

Frequently Asked Questions

National Bike Path Projects (NBP)

GENERAL INFORMATION:

National Bike Path Projects (NBP) is part of the Jobs Fund – a \$650 million Australian Government initiative to support and create jobs and increase skill through innovative projects that build community infrastructure and increase social capital in local communities across the country.

The Australian Government has set aside \$40 million over one year for the construction of bike paths under the Local Jobs stream of the Jobs Fund.

The Jobs Fund, including the National Bike Path Projects will commence 1 July 2009. Projects under the Bike Path stream will be funded until 30 June 2010.

1. Who is eligible to apply for NBP funding?

Non-profit organisations, employment services providers, industry associations, unions, peak bodies, regional development agencies, industry associations, local/state/territory governments and community organisations will be eligible to apply for funding under the Local Jobs and Get Communities Working streams.

2. How and when do I apply for NBP funding?

A first round of applications for the Jobs Fund closes at 4.30pm EST on 22 May 2009. Organisations should read the Jobs Fund Guidelines at:

<http://www.deewr.gov.au/Employment/Pages/JobFund.aspx> to obtain further information prior to developing and submitting proposals and obtain the Proposal for Funding Form. For further information see:

http://www.infrastructure.gov.au/regional/national_bike_path.aspx

3. What can NBP funding be spent on?

Bike path funding may be provided for new, extensions or refurbishment of existing:

- off-road bike paths (but not dedicated mountain bike trails);
- on-road bike lanes (e.g. road-widening, and marking bike lanes on an existing road); and
- bicycle parking facilities.

Funding can be used for: construction; project management costs; and payment of salary/wages and employee on-costs for additional people employed on the project. The majority of funding must be used for construction.

4. Who will administer NBP funding?

The Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government is responsible for administering \$40 million in the Local Jobs stream for the construction of bike paths over one year.

5. How many applications can we submit?

Organisations should submit one application per project. An application may contain a number of components but should not exceed the \$2 million maximum per project.

6. Can we start our project once the application is in?

Do not assume an application will be successful. Applicants should not make financial commitments based on notification of funding approval from the Australian Government until the Funding Agreement (contract) has been executed by both parties. Multi-staged projects can commence provided they are not contingent upon Australian Government funding.

7. How will NBP projects be assessed?

All proposals initially will be assessed by the Department of Employment, Education and Workplace Relations against the four target areas and the three gateway criteria (refer to Annexure 1). Following the initial assessment, the application for Bike Path funding will be forwarded to the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government for due diligence and risk assessment.

Sub-sections 6.4.1 - 6.5 of the Program Guidelines set out the information that applicants should provide in their application for funding (refer to Annexure 2).

Each proposal will be judged on its merits, and in comparison to other project proposals submitted at the same time or previously.

For Bike Path Project proposals, applicants need to demonstrate how the project will create local jobs and provide alternative transport options. A joint funding contribution of 50 per cent will be expected. Funding for individual projects will be determined on a case-by-case basis to a maximum of \$2 million per project.

Funding will be in the form of one-off grants to support the delivery of innovative social or infrastructure projects which create jobs and employment opportunities in communities affected by the economic downturn, while also delivering positive environmental, heritage and social outcomes. Projects will focus on directly generating jobs for people in communities with high unemployment, a rise in unemployment or vulnerability.

8. How do I demonstrate partner funding?

A joint funding contribution of 50 per cent will be expected. Applicants should provide details of any demonstrated financial or in-kind commitment from your organisation or other partners in the project (e.g. staff, assets). Refer to Annexure 2 (6.4.1 Assessment Criteria in the Program Guidelines).

Partner funding does not need to be fully expended during the same period as National Bike Path Project funding (i.e. it could be used to fund other stages of the same project).

While partner funding needs to be identified, projects may be able to be considered where funding has not yet been confirmed. However, preference may be given to projects that have secured partner funding. No funding will be released until partner funding has been confirmed (refer to Annexure 2).

9. Why are the National Bike Path Projects the only stream of the Jobs Fund that expects a minimum of 50 per cent partner funding?

Partner funding helps demonstrate the commitments of applicants to deliver a project within a one-year timeframe and that there is wide support for the project.

Bike Paths are a single class of infrastructure and greater flexibility may be required in the other streams of Jobs Fund.

10. Do we need to demonstrate how many jobs will be created?

Yes. The Jobs Fund is a jobs creation program. Organisations should provide details of how your project will deliver direct employment and economic benefits in both the short term and long term, the number of work experience positions and the number of traineeships that will be created and /or retained as a result of this project, and how this will be achieved. Refer to Annexure 2 (6.4.1 Assessment Criteria in the Program Guidelines).

11. When should construction start?

Construction must commence within six months of the Funding Agreement (contract) being signed by the recipient and the Australian Government. Projects will be funded until 30 June 2010. Where applicants expect their projects to continue past this period, they must demonstrate an alternative source of funds beyond 30 June 2010.

12. Can I apply if I do not yet have all relevant statutory approvals?

Yes, provided the project can commence construction within 6 months of signing the Funding Agreement. Refer to Annexure 2 (6.4.1 Assessment Criteria in the Program Guidelines).

13. Do we need to be in a priority area to apply for funding?

Project proposals are not limited to identified priority areas.

14. What is the role of Local Employment Co-ordinators?

The Government is placing Local Employment Co-ordinators (LECs) in regions that are in most need of support. Working with their local community, Co-ordinators will identify and develop projects that might be eligible for the fund. Co-ordinators will also develop and put in place rapid responses to deal with emerging employment issues in their region.

Local Employment Co-ordinators will be placed in an initial seven identified regions across Australia.

These priority areas are:

- Canterbury-Bankstown and south-west Sydney in New South Wales
- Illawarra in New South Wales
- South-east Melbourne in Victoria
- Ipswich-Logan in Queensland
- Northern and western Adelaide in South Australia
- South-west Perth in Western Australia
- Northern Tasmania

Applications are not restricted to projects in these priority areas.

Further information is available at:

<http://www.deewr.gov.au/Employment/Pages/JobFund.aspx>

15. When are applications due for NBP? Can I get an extension?

Applications in response for the first call for funding close 4:30pm EST 22 May 2009. While no extensions will be granted, there may be further opportunities for the funding of Bike Paths Projects during 2009/10 either through additional funding rounds or an ongoing application process. This will be determined following consideration of applications under the First Funding Round.

Annexure 1

2.3 Project eligibility

Projects which will be considered for funding under the Jobs Fund must address at least one of the following four target areas:

- A. create jobs or retain people in jobs at risk due to the downturn
- B. build skills for the future
- C. build community infrastructure or improve community amenity which generates local jobs, or
- D. provide seed funding for social enterprises to start up, maintain or expand services, generating jobs and improving community services.

Within each of these four target areas preference will be given to projects which demonstrate one or more of the following:

- are ready-to-start immediately
- support, create or retain jobs
- assist a greater number of disadvantaged job seekers including Indigenous job seekers and have a greater likelihood of achieving outcomes for those job seekers
- are in locations that have entrenched disadvantage or are vulnerable to the economic downturn
- involve place-based initiatives which strengthen the community
- provide job seekers with additional skills through training which maintains a connection with the labour market or develops connections to the community
- assist apprentices/trainees who have been made redundant to complete their apprenticeships
- have the potential to be sustainable and provide long-term employment opportunities for job seekers in areas of high unemployment
- provide jobs for local businesses and communities and provide opportunities for youth, while also delivering positive environmental, heritage and social outcomes
- involve well negotiated partnerships with employment services providers, local community organisations and relevant stakeholders needed to assist job seekers
- demonstrate stakeholder consultation and work with the local community in designing and running projects
- include a contribution of funds, or in kind contributions to supplement the amount sought in the project proposal
- revitalise or create new infrastructure assets for community needs or have the potential to contribute to economically viable regions.

All projects must also demonstrate that the activities to be funded are clearly additional to those that would have occurred in the absence of funding under the Jobs Fund.

2.4 Gateway criteria

- The Jobs Fund will have a common set of gateway criteria which must be met for funding under any of the three streams:
- Projects in areas experiencing high unemployment, a significant rise in unemployment or vulnerability
- Projects must be viable and ready to start
- Funding will not extend past 2010-11. Projects will be expected to be self-sufficient and/or not require Australian Government funding beyond 30 June 2011.

Annexure 2

6.4.1 Assessment criteria

Assessment of projects will be based on applicant responses to the following key criteria:

1. Projects in areas experiencing high unemployment or a significant rise in unemployment or vulnerability

Your response should:

- detail your project location (you are required to provide photos of the area where you intend to undertake any construction activity as part of your proposal)
- list the primary areas where local jobs will be created or retained
- demonstrate that this location experiences high unemployment or has had a significant rise in unemployment or has an identified vulnerability
- provide details of how your project will deliver direct employment and economic benefits in both the long term and short term, including approximately how many short term (less than 6 months) and long term (greater than 6 months) jobs, the number of work experience positions and the number of traineeships that will be created and/or retained as a result of the project, and how this will be achieved
- specify which target group of job seekers will be assisted (e.g. skilled, unskilled, youth, training/apprenticeships)

2. Projects must be viable and ready to start

Your response should:

- indicate when you are able to start your project. Eligible projects must be 'ready-to-start' within six months of signing the Funding Agreement (contract). Where projects involve construction, construction must commence within the six month timeframe
- indicate if the project has been fully scoped and if necessary plans have been prepared
- indicate if relevant licences or approvals have been granted or will be obtained shortly (e.g. building or planning approvals)
- indicate if all required labour, materials and specialist expertise is available within the required timeframes
- provide details of any community, employer, industry, employment services provider or stakeholder involvement and support for the project
- provide details of any demonstrated financial or in-kind commitment from your organisation or other partners in the project (e.g. staff, assets etc). You will need to complete the tables in Items 12 and 15 of Part B of the Proposal for Funding form as part of addressing this criterion
- demonstrate your capacity to deliver the project by having staff with the appropriate expertise and technical skills
- demonstrate how the activities to be funded are clearly additional to those that would have occurred (or in the case of Temporary Financial Assistance, the activity/service(s) would not be maintained) in the absence of funding

A range of information will be assessed in order to confirm project viability (refer to sub-section 6.5 for the type of factors that may be taken into consideration). You will need to

complete the Financial and Credentials Information Form at Attachment B and submit it with your proposal.

6.5 Due diligence and risk assessment

Projects will be subject to due diligence and risk assessment by the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government as appropriate. Important aspects that may be considered in relation to the overall viability of the project include:

- **Cost effectiveness**

Applications will need to demonstrate that the project represents value for money for the Australian Government. In assessing value for money, Departments will look at the outcomes of the project in light of the amount of funding being sought. For example, Departments could consider

- The number of long term and short term jobs being created
- Number of persons being trained, or
- The number of users of a facility being built.

Departments will take into consideration local community factors and project variables in making this assessment.

- **Ability to complete project on time and in budget**

Applicants will need to provide details of key milestones, in particular project delivery dates. Applicants will need to be able to demonstrate experience in the delivery of projects, in particular project management and reporting.

- **Organisation financial viability**

Applicants will need to submit the Financial and Credentials Information Form at Attachment B with their proposal so that a financial viability assessment can be conducted. Some of the types of information that may be required as part of this assessment includes:

- audited financial statements (i.e. balance sheet, profit and loss statement, cash flow statement, notes to the accounts) for the most recent three financial years
- contracts with other public funding bodies, and
- details of relevant organisational staff.

- **Sustainability**

The applicant will need to demonstrate how the benefits to the community of the project will be maintained into the future.

- **Independent Viability Assessment**

Where the Departments consider there are risks with the viability of the project that requires further consideration, an Independent Viability Assessment (IVA) will be undertaken by a qualified external consultant engaged by one of the Departments. The findings of the IVA will be considered in the project assessment.

- **Insurance and compliance**

Projects should demonstrate evidence of current insurance coverage or the ability to obtain appropriate coverage.