Feedback for Applicants

To request feedback specific to your application send an email to bbrffeedback@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
Community Investments stream – Round One

- Round one of the Building Better Regions Fund Community Investments Stream was highly competitive.
- A total of 392 applications were received requesting $53.5 million, with 147 projects approved to the value of $6.9 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:

- Applicants requested funding for an ineligible project. Projects must fit under one of the following categories:
  - Local events and activities
  - Strategic planning
  - Regional leadership and capability.
- Infrastructure projects are not eligible under the Community Investments Stream.
- Applicants requested funding for a ‘Local events and activities’ project but did not identify a new or expanded event.
- Cash contributions to meet the co-funding requirement were not confirmed by project partners. 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.
- Not for profit applicants did not provide adequate audited financial statements for the two most recent consecutive years (or the period the organisation has been incorporated if less than two years). Audited statements must at the minimum include full financial statements and be signed by a qualified auditor.
- One or more mandatory documents were not provided.

Refer to Section 8.1 of the Round 1 Building Better Regions Fund Community Investments Stream Guidelines for a full list of requirements for supporting documents.
Merit assessment

Eligible applications progressed to merit assessment. Applicant claims and evidence against the four merit criteria were considered. As a minimum, applications had to meet a benchmark score against all four merit criteria to be considered for funding by the Ministerial Panel. 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 project period; and
  - included a project specific Business Case, Project Management Plan or similar documents or justification 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 $100,000, applications were required to include a Risk Management Plan. Stronger applications detailed key project risks and strategies to address those risks and included a cost benefit analysis to support 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 project 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 – Value for money:
This criterion contributed up to 5 marks out of the total score of 35.

- Assessment against this criterion 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.

**Criterion 4 – Project delivery:**
This criterion contributed up to 5 marks out of the total score of 35.

- Applicant viability, project sustainability and project viability was considered under this criterion.

- **Strong applications:**
  - included a Project Management Plan that aligned to the project and set out the project scope, implementation methodology, timeframes, budget, risks and consideration of required approvals;
  - demonstrated a track record with similar projects;
  - demonstrated access to people with the right skills and experience, and access to infrastructure, capital equipment, technology and intellectual property;
  - confirmed access to required infrastructure, capital equipment, technology and intellectual property; and
  - for local events and activities projects, demonstrated how future events would be funded without further funding assistance from the Australian Government.