



Queensland Innovation Precincts and Places Fund: Stream 3 – Regional Precincts and Places Infrastructure & Technology Program

Round 2 Program guidelines

6 August 2024

IMPORTANT

Potential applicants should note that, in advance of the State General Election on 26 October 2024, the Government will enter a caretaker period from 1 October 2024. The caretaker period will last until the result of the election is known. While the closing date for the receipt of applications for this grant program is before the start of the caretaker period, due to the imposition of Caretaker Guidelines and the need for the public service to not bind an incoming government, the department is unable to provide advice about the outcome of the funding round or allocate any funding until the result of the election is known and a new government has been sworn-in by the Governor.





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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

The Department of Environment, Science and Innovation acknowledges the Country and people of Queensland's First Nations. We pay our respect to Elders, past, present and emerging. We acknowledge the continuous living culture of First Nations Queenslanders—their diverse languages, customs and traditions, knowledges and systems. We acknowledge the deep relationship, connection and responsibility to land, sea and sky Country as an integral element of First Nations identity and culture. This Country is sacred. Everything on the land has meaning and all people are one with it. We acknowledge First Nations peoples' sacred connection as central to culture and being. First Nations people speak to Country, listen to Country, sing up Country, dance up Country, understand Country and long for Country. We acknowledge and thank First Nations people for the enduring relationship connecting people, Country and ancestors—an unbreakable bond that safely stewarded and protected the land, waters and sky for thousands of generations.

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1. Fund Overview

1.1 About the Fund

The Queensland Government's [*Advance Queensland: Innovation for a Future Economy 2022-2032 Roadmap*](#) (the Roadmap) sets out the direction, key priority outcomes and initiatives for the next phase in Queensland's journey toward becoming a leading and sustainable world-class innovation economy.

The Roadmap identifies the opportunity for Queensland's world-class innovation infrastructure to drive ideas through to commercialisation, adoption and diffusion. This includes positioning Queensland precincts, places and hubs to reach their full potential for attracting investment and creating jobs, co-locating innovation precincts and places with research, education and training institutes and improving digital infrastructure accessibility.

The Queensland Government's [*A Place to Innovate: Queensland Innovation Precincts and Places Strategy 2022-2032*](#) sets out how Queensland's precincts and places will achieve this vision based on three key pillars:

- **People** - empowering innovation place leaders and stakeholders to collaborate and thrive.
- **Place** - maximising the innovation potential from infrastructure.
- **Purpose** - harnessing the opportunities and achievements of innovation places.

The \$9 million **Regional Precincts and Places Infrastructure & Technology Program** (the program) will support objectives across all three pillars:

- **People** - Enable regional innovation precincts and places to network and collaborate to drive scale.
- **Place** - Strengthen planning and project pathways for regional innovation precincts and places through smart place-based infrastructure and technology that facilitates collaboration, optimises performance and increases capacity.
- **Purpose** - Develop and activate Queensland's regional innovation precincts and places.

1.2 About the program

The program will strengthen the development, effectiveness, and sustainability of Queensland's regional innovation precincts and places.

Program objectives are to:

- co-locate innovation precincts and places with universities and research organisations to increase knowledge transfer and commercialisation
- increase high-value knowledge economy jobs, support productivity and competitiveness of key industries, and support regional economic diversification and transition
- increase investment in intellectual property (IP) and the licensing of IP to Queensland-based businesses
- increase spin-outs from Queensland research organisations
- attract and retain innovative businesses in regional Queensland
- increase access to capital for regional Queensland startups and business
- improve access to leading scientific and technology equipment, on a common-user basis.

2. Available funding

Grants of up to \$3 million (excluding GST) are available to support projects that are able to commence within six months of approval and be completed by no later than 36 months from contract start date.

Applications that include a matched funding contribution from the applicant, precinct or place partners and/or collaborative partners will be highly regarded.

Where projects require additional funding to be completed over and above the grant funding sought, all additional costs will need to be covered by the applicant and its partners.

3. Eligibility

3.1 Applicant

To be eligible to apply for this program **the applicant** must be:

- a corporate entity, not an individual
- GST registered, with an A.B.N.
- a precinct or place partner in an innovation place based in regional Queensland
- collaborating with one or more organisations based in a regional Queensland.

Please note for the purposes of Round 2 of program, eligibility criteria has changed from previously published information.

An **innovation place** for the purposes of this program is defined as having the following elements:

- involvement and identification with one or more of Queensland's priority innovation growth areas through the precinct or place, which may include:
 - using the following innovative technology to advance industry:
 - automated systems
 - robotics and artificial intelligence
 - nanotechnology
 - biotechnology
 - synthetic biology
 - quantum technologies
 - innovation in cybertechnology and defence industries
 - innovation to support resilience of the Great Barrier Reef and marine environments
 - innovative methods to improve agriculture and food including novel proteins and low emissions production systems (AgTech)
 - using innovative methods to achieve a sustainable future in a decarbonising economy by:
 - developing environmentally responsible mining practices including innovative methods to accelerate new economy/critical minerals industry
 - developing the circular economy
 - mitigating and preventing climate change
 - developing sustainable energy solutions including technology supporting green hydrogen
 - developing sustainable housing solutions
 - developing energy storage solutions
 - developing sustainable water solutions
 - building resilience against
 - future potential pandemic crises,
 - natural disasters e.g., droughts, floods, cyclones and bushfires
 - innovation in any other area or industry that could demonstrably contribute to Queensland's economic growth.
- an existing, clearly defined, established physical site/s
- two or more entities co-located at the precinct or place with a common interest around a central innovation theme/s
- a focus on benefitting the Queensland innovation ecosystem at the precinct or place, evidenced by one or more of the following:

- onsite incubation of innovation driven startups, SMEs, and or their technologies
- common user testing, trial and/or demonstration facilities
- hosting of regular activities that support the development and growth of the innovation ecosystem in Queensland
- hosting of regular events to activate, promote and accelerate innovation in priority precincts in Queensland
- initiation of programs focused on promoting diversity and inclusion across the innovation ecosystem.

The program will support applications from innovation places that are based in regional Queensland outside of defined SEQ council areas.

Regional Queensland is any location in Queensland **excluding** a location in one of the following South East Queensland council areas:

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| • Brisbane City Council | • Noosa Council |
| • Gold Coast City Council | • Redland City Council |
| • Ipswich City Council | • Scenic Rim Regional Council |
| • Lockyer Valley Regional Council | • Somerset Regional Council |
| • Logan City Council | • Sunshine Coast Council |
| • Moreton Bay Regional Council | • Toowoomba Regional Council |

A **precinct or place partner** is defined as an organisation that:

- is an unrelated entity to the applicant organisation
- is physically co-located within the innovation precinct or place
- is aligned with the brand and identity of the innovation precinct or place
- has a shared purpose and vision, agreement and/or common interest with the future development and growth of the precinct or place.

A **collaborative partner** is defined as an organisation or individual who supports the application and is a separate (external) unrelated entity to the applicant and precinct or place partners and is not physically co-located within the innovation precinct or place.

Universities, research organisations and Local Government entities are eligible to apply. State and Federal Government core departments are not eligible to apply but may be considered as a precinct or place partner or collaborating organisation for program eligibility.

3.2 Projects

The proposed project must be focused on the establishment of infrastructure and/or the acquisition of plant and equipment including digital infrastructure at the innovation precinct or place where the applicant is physically located.

Projects can include costs to improve physical connectivity to the innovation precinct or place including cabling and connection costs.

Your application is ineligible if the proposed project focuses **solely** on:

- the purchase, lease or licence a building or premises
- maintenance costs for existing infrastructure
- costs to only access internet services
- developing a construction plan
- developing a property development proposal
- obtaining construction development approval
- acquisition of digital infrastructure – **external** to the precinct/place
- salaries (including salary/related on costs) for project staff.

To be considered eligible for this program, the **application** must include:

- a response to the assessment criteria
- a detailed project plan and budget for the proposed project
- quotes for all proposed project elements
- letters of support from precinct or place partners.

An applicant may only submit one application per innovation place. Applications supported by all precinct or place partners will be highly regarded.

4. Project Costs

Grant funding may be used for the following eligible capital works and/or physical infrastructure costs including:

- building infrastructure
- digital infrastructure – internal to the precinct/place
- cost of plant and equipment required specifically for the project.

Only eligible expenditure incurred on or after the agreed project commencement date can be claimed by successful applicant organisations.

Items **not eligible** to be claimed under the grant funding include:

- purchase of an existing building
- lease or licence costs
- costs associated with the core business of the applicant including organisational overheads
- payments between applicants, precinct or place partners and associated entities.

5. Assessment Criteria

Criterion 1: **Significance of the opportunity to the regional innovation place**

You must demonstrate the proposed project will:

- increase the regional innovation place's collaboration capabilities and outcomes,
- establish key smart place-based infrastructure to support future industry focused collaborative projects,
- place the precinct or place in a position to optimise performance and increase its capacity in region.

Criterion 2: **Strength of collaboration(s)**

You must demonstrate the proposed project will:

- involve regional partners who have a shared commitment to realise the potential opportunities for the region,
- facilitate collaboration between the innovation precinct or place and priority industries.

The letters of support from precinct or place partners and/or collaborative partners will be considered under this assessment criteria.

Criterion 3: **Value and viability of the project**

You must demonstrate the proposed project:

- involves an applicant, precinct or place partner(s) and/or collaborative partner(s) with the resources, knowledge, skills, and experience to successfully deliver the project,
- is well planned and achievable within the defined timeframe and budget,
- demonstrates value for money.

Criterion 4: **Sustainability and resilience**

You must demonstrate the proposed project will:

- position the regional innovation place to increase its potential long-term success and sustainability,
- deliver tangible and immediate benefits to the region and its priority industries,
- contribute to an increase in the maturity of the precinct or place and its ability to deliver collaborative activities to support in region priority industry sectors and emerging industries,
- contribute to the support of new and high value jobs in regional Queensland.

The letters of support from precinct or place partners and/or collaborative partners will be considered under this assessment criteria.

6. Application and Assessment Process

The program is open for applications until all funds are committed.

Applications assessed as ineligible in previous rounds of the program may be reconsidered following changes to eligibility criteria in this round and will not be required to reapply.

For **new** applicants the application and assessment process will include the stages outlined below.

6.1 Submit an application

Applications to the program must be submitted electronically through the Department's SmartyGrants portal.

A full application will include:

- a completed online application form including detailed response to each of the assessment criteria
- a proposal of the project including a project plan and budget
- quotes for service, plant and equipment
- a letter of support (or equivalent) by precinct/collaborative partner entity/s, signed by an authorised representative, detailing their:
 - commitment to be publicly announced as a Project Partner should funding be awarded
 - financial and/or in-kind contribution to the project
 - their role and responsibilities to the project.

6.2 Assessment

All applications will be assessed against the eligibility requirements.

Only eligible submissions will be considered for funding support.

Eligible applications will be assessed in a merit-based approach by a panel of assessors against the assessment criteria.

Applicant organisations may be contacted at any stage of the assessment process to provide further information to enable a due diligence and probity assessment.

There is no implicit guarantee of approval at any stage in the process and applicants will be notified via email of the assessment outcome.

The Queensland Government reserves the right to administer the Queensland Innovation Precincts and Places Fund and conduct the assessment and approval processes as it sees fit. This may include, at its discretion, considering current government priorities and the need to balance the investment to support a diversity of activities across Queensland.

6.3 Decision

Applicants will be notified in writing/by email of the decision.

The Queensland Government's decision in relation to an application is final and there is no process for appeal. The department has established processes for dealing with complaints - if an applicant has any concern in relation to the application or assessment process, a formal complaint may be submitted to the department through the website at www.desi.qld.gov.au.

7. Timeframes

Applications open	Tuesday 6 August 2024
Applications close	Once all funds have been allocated

8. Funding Agreement

Successful applicants will be required to enter into a legally binding Funding Agreement with the State of Queensland through the Department of Environment, Science and Innovation.

Successful applicants will be required to execute a Funding Agreement within 30 business days of being notified that the funding application has been successful. Failure to meet this timeframe may result in the funding offer being withdrawn.

Projects must commence within six months of approval and be completed by no later than 24 months from contract start date.

Grant payments will be made on provision of evidence of relevant activities having been completed, project expenditure has occurred, and matching cash contribution (if any) has been committed by the parties.

Changes to applicant and precinct or place partner/s

Following commencement of the project, the successful applicant must immediately notify the department in the event the applicant or a precinct or place partner ceases to be part of the innovation place. In the event of such notice, the department may do one of the following:

- agree for the project to continue without the exiting precinct or place partner
- suspend the project activity until the department is satisfied the project is sustainable without the exiting precinct or place partner
- terminate the Grant Agreement thereby ending the Regional Precincts and Places Infrastructure & Technology Program funding commitment to the project.

Where contractual commitments to third parties cannot be terminated, successful applicants will seek to minimise further expenditure under any third-party contract where the exit of a precinct or place partner substantially impacts the future of the innovation place.

Payment of grant funding

Payment of grants will be made based on agreed periodic project milestones. A final milestone payment will be paid on provision of documentary evidence that all project requirements have been satisfied, including evidence that total project expenditure has been incurred and co-contributions have been made by relevant parties.

9. Promotion of Supported Projects

Funding recipients will be expected to actively promote their projects, and to provide information and attend media/promotion events if requested.

The Queensland Government funding should be acknowledged by recipients in all relevant published material, media releases and public statements.

10. Privacy

The department is collecting personal information from you, such as your name, address, contact details of you and your organisation (including employees and partners), resumé, employment, payslips, asset and financial information and other information relevant to your application or provided by you.

This information is collected for the purpose of assessing and evaluating your application for funded projects, milestone reports, and other departmental functions to support organisations and industry through innovation programs and grants.

Personal information may also be disclosed where required for purposes associated with undertaking assessment of the application, including due diligence enquiries.

The email address you provide will be used to communicate with you about your application or program participation (if successful). For example, you may be contacted via email about participating in a survey, interview or focus group.

Dependent upon the email service provider you have chosen, this may result in your personal information being transferred overseas.

The personal information provided may be provided to other relevant Queensland Government departments and Ministers, for the purpose of publicly announcing or publishing details as identified in the guidelines and to promote those projects that have been funded. This may include the recipient's name and the amount of funding awarded, project details, agreed outcomes, and project progress.

De-identified aggregated data may also be used for the purpose of managing and evaluating the program and informing government.

Your personal information will also be used to provide the services outlined in the guidelines, and for the purpose of research, evaluation, promotion, and monitoring such services, and to improve and design services and programs.

Your personal information will not be otherwise used or disclosed unless authorised or required by law and will be managed in accordance with the *Information Privacy Act 2009*.

The Queensland Government privacy policy can be found at: www.qld.gov.au/legal/privacy.

11. Further information

Web: advance.qld.gov.au

Facebook: Advance Queensland

Phone: 13 QGOV (13 74 68)

Email: innovationplaces@dtis.qld.gov.au

Twitter: @AdvanceQld

LinkedIn: Advance Queensland

If you require any further information or clarification of these guidelines, please contact the department via email innovationplaces@dtis.qld.gov.au.