



**Australian Government**  
**Department of Infrastructure  
and Regional Development**



# GUIDELINES



## National Stronger Regions Fund

Promoting Economic Development in Australia's Regions

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Director, Internal Communications and Publishing  
Communications Branch, Department of Infrastructure and Regional Development  
GPO Box 594, Canberra ACT 2601, Australia

Email: [publishing@infrastructure.gov.au](mailto:publishing@infrastructure.gov.au)

Website: [www.infrastructure.gov.au](http://www.infrastructure.gov.au)



The Australian Government is committed to building stronger regions. We understand the proud history of Australia's regions and their importance to our future economic prosperity. To strengthen communities and drive new growth in our regions, the Australian Government is inviting applications to the National Stronger Regions Fund.

The Fund will invest \$1 billion over five years and support investment in the priority economic and infrastructure areas – from freight and transport projects to convention centres and major multi-purpose sports facilities. These investments will also have a major focus on strengthening economies in Australia's regions by improving the productivity, employment, and workforce skills of Australians.

The Government's investment will enhance the economic growth, activity and output of our regions and sustain these gains into the future. The Fund will have a particular focus on assisting disadvantaged regions to achieve growth.

The Fund will invest in crucial infrastructure projects that will be conceived by local communities – and this approach will help Australia's regions invest in their own future.

As well as providing direct investment in major projects that deliver economic and social benefits, the Fund will have flow on benefits of improving the capacity of organisations to deliver projects. To best deliver critical infrastructure, the Fund will encourage the formation of strong partnerships that engage project proponents with the private sector, and local, state and territory governments.

Projects seeking funding will be considered in consultation with the Government's National Infrastructure Committee, which has a strong interest in, and commitment to, harnessing the potential of Australia's regions.

The Guidelines for the National Stronger Regions Fund provide the information you need about the type of project proposals we are seeking, how proposals will be assessed, critical dates, and how you contact our Department to assist you with further information.

We welcome your interest in the National Stronger Regions Fund, and wish you all the best with your proposal.

**The Hon Warren Truss MP**  
*Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for  
Infrastructure and Regional Development*

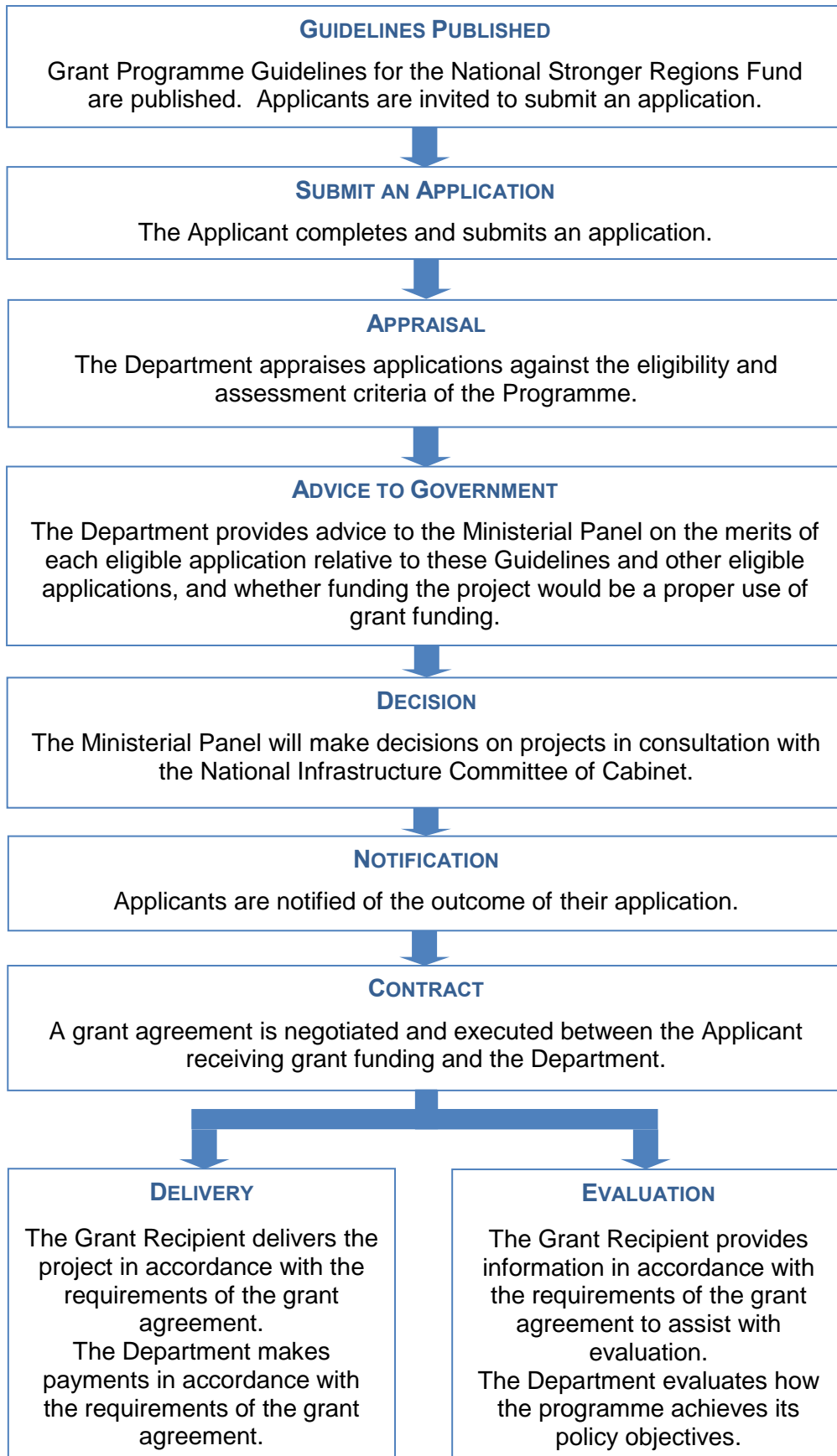
**The Hon Jamie Briggs MP**  
*Assistant Minister for Infrastructure  
and Regional Development*

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## Grant Programme Process Flowchart



# 1. Introduction

## 1.1. Overview

The National Stronger Regions Fund (NSRF) is a new programme to promote economic development in Australia's regions. The Government is providing \$1 billion over five years, commencing in 2015-16, to fund priority infrastructure in local communities.

The NSRF is a competitive programme, with decisions on projects to be funded based on, amongst other things, information provided in the application and supporting documents.

Applications for grant funding will be appraised against the eligibility and assessment criteria of the NSRF programme and whether funding the project would be a proper<sup>1</sup> use of grant funding. Decisions on projects to be funded will be taken by a Ministerial Panel in consultation with the Government's National Infrastructure Committee of Cabinet.

These Grant Programme Guidelines (the Guidelines) apply to all projects seeking funding from the NSRF. The Guidelines outline the objectives and desired outcomes of the NSRF, eligibility and assessment requirements, the application and appraisal process, roles and responsibilities, and funding arrangements.

Applicants are strongly encouraged to read these Guidelines in conjunction with the Frequently Asked Questions and the Guide to Lodging an Online Application Form, which are all available on the Department of Infrastructure and Regional Development website at <http://www.infrastructure.gov.au/nsrf>.

## 1.2. Programme objective and outcomes

The objective of the NSRF is to fund investment ready projects which support economic growth and sustainability of regions across Australia, particularly disadvantaged regions, by supporting investment in priority infrastructure.

The desired outcomes of the programme are:

- improved level of economic activity in regions;
- increased productivity in the regions;
- increased employment and a more skilled workforce in regions;
- increased capacity and improved capability of regions to deliver major projects, and to secure and manage investment funding;
- improved partnerships between local, state and territory governments, the private sector and community groups; and
- more stable and viable communities, where people choose to live.

Not all projects will be able to contribute to each desired outcome, however collectively the projects will meet the NSRF objectives and desired outcomes.

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<sup>1</sup> Proper' is defined in the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013* as meaning 'efficient, effective, economical and ethical'.

### 1.3. Roles and responsibilities

The *Process Flowchart* outlines the roles and responsibilities of each party.

The NSRF is administered by the Department of Infrastructure and Regional Development (the Department).

The Ministerial Panel considers the Department's advice, information provided by the Applicant, independent advice on projects, and consults with the National Infrastructure Committee of Cabinet before making decisions on projects to be funded. The Ministerial Panel comprises:

- the Hon Warren Truss MP, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Infrastructure and Regional Development;
- the Hon Jamie Briggs MP, Assistant Minister for Infrastructure and Regional Development; and
- the Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister.

For the purposes of these Guidelines, the Applicant means the organisation that submits the application and will be the organisation which enters into the grant agreement if grant funding is approved. On entering into the grant agreement, this organisation will be referred to as the Grant Recipient.

## 2. Key Dates

Key Dates	
NSRF Announced	1 October 2014
NSRF Guidelines Published	1 October 2014
Round One Applications Open	1 October 2014
Round One Applications Close	28 November 2014
Round One Application Assessment Completed	31 March 2015
Announcements of Round One Projects to be Funded	May 2015
Round Two Applications Open	1 May 2015
Round Two Applications Close	31 July 2015
Round Two Application Assessment Completed	31 October 2015
Announcements of Round Two Projects to be Funded	December 2015

Decisions on further Rounds will be determined by Government subject to the outcomes of Rounds One and Two. All key dates will be published on the Department's website.

## 3. How to Apply

### 3.1. Application process

Applications for the NSRF can be submitted at any time between the opening and closing dates for each Round. Applications must be received by 5.00pm local time on 28 November 2014 for Round One and 31 July 2015 for Round Two (note local time refers to the Applicant's local time)



Late applications will not be accepted, unless the Department considers there were exceptional circumstances beyond the Applicant's control. The Department's decision will be final.

Only completed applications submitted by an authorised member of the organisation will be accepted and appraised. Incomplete applications will be deemed as ineligible.

Applicants may withdraw an application at any time, with written advice of the withdrawal to be provided to the Department via email to [nsrf@infrastructure.gov.au](mailto:nsrf@infrastructure.gov.au).

### **3.2. Application requirements**

Applications must provide all of the information required in the application form, including the mandatory documents listed in Section 4.1. Documents should also be provided to support the case made against the assessment criteria, although these are not mandatory.

Claims against the assessment criteria should be supported by evidence.

### **3.3. How to submit an application**

Applications must be submitted via the online application form, which is accessed from the Department's Grant Management System (GMS) Portal at <http://gms.infrastructure.gov.au/UI>. Supporting documents are uploaded with the application, however each supporting document must not exceed 15 megabytes in size and must not exceed 45 characters in length for the file name. Separate arrangements for lodgement may be made in exceptional circumstances. Further information on lodging an application is available in the GMS Portal User Guide at [www.infrastructure.gov.au/nsrf](http://www.infrastructure.gov.au/nsrf)<sup>2</sup>.

### **3.4. Appraisal process**

Applications will be appraised against the eligibility and assessment criteria by the Department. The appraisal will be based on information provided in the application form, supporting documentation and advice from other parties. Following advice from the Department on the individual and relative merits of eligible applications, the Ministerial Panel will make decisions on projects to be funded in consultation with the National Infrastructure Committee of Cabinet.

### **3.5. Support in identifying projects**

Regional Development Australia (RDA) Committees may assist Applicants to identify infrastructure projects, particularly projects which contribute to long term economic growth and have been identified as priorities.

Committees may approach eligible organisations about developing an application for an infrastructure project or play a facilitation role by bringing key parties together, including those who may provide a financial contribution to the project. Committees may work with Applicants to prepare applications, supporting documents and evidence.

RDA committees will not be involved in the appraisal or prioritisation of projects.

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<sup>2</sup> Requests for separate lodgement arrangements should be submitted in writing to [nsrf@infrastructure.gov.au](mailto:nsrf@infrastructure.gov.au).

## 4. Eligibility

Applicants must satisfy all of the eligibility requirements.

Applications that do not satisfy all of the eligibility requirements will be deemed as ineligible. Ineligible applications will not be appraised against the assessment criteria or provided to the Ministerial Panel for consideration.

### 4.1. Documents to be provided to support eligibility

A number of documents must be provided to confirm that the application meets the eligibility requirements and to support the assessment of viability and sustainability. Applications which do not include all of the required documents will be deemed as ineligible.

Applicants seeking a grant of \$1 million or less will provide fewer and less detailed supporting documents. This reduces the compliance burden associated with small projects, whilst ensuring that the Department has sufficient information to conduct robust appraisals. The size and content of documents should be commensurate with the size, scope and nature of the project.

<b>Mandatory Documents For Grant Requests of \$1 million or Less</b>	<b>Mandatory Documents For Grant Requests of More than \$1 million</b>
Evidence of Incorporation (not-for-profit organisations only)	Evidence of Incorporation (not-for-profit organisations only)
Evidence to confirm capacity to deliver the project (not-for-profit organisations only)	Evidence to confirm capacity to deliver the project (not-for-profit organisations only)
Project Management Plan or a similar document	Project Management Plan
Business Case or a similar document	Business Case
Risk Management Plan or other document which includes any significant risks associated with the project and mitigation strategies	Risk Management Plan
Procurement Management Plan or other document which describes arrangements to procure major items	Procurement Management Plan
Written confirmation of all partner funding (cash) <sup>3</sup> . If partner funding is conditional on the provision of the funding grant, Applicants must provide a letter of intent from a senior member of the organisation providing funding	Written confirmation of all partner funding (cash) <sup>3</sup> . If partner funding is conditional on the provision of the funding grant, Applicants must provide a letter of intent from a senior member of the organisation providing funding
Written confirmation of all in-kind contributions	Written confirmation of all in-kind contributions
Evidence that the asset will be maintained in a viable and operational state for one year for projects with funding of less than \$250,000 and three years for projects with funding from \$250,000 to \$1 million	Evidence that the asset will be maintained in a viable and operational state for at least five years
Audited Financial Statements for two of the three most recent consecutive years	Audited Financial Statements for two of the three most recent consecutive years
	Evidence to confirm the Applicant's experience in delivering projects of similar size and scope
	Asset Maintenance or Asset Management Plan

<sup>3</sup> The certification in the application form is appropriate confirmation, where the Applicant is the only funding partner.

## 4.2. Who is eligible to apply for funding?

An eligible Applicant for funding must be:

- a legal entity with an Australian Business Number (ABN) or an Australian Company Number (ACN); and
- an organisation that is one of the following:
  - a Local Government body including the ACT Government, either in its own right or on behalf of a consortium; or
  - a not-for-profit organisation, either in its own right or on behalf of a consortium, that is not owned by a state or territory government.

Eligible local government bodies are defined in Attachment A. A consortium must be supported by appropriate legal arrangements, and must be led by a local government body or eligible not-for-profit organisation. A consortium may include ineligible organisations.

## 4.3. Who is ineligible to apply for funding?

The following organisations are not eligible for funding:

- NSW, VIC, QLD, WA, SA, TAS and NT governments;
- state and territory government-owned corporations, for example organisations that deliver services to communities that would normally be expected of a council and/or organisations that operate on a commercial basis and deliver services which support the day-to-day operation of the community;
- state and territory government-owned not-for-profit organisations;
- universities, technical colleges, schools and hospitals, and other organisations which are primarily supported by other Australian Government programmes or initiatives;
- Regional Development Australia committees; and
- all for-profit organisations.

## 4.4. What is eligible for funding?

NSRF funding will be provided for capital projects which involve the construction of new infrastructure, or the upgrade, extension or enhancement of existing infrastructure. Examples of projects which may be considered for funding are at Attachment B.

## 4.5. What is not eligible for funding?

The NSRF will not fund infrastructure projects which:

- do not deliver sustainable economic benefits, including job creation;
- are eligible for funding under the National Disaster Relief and Recovery Arrangements;
- shift costs from state, territory or local governments to the Commonwealth; and/or
- are integral elements of hospitals, as they are funded by other Government initiatives.

Grant funding from the NSRF cannot be used for the following:

- expenditure incurred prior to the announcement that the project has been successful in its application for NSRF funding;
- provision of services and support activities;
- soft infrastructure, including computer software or hardware that is not an integral part of the funded capital project;

- payment of salaries for new or existing staff or contractors; or
- administrative overhead items, including office equipment, vehicles or mobile capital equipment, for example trucks and earthmoving equipment.

#### 4.6. Additional eligibility requirements

Applications must comply with all of the following requirements to be considered for grant funding:

- the Applicant must seek a grant of at least \$20,000 and up to a maximum of \$10 million;
- the Applicant must match the NSRF grant in cash on at least a dollar for dollar basis;
- the NSRF funded component of the project must be completed on or before 31 December 2019;
- the project must deliver an economic benefit to the region beyond the period of construction<sup>4</sup>; and
- the Applicant must submit a completed application, including the mandatory documents listed at Section 4.1.

Cash partner funding can be provided by any organisation including, but not limited to, the Applicant, local government, state or territory government, not-for-profit organisations and private sector companies.

An NSRF grant can be one component of a larger package of Australian Government funding. Grants from other Australian Government initiatives cannot be included as part of the Applicant's matching funding. Total funding for the project from the Australian Government cannot exceed 50 per cent of the total project cost.

## 5. Assessment Criteria

Each application that meets the eligibility criteria will be appraised against the assessment criteria. Applicants are strongly advised to present a strong case against each assessment criteria, with all claims supported by evidence. Each application must meet a minimum benchmark against each of the criteria to be recommended for funding to the Ministerial Panel.

Applications will be appraised against each of the following assessment criteria:

- Assessment Criterion 1: The extent to which the project contributes to economic growth in the region;
- Assessment Criterion 2: The extent to which the project supports or addresses disadvantage in the region;
- Assessment Criterion 3: The extent to which the project increases investment and builds partnerships in the region; and
- Assessment Criterion 4: The extent to which the project and proponent are viable and sustainable.

Consistent with the policy intent of the NSRF and given that all projects must deliver an economic benefit, Assessment Criterion 1 will be given an increased weighting in the appraisal process. Assessment Criterion 1 will be weighted at 50 per cent of the total assessment criteria. Remaining criteria will be weighted equally.

<sup>4</sup> The nature, scope and quantity of economic benefit is appraised as part of the assessment criteria.

## 5.1. Assessment Criterion 1: The extent to which the project contributes to economic growth in the region

The Applicant should demonstrate how the project contributes to economic growth in the region.

Economic benefit relates to those benefits generated by new or improved infrastructure, and can be described in terms of the ability to generate additional income through more efficient use of resources and improved trade opportunities. Economic benefits can include, but are not limited to:

- more efficient use of resources;
- increases to productivity or capacity;
- the creation of direct and indirect employment, beyond the construction phase of the project;
- increases to output, exports and import replacement, or market share;
- increases in industry and economic competitiveness, including by reducing costs;
- more efficient supply chains, including through more efficient transport networks;
- diversification of the industrial base and local businesses;
- increases to capability to access funding and deliver a project of a significant size and scale;
- use of local and nationally produced goods and services, where it is appropriate and cost effective; and
- the extent to which the project halts a mooted or foreseen decline in a region, or otherwise stems a decline in employment, operating businesses, output or population.

Economic growth also delivers social and community benefits. Applicants may describe how their project enhances the public good in the medium<sup>5</sup> and long<sup>6</sup> term. These benefits should be quantified and supported by evidence.

A Cost-Benefit Analysis supporting the Applicant's case will be highly regarded, particularly for projects seeking grant funding of more than \$1 million.

## 5.2. Assessment Criterion 2: The extent to which the project supports or addresses disadvantage in a region

Projects should support disadvantaged regions or areas of disadvantage within the region. Applicants should demonstrate that both their region (or part thereof) is disadvantaged and the project will address this disadvantage. There must be a direct relationship between the project seeking funding and the identified region or area of disadvantage. Evidence to demonstrate both the relationship and benefits of the project is encouraged.

To demonstrate disadvantage, Applicants may wish to consider using some or all the following indicators:

- the Socio-Economic Index for Areas (SEIFA Index), which is published by the Australian Bureau of Statistics;
- unemployment data, average income and average weekly earnings, number of welfare recipients and single income families;
- population change, including significant population increases and decreases;

<sup>5</sup> Medium term is considered to be five to ten years following completion of the project.

<sup>6</sup> Long term is considered to be ten to twenty years following completion of the project.

- age of the population, percentage of the population from a non-English speaking background, percentage of the population from Indigenous or Torres Strait Islander backgrounds;
- impact of restructuring or structural change, impact of climate change;
- distance from and ease of access to major service, trade and employment centres;
- price of housing and rents, availability of housing; or
- education standards and skill levels of the population.

### **5.3. Assessment Criterion 3: The extent to which the project increases investment and builds partnerships in the region**

Partner contributions ensure that the benefits of the Australian Government's funds are increased. Applicants should seek to attract contributions which are additional to the required 50 per cent matching funding. Both cash and in-kind contributions will be considered against this criterion.

The extent and nature of partnerships, including those of a non-financial nature, formed to develop and deliver the project will be considered under this criterion. Sustainable economic growth is underpinned by partnerships with and between governments, industry, representative organisations, the community, the education and training sector, the not-for-profit sector and philanthropic organisations. Partnerships can ensure proper planning, and support increases to the capacity and capability of the region to deliver major projects.

### **5.4. Assessment Criterion 4: The extent to which the project and Applicant are viable and sustainable**

All eligible projects will be appraised for the viability of the Applicant and viability and sustainability of the project. The appraisal will consider all of the following:

- the Applicant's financial position, which determines whether the Applicant has sufficient funds to meet its obligations, fund any cost overruns and maintain the project in the medium term;
- the quality of supporting documents which gives confidence that the project will be delivered on time, on budget and to the required standard;
- whether all appropriate planning, construction, zoning, environmental and/or native title approvals are in place or will be in place within six months of execution of the funding agreement, to help confirm that the project will commence and be completed on time and according to the agreed scope;
- whether the project is investment ready, that is will be able to commence within 12 months of signing the funding agreement;
- the Applicant's history in managing grant funding (if any), which provides confidence that the grant will be expended according to the grant agreement; and
- risks associated with project delivery and ongoing management.

## **6. Decisions**

### **6.1. Advice from external parties**

The Department may request advice on applications from state and territory governments, other Australian Government agencies, independent experts and other external parties.

Advice will be requested on, but not limited to, the history of the Applicant in delivering projects, viability of the project and Applicant, the extent to which the project aligns with or delivers priorities in state and territory plans, confirmation of funding contributions and impact of the project on the region.

## 6.2. Value for money

Value for money is achieved when the processes, actions and behaviours employed by the Australian Government and Grant Recipients result in public resources<sup>7</sup> being used in an efficient, effective, economical and ethical manner.

The NSRF seeks to promote value with relevant money by selecting for funding, those projects that:

- have met all of the published eligibility requirements;
- have demonstrated the greatest relative merit in terms of the published assessment criteria;
- involve a reasonable (rather than excessive) cost having regard to the quality and quantity of deliverables that are proposed; and
- have a risk profile that is acceptable to the Australian Government, with any identified risks able to be efficiently and effectively managed.

Value for money will also be considered on an ongoing basis during and after the delivery of the project, including by ensuring that Australian Government funding is expended and acquitted in accordance with contracted requirements and all other conditions of funding are met, and through monitoring and evaluating the extent to which a funded project achieves its objectives and contributes to the outcomes of the NSRF.

## 6.3. Decisions on projects to be funded

Following an appraisal of the application, the Department provides advice to the Ministerial Panel on the individual and relative merits of each application and whether, based on its analysis, funding the project would be a proper use of public resources. Copies of each application, supporting documents, outcomes of the Department's appraisal and any other information which the Department considers relevant will also be provided.

The Ministerial Panel will consider the advice of the Department and supporting information, and make decisions on projects to be funded in consultation with the National Infrastructure Committee of Cabinet.

In addition to the application, supporting material and outcomes of the Department's appraisal, the Ministerial Panel and the National Infrastructure Committee may take other factors into account when making decisions on projects to be funded, including:

- the broader regional reach of the project;
- other similar existing or planned infrastructure in the region to ensure that there is genuine demand and/or no duplication of facilities or services;
- other infrastructure or planned infrastructure projects in the region, and the extent to which the proposed project supports or builds on those projects and the services that they offer; and

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<sup>7</sup> Public resources is defined in the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013* as 'relevant money, relevant property, or appropriations'

- the Australian Government's priorities.

The Ministerial Panel may require additional conditions and management strategies be attached to the grant funding based on its own knowledge, the outcomes of the assessment and the risk analysis. It may also offer a different amount of grant funding to that requested by the Applicant.

#### **6.4. Advice to the Applicant**

Applicants will be advised in writing of the funding decision. The Department will offer feedback to all Applicants on request.

Letters to successful Applicants will detail any specific conditions attached to the funding. Funding approvals will be announced by the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Infrastructure and Regional Development, the Assistant Minister for Infrastructure and Regional Development or a representative of the Ministers. Funding approvals will also be listed on the Department's website.

## **7. Conditions of Funding**

### **7.1. Contractual arrangements**

Applicants that have been selected to receive grant funding will be required to enter into a grant agreement with the Commonwealth of Australia, represented by the Department. The grant agreement states the obligations of the Grant Recipient and of the Department. Grant Recipients are advised to be aware of the obligations and requirements set out in the grant agreement, and should seek legal advice where needed. A template of the grant agreement is available on the Department's website at [www.infrastructure.gov.au/nsrf](http://www.infrastructure.gov.au/nsrf).

The grant agreement will set out:

- any specific conditions attached to the funding approval as a result of the appraisal process or further considerations by the Ministerial Panel. These will be identified in the offer of funding or during agreement negotiations;
- arrangements to report on the progress of the project and acquit the expenditure of funding;
- branding and recognition requirements; and
- arrangements to manage the delivery of the project, including reporting requirements and site visits conducted by the Department or representatives of the Department.

The Grant Recipient should not make financial commitments for funded activities based on the approval of funding or public announcements. Financial commitments entered into before a grant agreement has been executed with the Department are done so at the risk of the Grant Recipient.



## 7.2. Compliance with the Building Code 2013 and Australian Government Building and Construction OHS Accreditation Scheme

Project funding specifically relating to building and construction activity, as defined in the Building Code 2013<sup>8</sup>, as amended from time to time, must comply with the Building Code 2013 subject to any threshold requirements. Construction activity must be undertaken by an accredited builder as specified under the Australian Government Building and Construction OHS Accreditation Scheme<sup>9</sup>.

## 7.3. Evaluation

A Monitoring and Evaluation Strategy forms part of the Department's programme delivery arrangements, and will assess the extent to which the NSRF is achieving its policy objectives and provide valuable input to the development of future programmes.

Questions in the application form, as well as requests for data in the negotiation of the grant agreement, the delivery of milestones and following completion of the project will form key inputs to the evaluation. Applicants are required to provide information, as requested, to support the collection of baseline data and inform the evaluation of the NSRF.

# 8. Payment of Funding

## 8.1. Payment arrangements

Payments will be made on achievement of agreed milestones. Before any payment can be made, Grant Recipients will be required to provide:

- a tax invoice for the amount of the payment; and
- evidence of meeting the requirements for payment, as stipulated in the grant agreement.

## 8.2. GST and tax implications

It is recommended that Grant Recipients seek guidance about the implications in receiving NSRF funding from a tax advisor or the Australian Taxation Office at [www.ato.gov.au](http://www.ato.gov.au) prior to submitting an application.

In accordance with the terms of Australian Taxation Office ruling GSTR 2012/2, payments made by a government related entity to another government related entity do not attract GST. Payments to other entities may attract GST.

# 9. Probity

The Australian Government is committed to ensuring that the process for providing funding from the NSRF is transparent and in accordance with published Guidelines. The Guidelines may be varied from time-to-time by the Australian Government, as needed or to reflect its priorities. Amended Guidelines will be published on the Department's website.

<sup>8</sup> The Building Code 2013 can be found at <http://www.fwbc.gov.au/building-code>

<sup>9</sup> The Australian Government Building and Construction OHS Accreditation Scheme can be found at <http://www.fsc.gov.au/sites/fsc/needaccredited/accreditationscheme/pages/theaccreditationscheme>.

## 9.1. Conflict of interest

A conflict of interest may exist if, for example, the Applicant or any of its personnel:

- has a relationship (whether professional, commercial or personal) with a party who is able to influence the application appraisal process, such as a Department staff member;
- has a relationship with, or interest in, an organisation, which is likely to interfere with or restrict the Applicant in carrying out the proposed activities fairly and independently; or
- has a relationship with, or interest in, an organisation from which they will receive personal gain as a result of the granting of funding under the NSRF.

Each Applicant will be required to declare, as part of its application, existing conflicts of interest or confirm that, to the best of its knowledge, there is no conflict of interest that would impact on or prevent it from entering into a grant agreement with the Commonwealth of Australia (as represented by the Department).

Where an Applicant subsequently identifies an actual, apparent, or potential conflict of interest in relation to the application for funding, the Applicant must inform the Department in writing immediately.

Department employees will manage any conflict of interest in accordance with the Department's Accountable Authority Instruction for probity.

Further information on conflicts of interest is included in the grant agreement.

## 9.2. Confidential information

Information submitted by the Applicant may be provided to other organisations for the purposes of eligibility and project proposal appraisal.

Applicants should identify any information submitted which they wish to be considered as confidential, supported by reasons for the request. The Australian Government reserves the right to accept or refuse a request to treat information as confidential.


The Privacy Act 1988 applies to the handling of personal information about individuals obtained in the course of the delivery of the NSRF.

Grant Recipients must not act or engage in any practice which, if done or engaged in by the Commonwealth, would be a breach of an Information Privacy Principle contained at Section 14 of the *Privacy Act 1988*.

## 10. Contact Details

Questions about the NSRF, including the eligibility criteria and the application process can be emailed to [nsrf@infrastructure.gov.au](mailto:nsrf@infrastructure.gov.au). Questions should be clear and concise. Questions that are directly relevant to the NSRF will be added to a Frequently Asked Questions document and placed on the Department's website.

To ensure equity and fairness in the assessment process, the Department cannot respond to questions on the eligibility of individual Applicants or projects.



Any enquires relating funding decisions or complaints should be directed to:

General Manager  
Regional Programmes Branch  
Department of Infrastructure and Regional Development  
GPO Box 594  
CANBERRA ACT 2601  
E: [nsrf@infrastructure.gov.au](mailto:nsrf@infrastructure.gov.au)

## **11. Attachments**

- A: Eligible Local Government Bodies
- B: Overview of Projects which Applicants may Consider Requesting Funding

### Eligible Local Government Bodies

#### Local Government

A *local governing body* is defined by the *Local Government (Financial Assistance) Act 1995* (Cwlth) as either:

- a) a local governing body established by or under a law of a State, other than a body whose sole or principal function is to provide a particular service, such as the supply of electricity or water ('State' in the *Local Government (Financial Assistance) Act 1995* (Cwlth) includes the Australian Capital Territory and the Northern Territory); or
- b) a body declared by the Minister, on the advice of the relevant State Minister, by notice published in the *Gazette*, to be a local governing body for the purposes of this Act.

In addition, for the purposes of the NSRF, the following organisations will be considered local governing bodies:

- Five Indigenous local governing bodies in South Australia (Anangu Pitjantjatjara, Maralinga, Gerard, Nepabunna and Yalata);
- The Outback Communities Authority, formerly the Outback Areas Community Development Trust, in South Australia;
- The Trust Account in the Northern Territory;
- The Silverton and Tibooburra villages in New South Wales;
- Cocos (Keeling) Islands Shire Council;
- The Shire of Christmas Island;
- Norfolk Island Administration; and
- Lord Howe Island governed by New South Wales.

### Overview of Projects which may be Considered for Funding

Grant funding of between \$20,000 and \$10 million (GST exclusive) will be provided for infrastructure projects which provide economic benefit and have an identifiable and sustainable impact on a region. Projects must be capital in nature and could involve the construction of new infrastructure, or the upgrade, extension or enhancement of existing infrastructure.

Projects may involve a number of elements, however these elements should be cohesive, related to each other and meet the objectives of the programme.

Projects seeking funding from the NSRF could, for example:

- improve or upgrade transport networks to support connectivity and freight movement, such as transport hubs, intermodal services, airports, or upgrades to wharves or cargo loading facilities which cannot be funded by the market;
- enhance the efficient movement of freight, support an industrial estate or strengthen supply chains;
- increase access to water and waste services, support improved water management or enhance irrigation services (routine upgrades and repairs will not be funded);
- extend or enhance services to regions, for example deliver gas pipelines to new industrial estates, upgrade water pipes to support irrigation and industrial growth, or more efficiently manage waste water;
- convention centres and community or performance centres which deliver economic benefits or support increases in tourism; or
- construct large flagship or signature multi-purpose sporting facilities which generate significant long term economic and social benefits and/or support leadership in local communities, for example a state-of-the-art facility which will act as the state hub and will host national, state and elite events on a regular and ongoing basis
  - upgrades to or the expansion of local sporting facilities or the construction of sporting facilities which are otherwise available in the state or territory are unlikely to be supported; or
  - facilities which support a single sport or which can be funded by state and national bodies are unlikely to be supported.

Applicants should note that these are examples only and projects supporting these activities will not be given priority in the appraisal process. Applicants should identify and seek funding for those projects which are priorities in their region.

