

# Feedback for Applicants

*To request feedback specific to your application send an email to [bbrfeedback@industry.gov.au](mailto: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 Four – Drought Support*

- Round four of the Building Better Regions Fund - Infrastructure Projects Stream was highly competitive.
- A total of 374 applications were received requesting approximately \$0.85 billion, with 109 projects approved totalling over \$205 million.

## 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:

- The applicant was not an eligible entity.
- The applicant did not provide all the required mandatory attachments listed in Table 2 of the Grant Opportunity Guidelines.
- Applicants requested funding for an ineligible project. Projects must be aimed at the construction, upgrade or extension of infrastructure (as defined in the Grant Opportunities Guidelines) that provides economic and social benefits to regional and remote areas.
- The applicant had not demonstrated the project was investment ready (Refer to section 2.1.1 of the Grant Opportunities Guidelines). Commencement of construction may not be achievable within 12 weeks of executing and agreement. Evidence confirming authority to undertake the project, finalisation of project design and costings, and/or all required approvals were not provided.
- 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 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. 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 40.

- Claims of the projects 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 clearly define, quantify and/or provide supporting evidence limited the potential score on this criterion.

All applications were required to provide estimates of the number of jobs the project will create and provide supporting evidence. Strong applications sufficiently demonstrated the employment impacts were for new/additional jobs created by the project, and substantiated the expected duration of employment.

For grant requests over \$1 million, applications were required to include a Cost Benefit Analysis. Strong applications provided a sufficiently detailed Cost Benefit Analysis underpinned by independent data, clear methodology, explanation of clear and specific assumptions, and detailed how the cost benefit analysis supported the applicant's case for return on investment.

Further guidance on estimating employment outcomes and cost benefit analysis can be found at [www.business.gov.au/bbrf](http://www.business.gov.au/bbrf).

### Criterion 2 – Social benefit:

This criterion was weighted and contributed up to 15 marks out of the total score of 40.

- Claims of the projects expected social 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 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 for this criterion.

### Criterion 3 – Project delivery:

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

- Applicant viability and project viability were 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 that the applicant had prior experience (or access to people with the right skills and experience) in managing projects of a similar size or complexity;
  - demonstrated readiness to commence the project through:
    - demonstrated the project had progressed beyond the concept stage and was investment ready through appropriate designs, land approvals and consideration of required approvals;
    - 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; and
  - demonstrated appropriate project governance.

### Criterion 4 – Impact of funding on your project:

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

- Assessment against this criterion also considered:
  - how much partner funding had been confirmed above the minimum requirement. Both cash contributions and in-kind support 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.