

Feedback for Applicants

To request feedback specific to your application send an email to bbrfeedback@industry.gov.au.

The feedback in this document is of a general nature. Not all of the information provided will apply to all applicants.

Building Better Regions Fund

Infrastructure Projects stream – Round Three

- Round three of the merit-based Building Better Regions Fund Infrastructure Projects Stream was highly competitive.
- A total of 613 applications were received requesting approximately \$1.45 billion, with 166 projects approved totalling over \$197.5 million. A list of successful projects is at www.business.gov.au/bbrf.

Eligibility

All applications were assessed to determine whether they complied with the eligibility requirements under the program guidelines. Only applications that met all of the eligibility requirements were appraised against the merit criteria.

The key issues impacting the eligibility of applications were:

- Cash contributions to meet the co-funding requirement were not confirmed. Letters must be on the organisation's letterhead, signed and dated by an authorised person and set out the value and timing of contributions and any conditions attached. These applicants were contacted to request the missing information and they did not provide it.
- The applicant was not an eligible entity.
- The applicant entered the incorrect remoteness classification resulting in a shortfall in cash to meet the co-funding requirement.

Merit assessment

Eligible applications progressed to merit assessment. Applicant claims and evidence against the four merit criteria were considered. To be recommend for funding, your application must have scored highly against each merit criterion. Competitive applications scored highly against all criteria.

Criterion 1 – Economic benefit:

This criterion was weighted and contributed up to 15 marks out of the total score of 35.

- Claims of the project's expected economic benefits must be clearly defined and quantified. The claims should be supported by recent evidence specific to the project.
- Strong applications:

- demonstrated how the project would deliver the claimed economic benefits, for example, through evidence of appropriate linkages to show how the benefits would be realised from the project;
 - demonstrated how the benefits would be sustained beyond the construction period; and
 - included a project specific Business Case, Project Management Plan or similar documents including but not limited to, a demand analysis, research/case studies or similar projects, a needs analysis and/or a feasibility study.
- Applications that failed to define, quantify and/or provide supporting evidence limited the potential score on this criterion and likely had difficulty in meeting the minimum benchmark for funding.
 - For grant requests over \$1 million, applications were required to include a Cost Benefit Analysis. Stronger applications provided a sufficiently detailed Cost Benefit Analysis underpinned by independent data, including clear methodology, providing explanation of clear and specific assumptions, and detailing how the cost benefit analysis supported the applicant's case for return on investment.

Criterion 2 – Social benefit:

This criterion was weighted and contributed up to 10 marks out of the total score of 35.

- Claims of the project's expected social benefits must be clearly defined and quantified. Claims should be supported by recent evidence specific to the project.
- Strong applications:
 - demonstrated how the project would deliver the claimed social benefits, for example, through evidence of appropriate linkages to show how the benefits would be realised from the project;
 - demonstrated how the benefits would be sustained beyond the construction period; and
 - provided evidence to support the social benefit claims commensurate with the size and complexity of the project.
- Applications that provided general, unsubstantiated claims, or that repeated previously stated economic benefits, limited the potential score on this criterion.

Criterion 3 – Project delivery:

This criterion contributed up to 5 marks out of the total score of 40.

- Applicant viability, project sustainability and project viability was considered under this criterion.
- Strong applications:
 - demonstrated meaningful project planning that aligned to the project and set out the project scope, implementation methodology, timeframes, budget and consideration of required approvals;
 - demonstrated the project was past the concept stage and that the applicant had experience in managing projects of a similar size;
 - provided appropriate costings/quotes for the project and demonstrated that cost overruns were catered for;
 - demonstrated that the project assets would be maintained in a viable and operational condition for the time period commensurate with the value of the requested funding;
 - demonstrated appropriate project governance;
 - demonstrated access to people with the right skills and experience, and access to infrastructure, capital equipment, technology and intellectual property; and

- for grant requests over \$1 million, provided strong, mandatory documents as detailed in the Guidelines including a cost benefit analysis.

Criterion 4 – Impact of Grant Funding:

This criterion contributed up to 5 marks out of the total score of 40.

- Written confirmation of all cash (co-funding) and in-kind contributions had to be provided. For cash contributions to meet the co-funding requirement, letters had to be on the organisation's letterhead, signed and dated by an authorised person and set out the value and timing of contributions and any conditions attached.
- Assessment against this criterion also considered:
 - how much partner funding had been confirmed above the minimum requirement. Both cash and in-kind contributions were taken into account;
 - how many partners were evidenced as committed to the project;
 - the need for funding; and
 - the level of community commitment and support for the project.
- Strong applications:
 - demonstrated the extent and nature of the partnerships, including those of a non-financial nature, that were formed to deliver the project;
 - evidenced partner funding to demonstrate that the applicant had been successful in leveraging greater funding;
 - demonstrated support from different levels of government, the community, and/or the private sector;
 - confirmed additional partner funding above the minimum requirement; and
 - provided a rationale and evidence to support a need for funding. That is, why the project would not go ahead, or be diminished, without grant support, particularly when the applicant had sufficient funds to undertake the project without grant assistance.