



Australian Government

Department of Infrastructure, Transport,
Regional Development, Communications and the Arts

Frequently Asked Questions – Growing Regions Program – Expressions of Interest

Can applicants submit multiple EOI's for different projects? Will this impact each other or will they be assessed individually? Could an applicant potentially be awarded multiple grants?

Yes, applicants can submit multiple EOI applications for different projects. Each EOI application would be assessed as a separate application. Potentially, the same applicant could receive more than one grant if their multiple applications were invited to submit full applications and were successful.

Do the co-funding partners have to be not-for-profit organisations or can they be a normal incorporated company?

Co-funding partners can come from any source including, but not limited to: private sector, philanthropy, state, territory and local government grants. However funding from other Commonwealth grants cannot be used to fund the balance of project expenditure not covered by a grant under the Growing Regions Program.

Can eligible entities partner with private entities or commercial operators for co-funding?

Co-funding partners can come from any source including, but not limited to: private sector, philanthropy, state, territory and local government grants. However funding from other Commonwealth grants cannot be used to fund the balance of project expenditure not covered by a grant under the Growing Regions Program.

What evidence can applicants provide to demonstrate cash co-contributions?

Examples of the types of evidence applicants can provide to demonstrate cash co-contributions can include, but are not limited to: loan approvals and agreements, letters of offer from financial institutions, letters of commitment from funding partners, grant funding confirmation letters or agreements etc.

To be eligible, projects must not have commenced construction – what does 'commenced' mean? Is it limited to onsite work, or preliminaries such as tendering?

To be eligible, no construction activities must have commenced on the actual project site. Preliminaries such as tendering are considered pre-construction activities.

Can the project be split into stages where stage 1 is underway (non-site activity) and the grant funds subsequent stages?

Yes, projects can be split into different stages so that grant funds can be used to only fund stages that include eligible project activities.

In the staged project example above, could stage 1 investment be counted as co-contribution?

No, co-funding contributions must be obtained for the stage/s that the grant funds will be used.

If a design concept is in place, is a 'Design and Construct' process eligible to be considered during EOI - so long as project will be ready to commence on-site construction by May 2024?

Yes, section 6.2 of the guidelines states that under assessment criterion 1 – EOI applicants should demonstrate the extent projects are ready to proceed by identifying how advanced the project designs are.

Will quantity surveyors' estimates be considered as acceptable evidence under stage one – Expressions of Interest (EOI) applications?

Yes, applicants can provide quantity surveyors' estimates as supporting evidence for EOI applications. Please note quotes are not mandatory attachments at the EOI stage.

Will a land lease be considered as acceptable evidence under stage one - EOI applications?

Yes, applicants can provide a land lease as supporting evidence to demonstrate they have permission to use the land/infrastructure for the purposes of the project and the lease will cover the period of the grant.

Do applicants need to use their own budget template for applications?

Yes, applicants will need to use their own template as there is no standard template available on business.gov.au.

My project will not meet the minimum project amount of \$1 million for Group 3 co-funding requirements, what can I do?

Section 7.4 of the guidelines recognises that some organisations may want to submit a joint (consortia) application to deliver higher value projects. Applicants may wish to work with others to bring forward projects with a total cost of \$1 million. Please contact the Business Grants Hub on 12 28 46 or at www.business.gov.au/contact-us for further information about the joint application process.

Can project management costs be funded where staff are performing this role?

No, the payment of salaries for applicant employees is ineligible expenditure under Appendix B of the guidelines.

Can you provide guidance on contingencies, for example, amounts, eligibility etc?

Applicants are encouraged to invest time in writing their applications and developing project budgets that are realistic and cater for contingencies such as potential increases to project costs and timeframes.

In terms of grant funding for successful projects, progress payments are usually made in arrears and we set aside at least 10 per cent of the total grant funding for the final payment. We will pay this when applicants submit a satisfactory end of project report demonstrating completed outstanding obligations for the project. We may need to adjust progress payments to align with available program funds across financial years and/or to ensure we retain a minimum 10 per cent of grant funding for the final payment.

Can you suggest how councils might resolve reaching or exceeding local construction market limits to be able to participate in this grant? And what flexibility measures are built into the grant criteria and management?

We recognise that councils across Australia are currently operating under tight market conditions. In situations such as these applicants may wish to consider staging project activities, or deferring their project until the Growing Regions Program – Round 2 opens late 2023, to better match market availability within the required program dates. We would also encourage applicants to contact the Business Grants Hub on 12 28 46 or at [Growing Regions Program Round 1 | business.gov.au](http://GrowingRegionsProgramRound1|business.gov.au) to discuss their project applications.

Cost escalations in my region (and probably most others) are horrendous. Quotes may have little meaning and the 34 weeks it takes to get to the point of funding makes it harder. Can applicants build in a percentage for escalations?

At EOI stage, the intent of the guidelines is for applicants to demonstrate that the project budget is based on robust assumptions. This can be done by attaching quotes or other costings which would give an assessor sufficient confidence that the budget is realistic for the proposed project. However, we recognise that quotes or other costings may vary between the EOI and full application stage.

How will an applicant be certain that they are eligible for disaster area project funding (i.e. they may be in the area but it may be assessed that the project does not fit the criteria)? Can applicants 'hedge their bets' when seeking legitimate disaster area (90/10) or remote area (70/30) funding splits, where they go for the best split (e.g. 90/10) but can roll back to 50/50 if not supported / unsuccessful at the best funding split?

To be eligible for the up to 90% co-contribution towards eligible project costs, the specific project site must be located in an area impacted by natural disaster from 1 May 2022 onwards. Applicants must identify these areas using the link provided on page 8 of the guidelines. This link will direct applicants to the search tools and maps provided by the Department of Home Affairs' on its Disaster Assist web page. The project site must also be directly impacted by the disaster.

The evidence required to support the request for co-funding requirements under Group 1 could include evidence that the project location has been identified on the Disaster Assist website coupled with evidence of the specific site being impacted. For example, photos, newspaper articles, insurance documents etc.

Where the evidence to support a Group 1 application is deemed insufficient but the application is meritorious in all other respects, the applicant may still be invited to submit a full application under the co-funding group associated with the project location only. In this case, the applicant will need to demonstrate they meet the co-funding requirements for that new group as part of the Full Application.

In terms of project specifics, we encourage all applicants to contact the Business Grants Hub to discuss any questions they may have regarding their project eligibility, circumstances and activities. The Business Grants Hubs contact details are provided here [Growing Regions Program Round 1 | business.gov.au](#)

Is digital infrastructure eligible?

The program is designed to fund hard infrastructure. Appendix B of the guidelines outlines that ongoing upgrades, updates and maintenance of existing ICT systems, the costs of ongoing subscription-based software, and IT support membership and warranties for purchases are ineligible expenditure. Additional examples of ineligible expenditure specific to investment ready projects include ICT equipment, including software or hardware that is not an integral part of the funding infrastructure. However, Appendix A of the guidelines includes ICT cabling as eligible material costs.

We would encourage applicants to contact the Business Grants Hub to discuss the specifics of the project including project eligibility, circumstances and activities. The Business Grants Hubs contact details are provided here [Growing Regions Program Round 1 | business.gov.au](#)

When does stage two – full applications of the Growing Regions Program application process close?

The closing date and time for stage two – full applications is 5pm Australian Eastern Daylight Savings Time (AEDST) on 12 December 2023.

Is there any prospect of additional councils in being added to the Group 2 co-funding group?

There are no plans to modify the co-funding groups for Round 1 of the program.

How do applicants apply project location geographic eligibility requirements to projects such as bike tracks etc?

Applicants should use the project's starting point address to determine a project's geographic eligibility.

My community infrastructure project does not meet the geographic eligibility criteria as it is located within a Greater Capital City Statistical Area, why does this program use this definition?

The geographic boundaries applied under the program – the Greater Capital City Statistical Areas as defined by the Australian Bureau of Statistics - provide on an up-to-date definition of the functional extent of each of the eight state and territory capital cities, using a consistent and evidence-based approach.

Projects located inside the Greater Capital City Statistical Areas will be geographically eligible for the Thriving Suburbs Program. Between the Growing Regions and the Thriving Suburbs programs local government entities and not-for-profit organisations in every part of the country will be able to apply for Australian Government funding for capital works projects that deliver community and economic infrastructure projects.

When will more information about Thriving Suburbs Program be made available.

Information on the program guidelines, eligibility criteria and the application process will be provided on the department's website in due course. Please continue to monitor the department's website at [Thriving Suburbs Program | Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications and the Arts](#)

If an EOI is not successful in Round 1, can an applicant apply again in Round 2?

Unsuccessful applicants from Round 1 may be able to apply for Round 2, noting the guidelines for the Growing Regions Program - Round 2 have not yet been finalised. If applicants were unsuccessful in their last application we would encourage them to contact the Business Grants Hub for feedback.

When will Round 2 of the Growing Regions program open?

Round 2 is expected to launch in late 2023.

Further information

These FAQs are intended to complement the Grant Opportunity Guidelines for this program. If you have any questions about the guidelines or during the application process, contact us the Business Grants Hub at [Growing Regions Program Round 1 | business.gov.au](#)