orange and grey work jacket. She is holding a tablet computer and looking at it. A man in a grey work jacket and white hard hat stands next to her, looking at the tablet. The background is a blurred industrial environment with metal structures and lighting.

→ Activating the economic potential of priority precincts, and key industries across regional NSW

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1

Introduction



1.1 Overview

The Regional Investment Activation Fund (RIAF) grant fund is a key component of the Regional Investment Activation Program (RIAP) announced in the 2022-23 NSW Budget. RIAP is a \$145 million program that aims to make regional NSW the location of choice for investors and activate the economic potential of priority precincts and key industries in alignment with the 20-Year Economic Vision for Regional NSW Refresh.

The objectives of RIAP are to:



facilitate the establishment and expansion of businesses in regional NSW



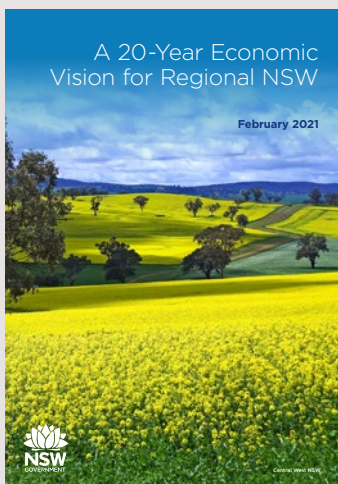
enhance the collective knowledge, know-how and skills of individuals and enterprises responsible for undertaking investment attraction activities



develop a pipeline of workers who have the skills to match the needs of specific businesses and industries looking to invest in regional NSW



raise awareness of regional NSW as an attractive investment destination for new and existing investment opportunities.



[The 20-Year Economic Vision for Regional NSW Refresh](#)

The 20-Year Economic Vision for Regional NSW -Refresh (the Vision) sets out the key investment priorities and opportunities to drive sustainable, long-term economic growth in regional NSW. The Department of Regional NSW (DRNSW) is the central agency for regional issues in NSW and is responsible for delivering the Vision. This includes creating the conditions to support private sector investment in key industries, locations, infrastructure and technologies that will ensure regional NSW continues to be a great place to live, work, visit and do business.

The \$110 million Regional Investment Activation Fund aims to activate the economic potential of key industries and locations in alignment with the Vision and other NSW Government strategies and priorities. It will deliver sustainable employment opportunities, activate new industries, promote cluster development, and drive increased productivity, innovation and competitiveness of businesses in regional NSW.

The NSW Government has designed the RIAF to unlock private sector investment through two targeted funding streams:

Stream 1

an open, competitive grants program with a two-stage application and assessment process (Expression of Interest followed by Detailed Application). Eligible applications will be assessed on their comparative merits against the nominated eligibility and assessment criteria.

Stream 2

an open, non-competitive grants program where applicants can contact DRNSW to apply for funding. Applications will be assessed individually, without reference to the comparative merits of other applications. Stream 2 aims to provide increased flexibility to secure investments that are time-sensitive and strategically significant for a priority industry or location.

In this Stream 2, DRNSW is seeking to identify projects that, if assessed as suitable, may be recommended to the NSW Government for funding support under RIAF.

These Guidelines relate to Stream 2 of RIAF and provide an overview of the:

- key dates and timeframes for the grant opportunity
- eligibility and assessment criteria
- application process
- assessment process
- terms and conditions during the grant life cycle
- mechanisms for accessing support and further information.

DRNSW is responsible for administering RIAF on behalf of the NSW Government.

1.2 Objectives

RIAF will co-invest with eligible entities in catalytic projects that will deliver, or have the potential to deliver, significant economic, social and/or environmental benefits for a priority industry or location.

The objectives of RIAF are to:



support the growth of existing industries and the establishment of new/emerging industries where regional NSW has a strong actual or potential competitive advantage



activate the economic potential of Special Activation Precincts, Regional Job Precincts, Renewable Energy Zones, hydrogen hubs and other priority locations through increased private sector investment



create new high quality employment opportunities



support the shift towards higher-value-added activities and participation in global value chains and supply chains



promote collaboration between businesses, education and research institutions and other parties through sharing of knowledge, resources and infrastructure.

The program defines catalytic projects as those that are strategically significant and aligned to key NSW Government priorities and strategies, which are necessary to activate priority precincts and/or deliver high-value jobs across key industries in Regional NSW.



Circular Plastics Australia

1.3 Key dates and timelines

Table 1 identifies the indicative timeframes for the grant opportunity. These are subject to change at the discretion of DRNSW.

Funding assistance provided through RIAF is subject to funds being available and the application and assessment process may be cancelled at any time. The NSW Government makes no binding funding commitment to an applicant unless and until both parties sign a Funding Deed.

Table 1 Key dates and timeframes

| Stage | Timeframe |
|--|---|
| Expression of Interest Applications Open | 5 October 2022 |
| Invitation to Submit EOI Application | Within five business days of the pre-submission meeting |
| Notification of EOI Application Assessment Outcome | Within seven business days of the EOI Application submission. Successful applicants will be invited to submit a Detailed Application. |
| Detailed Applications close | When program funding has been fully allocated or 31 December 2024, whichever occurs first. |
| Notification of Detailed Assessment Outcome | Within 14 weeks of the Detailed Application submission, or as soon as possible after a grant is approved at the NSW Government's discretion. Successful applicants will be advised by a Letter of Offer and be required to sign a Confidentiality Document. |
| Project Announcement | Public announcement by the NSW Government may occur at any time after an applicant has been notified of a successful outcome. |
| Contracting and Project Commencement | Contracting will commence once an applicant has signed and returned their Letter of Offer and Confidentiality Document. The Project will commence once both parties have signed the Funding Deed. |
| Project Completion | Capital works must be completed by 30 May 2025. |
| Project Evaluation | Successful applicants will be required to participate in a program evaluation after the project has commenced. The evaluation will require applicants to provide evidence of how the project has resulted in measurable benefits consistent with the objectives of RIAF. |

2

Eligibility Criteria



2.1 Eligible Applicants

To be eligible to apply for funding, applicants must:

- have an Australian Business Number (ABN)
- be one of the following:
 - a company incorporated in Australia
 - a company limited by guarantee
 - an incorporated trustee on behalf of a trust
 - an incorporated association or co-operative
 - an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Corporation registered under the Corporations (Aboriginal and /or Torres Strait Islander) Act 2006.
- be registered for GST
- be financially viable and able to demonstrate that they are likely to remain so over the duration of the project
- have at least \$20 million public liability insurance or be able to secure before entering into a Funding Deed if successful.

Applicants can be based internationally, interstate or in either metropolitan or regional NSW. International businesses will need an ABN, be registered for GST, have at least \$20 million in public liability insurance and be an eligible entity (as listed above), to enter into a funding deed if they are successful.

Applicants are requested to ensure they use the correct organisation name and details when applying as this cannot be changed once the project has been assessed.

2.2 Ineligible Applicants

Ineligible applicants include:

- Australian or NSW Government agencies, State Owned Corporations or statutory authorities
- Local Government Authorities or their Section 355 Committees
- organisations that do not have an ABN and are unable to obtain an ABN to enter a Funding Deed
- unincorporated associations
- other Unincorporated organisations
- an individual (including sole traders)
- partnerships
- businesses that are insolvent.

Businesses whose primary operation is in the following industries are not eligible for funding:

- hospitality, except where a proposal is unique to the existing market and considered regionally significant and/or iconic
- retail
- localised trades
- healthcare, childcare and social services
- residential housing construction that serves only the local or regional community
- waste services, except where a proposal is providing unique services, such as un-serviced or under-serviced waste stream, and provides services beyond the local or regional area
- administrative services that serve only the local or regional community.

DRNSW, at its sole discretion, may take other factors into account to determine that a business is ineligible for funding. This includes any personal or business issues that could cause reputational or other risk to the NSW Government, for example:

- poor past performance of the applicant or key project personnel
- the applicant or their business activity could cause reputational or other risk to the NSW Government.

2.3 Competitive impacts

The provision of financial assistance to businesses may require consideration of the impact on NSW competition and NSW supply chains. Competition issues will be reviewed as part of the assessment process to avoid advantaging or disadvantaging businesses legitimately competing in the same market.

DRNSW, at its sole discretion, may determine that a business is ineligible for funding if the provision of government financial assistance will have a negative impact on NSW competition and NSW supply chains.

2.4 Eligible Projects

Projects must:

- be located in one of the 93 regional NSW local government areas, the Unincorporated Far West or Lord Howe Island. Projects based in Greater Sydney (including the Blue Mountains, Hawkesbury and Wollondilly), Newcastle or Wollongong Local Government Areas are not eligible
- demonstrate the project would not occur in regional NSW at all, or in the same timeframe without government investment support
- be delivered and operational by 30 May 2025. It is recommended applicants have a COVID plan in place to mitigate any potential delays due to COVID-19
- support sustainable employment opportunities and drive increased productivity, innovation and competitiveness of businesses in regional NSW priority industries and/or in a location of strategic importance
- deliver significant economic, social and/or environmental benefits for a priority industry or location
- provide proof of \$20M of public liability insurance at time of contracting
- secure approvals to meet project timeframes
- confirm secured cash co-contribution
- not be suitable for financial support under other Australian and/or NSW Government funding programs, or requires a NSW Government funding co-contribution to support an application to another government or industry program.

2.5 Ineligible Projects

The following projects are ineligible for funding under RIAF:

- projects funding the day-to-day operations of business or focusing primarily on marketing and promotion
- projects requiring ongoing funding from the NSW Government
- projects not aligned to the objectives of RIAF
- projects that would proceed and be delivered on the same timeline without government investment support
- projects that have already commenced for the scope requested in the application
- projects that will have significant negative competitive impacts on other NSW businesses legitimately competing in the same market and/or NSW supply chains
- projects that have already received NSW Government or other funding for the same outputs and outcomes. A project is eligible if funding from both sources is required to enable the project to proceed (for example, if both Australian Government assistance and assistance from RIAF is required to realise the total project outcomes). If the project can achieve the same outcomes through assistance already provided, then the project would not be eligible for RIAF funding.

2.6 Eligible Grant Amounts

The minimum grant amount per application is \$1 million. The maximum grant amount per application is \$10 million. All grants are GST exclusive. GST will be applied on top of the agreed grant value when payment is made.

2.7 Co-contributions

All applicants must provide a co-contribution.

Co-contributions must be cash and at least 50 per cent of the total project cost, unless there are extenuating circumstances. If so, applicants are required to provide supporting evidence for being unable to meet the threshold requirement.

2.8 Eligible Costs

Grants may be used for capital and other expenses directly related to the delivery of eligible projects. This may include:

- purchase of land (if necessary for the project and suitable alternatives to rent do not exist)
- purchasing, constructing, installing and/or commissioning new plant, equipment and/or machinery
- purchasing, constructing, establishing and/or fitting out new facilities, buildings or hubs
- purchasing technology and/or intellectual property (IP) required to undertake the project
- upgrading existing facilities, buildings, plant, equipment, machinery and/or technology where necessary to deliver the project and achieve its outcomes
- cost of contractors to construct new buildings and facilities
- external project management and administration costs up to 10% of project cost
- contingency costs up to 25% of project cost
- eligible costs incurred once both parties have signed a Funding Deed.

Applicants should consider how they can support accessibility for people with disability above the Australian Standards (AS)1428.1-2009 or supporting universal design principles when undertaking new or upgraded site works and fit out.

2.9 Ineligible Costs

The following costs are ineligible unless otherwise agreed by DRNSW:




- contributions made 'in-kind' (unless extenuating circumstances)
- repayment of existing debts or budget deficits
- administrative, operational and maintenance costs not related to the project
- ongoing staff wages and salaries
- ongoing rental and lease expenses beyond the project period
- costs already funded by insurance or other NSW or Australian Government programs
- costs that have been incurred prior to the commencement of the Funding Deed
- costs incurred in the preparation of a grant application or related documentation
- costs that require recurrent or ongoing funding from the NSW Government
- costs relating solely to marketing, advertising or product promotion, including education and information campaigns.

2.10 Example of Eligible Projects

Table 2 provides examples of projects that are eligible for funding under Stream 2 of RIAF.

This is not an exhaustive list of projects. It is designed to give applicants an idea of the type of projects that are eligible and their key benefits.

Table 2 Examples of eligible projects

| Project | Key benefits |
|---|---|
|  <p>Construction of an electrolyser manufacturing facility. The project requires a co-funding contribution from the NSW Government to support its application to an Australian Government funding program.</p> | <p>The project will support the growth of NSW's existing manufacturing industry and help activate a new green hydrogen industry. It will support the transition away from fossil fuels and the NSW Government's commitment to net zero emissions by 2050. The project will create up to 100 jobs during construction and 50 high-quality jobs during operation.</p> |
|  <p>Construction of a biofuels plant which will use biomass material for the production of renewable jet fuel. The project requires a co-funding contribution from the NSW Government to support its application to an industry-led funding program.</p> | <p>The project will activate a new biofuels industry in NSW and improve Australia's sovereign capability to produce and distribute bio jet fuels. It will help reduce emissions from planes and create up to 60 high-quality jobs during operation.</p> |
|  <p>Construction and fit-out of a new plant protein manufacturing facility to supply domestic and international markets. The project is footloose and is able to be located within several jurisdictions outside NSW.</p> | <p>Funding will secure benefits of the project to NSW and will create a new high value-added domestic supply chain option for pulse and grain growers and unlock a new export industry for NSW. It will provide the opportunity to value-add by up to four times the value of the product, create 200 high quality manufacturing jobs by 2025 and generate up to \$20 million in exports by 2035.</p> |

3

Application Process



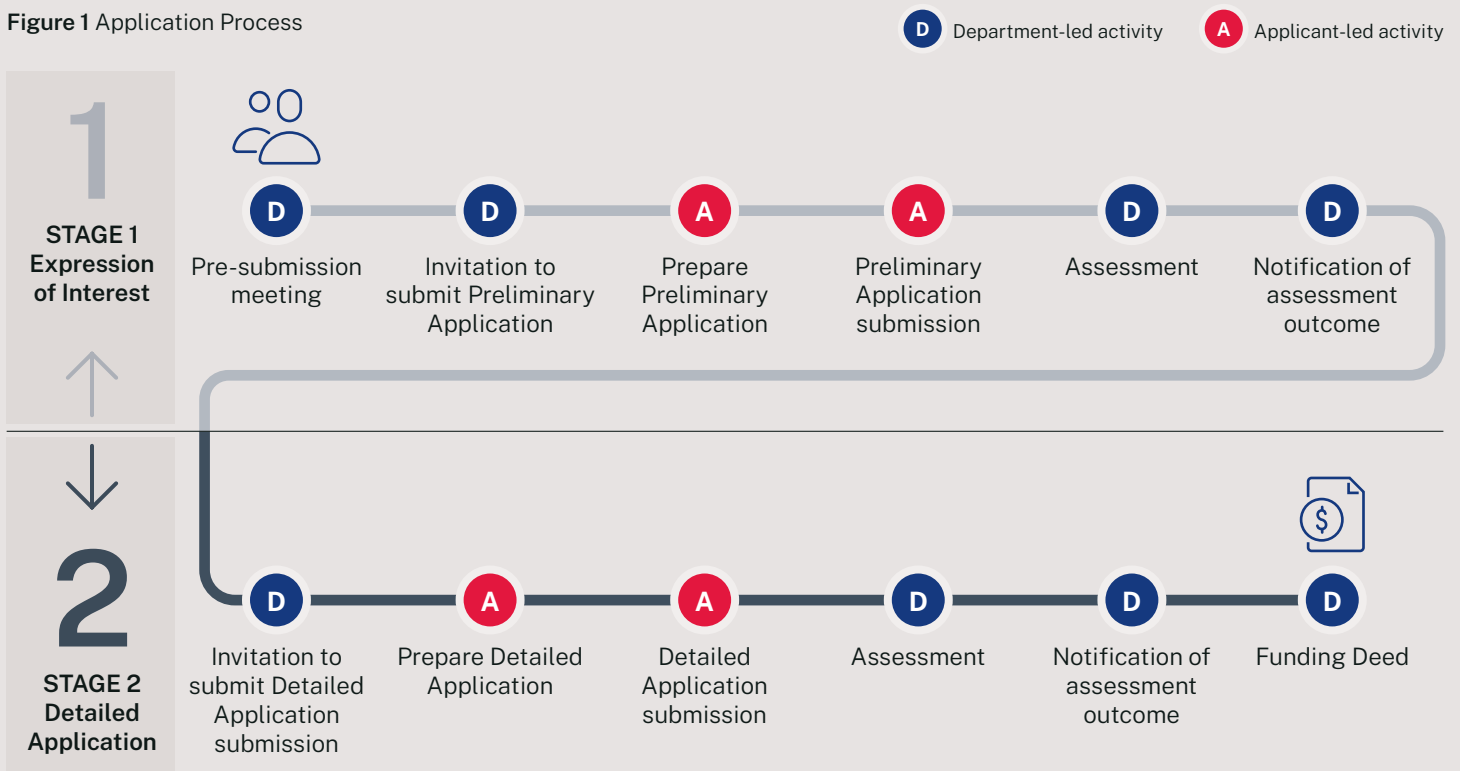
Stream 2 Program Guidelines

The application process is by invitation only for RIAF Stream 2 and has two stages:

- **Stage 1** – Expression of Interest (EOI) Application
- **Stage 2** – Detailed Application.

Figure 1 identifies the application process.

Figure 1 Application Process



3.1 Stage 1: EOI Application

A pre-submission meeting will be held between the applicant and DRNSW to formally explore the readiness of the project and discuss the RIAF Stream 2 Guidelines, Eligibility and EOI Assessment Criteria.

If the applicant and project meet the eligibility criteria and the applicant chooses to proceed, an invitation and pack of supporting materials will be provided to the applicant. Applicants will be provided with the invitation within five days of the pre-submission meeting.

The applicant will be required to demonstrate the project is time-sensitive and strategically significant for a priority industry or location to progress through the process. Other key attributes, benefits, requirements and assumptions underlying the potential project may also be discussed.

3.1 Stage 1: EOI Application continued

EOI Application must include:

- organisation eligibility details as listed in Section 3.1, primary activities of the organisation, entity type (e.g., company, trust, cooperative, etc), industry sector, key competitors, ANZSIC code, ownership structure and project contact details
- a short description of:
 - unique attributes of the project that make it time-sensitive and demonstrate that it is strategically significant for a priority industry or location
 - project scope and proposed use of the grant, including the aim, objectives, deliverables/outputs, timeframes for delivery and location
 - proposed governance arrangements to manage the project
 - organisation's experience in delivering projects similar in scope and scale to the proposed project
 - benefits the project is expected to provide
 - collaboration arrangements including identification of project partners and how resources, technology and/or infrastructure will be shared (if applicable)
 - status of any permissions or approvals relevant to the project and pathway to achieve all relevant permissions and approvals within the proposed project timeframe, for example development approval, landowner's consent, other regulatory approvals such as Therapeutics Goods Administration
 - status of appropriate IP rights for the project (if applicable).
- project budget including the estimated total cost of the project, grant request to the NSW Government, and cash co-contribution amount and source details
- financial statements (trading, profit & loss statements and balance sheets) for three continuous years starting from the latest available year or other evidence of financial viability if statements are not available (for example a signed statement from an external accountant).

Applicants can contact the Department to apply for Stream 2 funding by emailing regionalnsw.business@regional.nsw.gov.au

Applications must meet the eligibility criteria and demonstrate compliance with the EOI Assessment Criteria outlined in these Guidelines to be considered suitable for progression to the Detailed Application stage.

An application that is unable to meet all eligibility criteria may be accepted at the sole discretion of DRNSW.

Notification of the assessment outcome will be within seven business days of the EOI Application submission by inviting applicants to partake in a Detailed Application.

3.2 Stage 2: Detailed Application

DRNSW will contact successful applicants of the EOI Application process to discuss the Detailed Application process including confirmation of willingness to participate. DRNSW will provide a link to an online Detailed Application Form, data sheet and other templates for applicants to complete. DRNSW will be available to support applicants with the preparation of applications and supporting documents.

Each Detailed Application must include:

- any updates to the information provided in the EOI such as organisation details, project scope, proposed use of the grant, governance arrangements, financial statements etc
- detailed Project Plan which includes a detailed scope and identifies all elements of the project (template provided)
- completed data sheet (template provided) which includes:
 - a detailed cash flow budget identifying all project costs including contingency
 - information required for calculation of quantifiable benefits including incremental business revenue and costs from the project, incremental wages, intermediate input costs, profit margin, incremental employment from the project, and share of employment from unemployed or disadvantaged groups
- business plan or other supporting documents explaining the underlying assumptions across the project's lifecycle (demand, sales channels, value proposition, risks), for example:
 - justification for undertaking the project
 - evaluation of the costs, benefits, risks and assumptions of alternative options to deliver the project
 - financial analysis to demonstrate the project is financially feasible and supports the information provided in the data sheet
 - commercial analysis to identify the preferred procurement and delivery strategy
 - management analysis to demonstrate the preferred option can be successfully delivered (governance, resourcing, schedule, risk, benefits, change etc).
- cost estimates and/or quotes (dated in the previous six months) and technical documents supporting the detailed budget and project plan
- evidence of at least \$20 million in public liability insurance
- signed Probity Declaration Form.

3.2 Stage 2: Detailed Application continued

The level of information provided should be proportional to the scale and complexity of the project. Applications will be assessed against the Detailed Assessment Criteria outlined in Section 4.3 of these Guidelines.

Applicants should ensure they provide as much information as possible to demonstrate evidence of:

- the unique attributes of the project that make it time-sensitive and strategically significant for a priority industry or location
- project alignment to the objectives of RIAF and relevant NSW policies, strategies and frameworks
- experience in delivering projects similar in scope and scale to the project or otherwise demonstrates capability and capacity to deliver the project
- project readiness, including status of development applications, landowner's consent and/or regulatory approvals where required or applicable
- co-contribution to the project, including from the applicant and other sources, that demonstrates to DRNSW that the applicant has sufficient funds available for the required co-contribution amount
- other expected benefits of the project and how they will be measured
- rationale for and impact of government financial support including but not limited to:
 - secure the investment if the project is contestable
 - address a funding gap
 - improve an uncommercial payback period
 - bring forward the project by a number of years
 - deliver greater scale benefits
 - provide certainty and confidence to project lenders, equity partners and foreign investors etc.

Applications with insufficient evidence or detail will be disadvantaged in the assessment.

All Detailed Applications must be submitted online via the Detailed Application Form in the SmartyGrants portal.

Successful applicants will be notified by a Letter of Offer and confidentially document within 14 weeks of the Detailed Application submission, or as soon as possible after a grant is approved, at the NSW Government's discretion. Public announcement by the NSW Government may occur at any time after an applicant has been notified of a successful outcome.

Unsuccessful applicants will be notified in writing and will be offered a feedback information session. Unsuccessful applicants that demonstrate a meritorious application may be eligible for investment facilitation support and/or referral opportunities to other appropriate Australian or NSW Government sources of support and/or funding.

4

Assessment Process



4.1 Overview

The assessment of applications will be coordinated by DRNSW and undertaken in two stages:

1 Stage 1 – EOI Application

The purpose of the EOI Application assessment is to determine if the project is eligible for funding under Stream 2 of RIAF, and if sufficient justification exists to warrant further development and progression to a more defined project through the preparation of a Detailed Application.

A suitably qualified Departmental official will assess the application against the eligibility and EOI assessment criteria outlined in these Guidelines. A DRNSW official will provide a recommendation as to whether the project is considered suitable for progression to the Detailed Application stage.

Final approval to progress to the Detailed Application stage will be made by an executive from DRNSW.

2 Stage 2 – Detailed Application

The purpose of the Detailed Application assessment is to undertake a comprehensive assessment of the project to determine whether sufficient justification exists to make a recommendation to the NSW Government for funding approval.

A team of suitably qualified specialists coordinated by DRNSW will assess the application against the eligibility and detailed assessment criteria outlined in these Guidelines.

An assessment panel will be convened to review the outcomes of the assessment process, and provide an objective, independent recommendation as to whether the project is suitable for funding approval under RIAF.

The Assessment Panel will consist of:

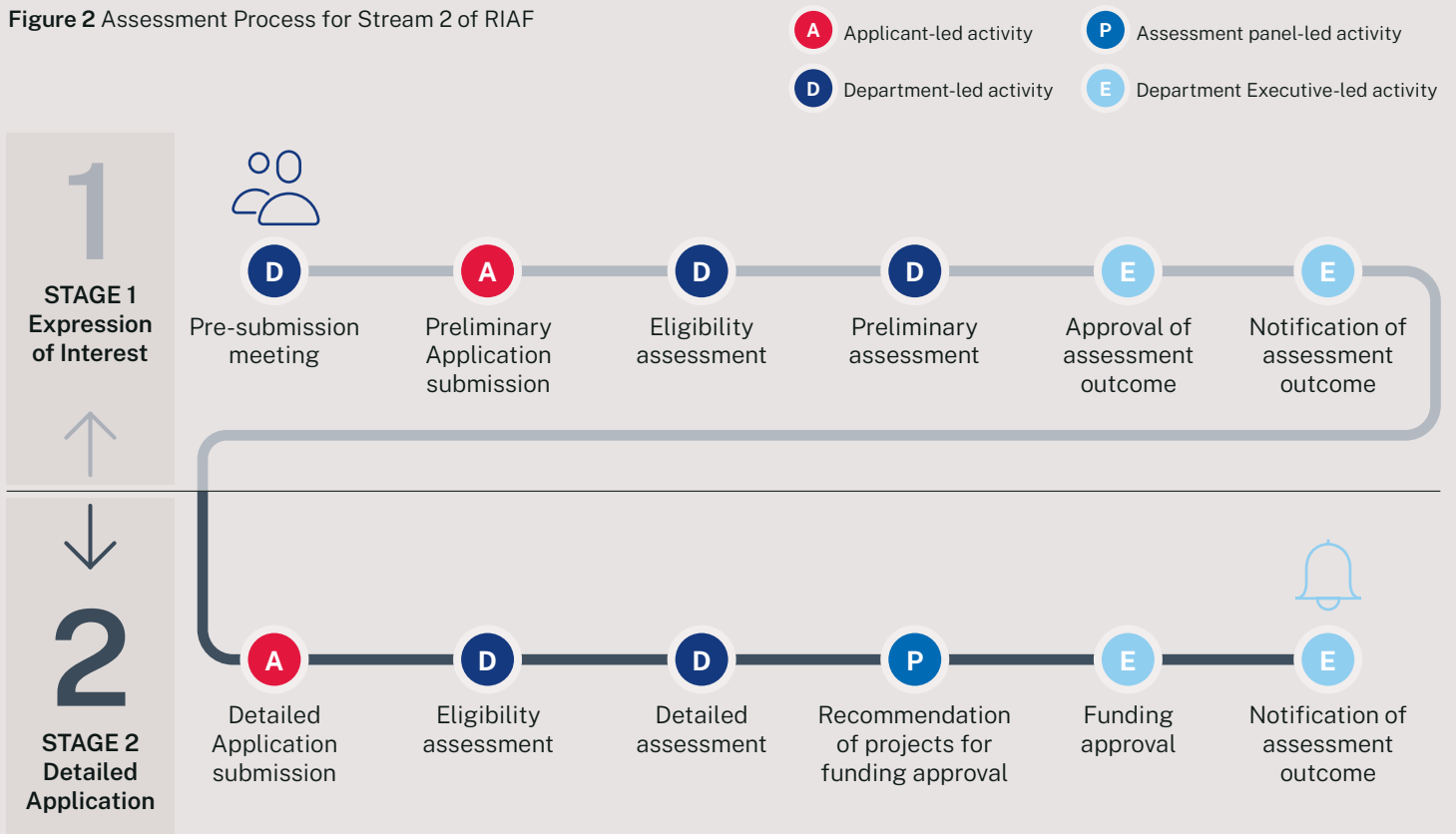
- two representatives from the Department of Regional NSW, one as chair
- one representative from Investment NSW
- one representative from Training Services NSW

Final funding approval will be made by an executive from DRNSW.

DRNSW may request additional information or clarification from the applicant during the assessment process. Advice may also be sought from other NSW Government agencies or other sources to assist in the assessment of projects. Confidentiality will be maintained throughout the process.

Figure 2 on the following page identifies the Stream 2 assessment process.

Figure 2 Assessment Process for Stream 2 of RIAF



4.2 Stage 1: EOI Application

4.2.1 Eligibility assessment

DRNSW will assess the application against the eligibility and EOI assessment criteria outlined in these Guidelines. Where there is uncertainty or unintended outcomes arising from the eligibility requirements, DRNSW will take the approach that, in its opinion, best achieves the objectives of RIAF.

Final eligibility determinations will be made at the discretion of an executive from DRNSW. Ineligible applications will not be considered for further assessment.

4.2.2 EOI assessment

DRNSW will assess the application against four EOI Assessment Criteria. A project must demonstrate compliance with the EOI Assessment Criteria to be eligible for progression to the Detailed Application stage.

Final approval to progress to the Detailed Application stage will be made by an executive from DRNSW.

Table 3 identifies the EOI Assessment Criteria.

Table 3 EOI Assessment Criteria

| Criteria | Requirement |
|---|---|
| Uniqueness | <p>The project is time-sensitive and can only proceed if Program funds are provided outside standard program funding cycles, for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • projects where regional NSW is in competition, or has the potential to be in competition, with interstate or international locations • projects where a NSW Government funding co-contribution is required to support an application to another government or industry program <p>And/or</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the project is strategically significant, i.e., it will deliver wider economic benefits to a priority industry or location that cannot be achieved by other comparable businesses in NSW and no other suitable funding opportunities are open or are expected to open. |
| Strategic alignment | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alignment with relevant NSW Government strategies, frameworks and plans including, but not limited to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – regional NSW-specific policies or strategies such as the 20-Year Economic Vision for Regional NSW Refresh, relevant Regional Economic Development Strategy – state-wide policies or strategies such as the NSW 2040 Economic Blueprint, NSW Trade Statement, Global NSW, Turning Ideas into Jobs, Net Zero Plan Stage 1: 2020-2030, NSW Waste and Sustainable Materials Strategy 2041 – industry development policies or strategies such as NSW Industry Development Framework, NSW Government Defence and Industry Strategy, Critical Minerals and High-Tech Metals Strategy, NSW Visitor Economy Strategy, NSW Hydrogen Strategy, NSW Advanced Manufacturing Industry Development Strategy – DRNSW Aboriginal Outcomes Strategy 2022-2025, and NSW State Government Aboriginal Procurement Policy • Alignment with the objectives of the RIAF |
| Project feasibility and deliverability | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clearly defined project scope including aim, objectives, deliverables/outputs and timeframes for delivery • Capability and capacity to deliver the project, as demonstrated through past performance in delivering similar projects, or appropriate expertise available (i.e., external project management service provider) • Suitability and experience of the staff or arrangements to deliver the project including consideration of procurement of services Aboriginal businesses • Governance arrangements in place to manage the project • Pathways to planning and regulatory approval for the proposed project are identified • Pathway/s to finance the project are identified and represent/s value for money • Project risks have been identified and strategies are in place to manage them. |

| Criteria | Requirement |
|-------------------------------|--|
| Sustainable employment | <p>How strongly the project will contribute to sustainable employment opportunities including, but not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• retention of existing jobs in regional NSW for a specified period• employing and/or working in partnership with identified priority groups including Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander individuals and communities, young people and people with a disability• provides high-quality upskilling opportunities for existing regional NSW based workforce (pay and benefits, job design, level of skill or training, future work prospects)• creation of high-quality employment opportunities (pay and benefits, job design, level of skill or training, future work prospects). |

4.3 Stage 2: Detailed Application

4.3.1 Eligibility assessment

A suitably qualified Departmental official will confirm that the application meets the Eligibility Criteria identified in Section 3 of these Guidelines. Final eligibility determinations will be made at the discretion of an executive from DRNSW. Ineligible applications will not be considered for further assessment.

4.3.2 Detailed assessment

DRNSW will assess the application against five Assessment Criteria. Subject matter experts and/or technical advisors may be consulted to assist in the assessment of projects.

Due diligence of the applicant, including of the financial statements (or other evidence of financial viability if statements are not available) will also be undertaken to determine the financial strength or risks of the applicant.

Table 4 identifies the Assessment Criteria for the Detailed Application stage.

Table 4 Detailed Application Assessment Criteria

| # | Criteria | Requirement |
|---|----------------------------|---|
| 1 | Uniqueness | <p>The extent to which the project is time sensitive.</p> <p>Projects that are able to demonstrate why NSW Government funding assistance is urgent will be treated with a higher priority for further consideration by Government. For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • projects where regional NSW is in competition, or has the potential to be in competition, with interstate or international locations • projects where a NSW Government funding co-contribution is required to support an application to another government or industry program • the project is strategically significant, i.e., it will deliver wider economic benefits to a priority industry or location that cannot be achieved by other comparable businesses in NSW and no other suitable funding opportunities are open or expected to open. |
| 2 | Strategic alignment | <p>How strongly the project aligns with relevant NSW Government strategies, frameworks and plans including, but not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • regional NSW-specific policies or strategies such as the 20-Year Economic Vision for Regional NSW Refresh, relevant Regional Economic Development Strategy • state-wide policies or strategies such as the NSW 2040 Economic Blueprint, NSW Trade Statement, Global NSW, Turning Ideas into Jobs, Net Zero Plan Stage 1: 2020-2030, NSW Waste and Sustainable Materials Strategy 2041 • industry development policies or strategies such as NSW Industry Development Framework, NSW Government Defence and Industry Strategy, Critical Minerals and High-Tech Metals Strategy, NSW Visitor Economy Strategy, NSW Hydrogen Strategy, NSW Advanced Manufacturing Industry Development Strategy <p>How strongly the project is aligned to the objectives of the RIAF:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • support the growth of existing industries and the establishment of new/emerging industries where regional NSW has a strong actual or potential competitive advantage • activate the economic potential of Special Activation Precincts, Regional Job Precincts, Renewable Energy Zones, hydrogen hubs and other priority locations through increased private sector investment • create new high quality employment opportunities, supports accessible infrastructure and universal design • support the shift towards higher-value-added activities and participation in global value chains and supply chains • promote collaboration between businesses, education and research institutions and other parties through sharing of knowledge, resources and infrastructure |

| # | Criteria | Requirement |
|---|----------------|---|
| 3 | Economic | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A cost benefit analysis will be coordinated by DRNSW to determine the net benefit per dollar of government grant (NPV/I) • Projects will generally be required to produce a positive NPV/I. Projects that do not achieve a positive NPV/I may still be considered if unquantifiable benefits are expected to be significant, including if the projects: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – deliver agglomeration benefits such as knowledge spillovers, labour pool sharing, more efficient supply chain linkages etc – attract other flow-on investment to regional NSW that would not otherwise occur – increase industry resilience to risks such as increasing climate variability and sovereign capability – introduce a new industry capability demonstrated to not otherwise be available to NSW |
| 4 | Deliverability | <p>How strongly an applicant can demonstrate the project is deliverable by 30 May 2025. Key considerations include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • project scope is clearly defined including aim, objectives, deliverables/outputs and timeframes for delivery • the applicant has demonstrated skills and capacity to deliver the project, as demonstrated through past performance in delivering similar projects, or appropriate expertise available (i.e., external project management service provider) • suitability and experience of the staff or arrangements to deliver the project including consideration of procurement of services Aboriginal businesses • readiness to commence the project, including status of required regulatory and/or development approvals • the project budget represents value for money for the scope being delivered • suitability of the detailed business plan, business case (if required) feasibility plan, budget, technical plans and/or cost estimates supporting the project |
| 5 | Affordability | <p>The share of the co-contribution in the form of committed cash from the applicant and other non-NSW Government sources as a percentage of the total project cost.</p> <p>Co-contributions from non-NSW Government sources should be at least 50 per cent of the total project cost. Applicants are required to provide supporting evidence for being unable to meet a threshold requirement.</p> |

4.3 Stage 2: Detailed Application continued

4.3.3 Review and recommendation

The Assessment Panel will be convened to determine the suitability of the application for funding under RIAF. The Assessment Panel will consider the merit of the application against:

- outcomes of the Detailed Assessment
- economic benefits of the project as measured by net benefit per dollar of government grant
- financial strength and viability of the applicant
- any personal, businesses and/or probity issues and risks that cause reputational or other risk to the NSW Government.

The Assessment Panel may also consider the following factors when assessing the suitability of the project for funding:

- geographical and industry spread of projects across regional NSW
- the amount of funding available
- suitability of the project for other government funding opportunities
- applications that have requested consideration for extenuating circumstances (e.g., less than the minimum required co-contribution, late submissions etc) and have provided supporting evidence for being unable to meet a threshold requirement
- whether further information is required to make an informed decision and delay the status of an application
- an independent probity advisor will be present during the Assessment Panel meetings. Industry experts, either internal or external to the NSW Government, may advise the Assessment Panel during the assessment.

4.3.4 Decision-making

The Assessment Panel will provide advice to DRNSW on the suitability of the project for funding.

The Assessment Panel may recommend part-funding of projects if there is insufficient funding available for the whole project or where only a component of the project is considered suitable/eligible.

All projects may be referred to other NSW or Australian Government funding programs for consideration.

The relevant executive from DRNSW will provide final funding approval of the project and funding amount.

4.3.5 Probity advice

Independent probity advisers will provide guidance to DRNSW on any issues concerning integrity, fairness and accountability that may arise throughout the application, assessment and decision-making process. This will ensure decisions are made with integrity, fairness and accountability, while delivering value for money for NSW.

5

Successful Applicants



5.1 Notification

Successful applicants will be notified via email and/or letter. Applicants may be requested to keep the grant confidential for a period if an announcement is likely to be made by the NSW Government.

5.2 Funding Deed

Successful applicants will be required to enter into a Funding Deed with the NSW Government. An example Funding Deed template will be made available on DRNSW of Regional NSW website. All successful applicants will be paid the approved grant amount plus 10 per cent GST.

The NSW Government makes no binding funding commitment to an applicant unless and until both parties sign a Funding Deed.

The Funding Deed will require the successful applicant to provide a copy of all relevant insurances, project approvals (e.g., development approvals, landowner's consent) and other supporting documentation relevant to the project or as requested by DRNSW. The first grant payment will be made once all required documentation has been provided to DRNSW.

Grants will be paid as per the instalment structure within the agreed Funding Deed. Timing and requirements will vary at NSW Government's discretion, depending on the scope and risk of the project.

Successful applicants may be required to submit project progress reports to the NSW Government as outlined in the Funding Deed. Examples of measures to be included in the report are completion of project activities and number of FTE positions created as a result of the project, construction jobs created through the delivery of the project and employment outcomes for young people, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and people with disability.

5.3 Important Terms and Conditions

Applicants should note the following:

- the NSW Government may choose to publicly announce funding for individual applications, including the amount of funding and the expected economic benefits created by the funding. It may also use information provided in the application to develop case studies
- requests for variations or changes to the project will only be considered in limited circumstances
- successful applicants will be required to pay back unspent funds, or any funds not spent in accordance with the Funding Deed
- successful applicants will be required to participate in a program evaluation after the project has commenced. The evaluation will require applicants to provide evidence of how projects have resulted in measurable benefits consistent with the objectives of RIAF
- all recipients of NSW Government funding must acknowledge this financial support as per the Sponsorship and funding acknowledgement website available at nsw.gov.au/branding/sponsorship-and-funding-acknowledgment-guidelines

- all awarded grants will be GST exclusive. GST will be applied on top of the agreed grant value when payment is made. Grants are assessable income for taxation purposes, unless exempted by taxation law. It is recommended applicants seek independent professional advice about taxation obligations or seek assistance from the Australian Taxation Office. The NSW Government does not provide advice on individual taxation circumstances
- DRNSW reserves the right to undertake an audit of grant funding within seven years.

5.4 Unsuccessful Applicants

Unsuccessful applicants will be notified in writing of the outcome of their application and will be offered a feedback information session.

5.5 Getting support

Frequently Asked Questions and other resources to assist with applications may be updated regularly at on the [NSW Government Grant and Funding Finder](#). The Grants and Finder should be considered the authoritative source of all Grant information.

Department of Regional NSW staff are available to support applicants with their applications, even at the expression of interest stage. Email regionalnsw.business@regional.nsw.gov.au or call 1300 679 673 for assistance.

Applicants should seek advice from their legal, business and financial advisers to determine the suitability of the funding before applying.

5.6 Complaints

Any concerns about the program or individual applications should be submitted in writing to regionalnsw.business@regional.nsw.gov.au. If you do not agree with the way DRNSW handled the issue, you may wish to contact the NSW Ombudsman via ombo.nsw.gov.au.

5.7 Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009 (NSW)

Applicants should be aware that information submitted in applications 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.

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5.9 Disclaimer

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For more information

Email regionalnsw.business@regional.nsw.gov.au

Phone 1300 679 673