

Queensland Innovation Precincts and Places Fund – Strategic Initiatives Program

Frequently asked questions
Version 1.2 (September 2023 update)



Table of Contents

Objectives	5
How does the Strategic Initiatives Program align with Queensland Government’s Innovation Precincts and Places Strategy?	5
What are the objectives of the Strategic Initiatives Program?	5
How much funding is available through the Strategic Initiatives Program?	5
How many grants will be provided?	5
Is there a quota for spreading the funding across regions?.....	5
Eligibility	5
How will I know if I am eligible to apply?	5
What is an innovation precinct or place?	6
Who is considered a Precinct or Place partner? (AMENDED)	6
Who is considered a Collaborative Partner? (NEW).....	6
Are we eligible if our precinct only has one operational entity the time of the application? (NEW).....	6
Can more than one application be submitted in relation to a single innovation precinct or place? (NEW) ...	6
What can be funded through the Strategic Initiatives Program?	6
What is a governance framework?	6
What is an investment attraction strategy?	7
What is an operational (land and building/asset) assessment strategy?	7
What is a third-party expert? (AMENDED)	7
What cannot be funded through the Strategic Initiatives Program?	7
What kinds of costs are eligible for payment through the fund?	7
What kinds of costs are ineligible for payment through the fund? (AMENDED).....	7
Can I apply for additional funding if I am already receiving other Queensland or Federal Government support for this initiative?	8
When can I start incurring costs that will be funded through the program? (AMENDED)	8
When do deliverables need to be provided by?.....	8
Are federally funded or local government funded innovation precincts eligible?.....	8
Does a university makers space or entrepreneurship space count as a precinct?	8
Can the lead applicant be a local or state government authority or agency? (AMENDED)	8
Can a precinct have multiple partners that are smaller businesses or organisations rather than one large or significant partner?.....	8
When does an innovation precinct or place need to be ‘existing’ to be eligible for funding consideration?..	8
Is there a list of identified Queensland Innovation Precincts and Places and does the precinct have to be	

on that list?	9
Can the precinct cover multiple physical addresses?	9
Can a precinct exist within a precinct?	9
Can the partners be in different locations - but same greater area? (AMENDED)	9
Is there a definition of regions that relates to this program?	9
Application	10
What documents should I include with my application?	10
How many applications can I submit?	10
How do I submit an application?	10
When do applications open and close?	10
Do I need a proposal from a Third-party expert before I apply?	10
Does the proposal need to cover all three types of strategic advice noted or can it be just one?.....	10
Can funding be used to obtain strategic advice AND deliver/implement part (or all of) the nominated action plan? (NEW).....	10
Are there any activities in the action plan that can be considered eligible expenditure? (NEW).....	10
Can we draw on multiple consultants who bring in diverse expertise?	11
What does it mean when the guidelines say the third-party expert must be unrelated and independent of the applicant, precinct or place partners and collaborative partners? (NEW)	11
Does the specialist need to be Queensland based?	11
Is there a list of third-party experts I can use?	11
Will an application be disadvantaged if a third party is also on other non-related submission? (NEW).....	11
Can I submit multiple applications if I am a partner of multiple precincts? (AMENDED)	11
Can I provide advice as a third-party expert through my area of expertise if I am a partner of an innovation precinct or place that has submitted a funding application? (NEW)	11
Can you apply for more than one funding stream (i.e. if you are funded in Stream 1 can you also apply for Stream 3?).....	12
Do I need to provide a funding contribution to be considered for funding?	12
What are cash contributions?.....	12
Are you asking for valuation of in-kind contributions from the applicant and/or partner organisations in the budgets that may form part of the submission?	12
Can salaries associated with submitting the grant application be captured in 'cash contribution' calculations? (NEW).....	12
Can the applicant contribution be completely provided by another entity? (AMENDED)	12
What if I am having technical issues with the SmartyGrants application?	12
Contract	13
How is the funding paid?	13
Do all funds have to be paid to third party experts? (NEW).....	13

Do I need an ABN?	13
Are grant payments subject to GST?	13
Future Funding	13
If there are funds remaining after this grant round, will they be made available for other grants?	13
Is there any support for innovation precincts and places that are not yet established and/or are in the process of being developed?	13
Will being accepted into this grant program be a requirement to access future AQ grants?	13
Further information	14
How do I find more information about the Program?	14

Objectives

How does the Strategic Initiatives Program align with Queensland Government's Innovation Precincts and Places Strategy?

The Queensland Government released the [Queensland Innovation Precincts and Places Strategy](#) following significant consultation with key stakeholders. The purpose of the strategy is to identify ways the Queensland Government can support coordination and collaboration in the innovation economy and accelerate the development of innovation places.

The strategy will drive opportunities through three key pillars:

1. People: empowering innovation place leaders and stakeholders to collaborate and thrive
2. Place: maximising innovation from infrastructure
3. Purpose: harnessing opportunities and achievements of innovation places

One of the key initiatives in the strategy is the delivery of the \$15 million Queensland Innovation Precincts and Places (QIPP) Fund.

The QIPP Fund will deliver on the three key pillars across streams:

- Stream 1 – Strategic Initiatives Program (Purpose and Place)
- Stream 2 – Innovation Place Leaders Network (People, Purpose and Place)
- Stream 3 – Regional Precincts and Places Infrastructure and Technology Program (Place).

What are the objectives of the Strategic Initiatives Program?

The objectives of the Strategic Initiatives Program are to:

- position Queensland innovation places to reach their full potential for attracting investment and creating high value jobs
- position Queensland innovation places and places and partners to collaborate in the development and growth of innovation places; and
- strengthen the development, effectiveness, and sustainability of Queensland's innovation places.

How much funding is available through the Strategic Initiatives Program?

The \$4 million Strategic Initiatives Fund will provide grants of up to \$300 000 (excluding GST) for established and emerging innovation precincts to obtain strategic advice, including an action plan, that supports governance arrangements, investment attraction, and operational (land and building) assessments.

How many grants will be provided?

The number of recipients will depend on the amount of funding allocated to the funding round and the quality of the applications submitted.

Is there a quota for spreading the funding across regions?

There are no quotas regarding funding amounts per region.

Eligibility

How will I know if I am eligible to apply?

To be eligible for this program the applicant must be:

- a precinct or place partner of an existing Queensland-based innovation precinct or place
- a corporate entity, not an individual
- GST registered, with an ABN

What is an innovation precinct or place?

An innovation precinct or place is defined as having the following elements:

- a brand/identity as an innovation precinct or place
- an existing, clearly defined, established physical site
- the site co-locates two or more entities who have a shared vision/agreement and/or common interest, at least one of which is a commercial and/or research entity
- an objective to foster innovation and collaboration across the precinct or place partners.

Who is considered a Precinct or Place partner? (AMENDED)

An innovation precinct or place partner is an entity that;

- is physically co-located within the innovation precinct or place which is subject of the application
- 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
- has a commitment to the future strategies and action plan of the innovation precinct or place
- is accepted by other precinct or place partners as belonging to the innovation precinct or place.

Who is considered a Collaborative Partner? (NEW)

A Collaborative Partner is an organisation or individual who supports the application (either through services or contribution) 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.

A Collaborative Partner is not required to be co-located in the innovation precinct or place which is the subject of the application.

Are we eligible if our precinct only has one operational entity the time of the application? (NEW)

No, a minimum of two entities (precinct partners) as defined in the FAQs and guidelines need to be operational at the time of application.

Can more than one application be submitted in relation to a single innovation precinct or place? (NEW)

Yes. All eligible applications from an innovation precinct or place will be assessed however only one funding application will be approved per innovation precinct or place.

Note that applications supported by all precinct and place partners of an innovation precinct or place will be highly regarded.

What can be funded through the Strategic Initiatives Program?

Grant funding may be used to engage a third-party expert to obtain strategic advice including an action plan that will deliver on best practice governance frameworks, investment attraction strategies, and/or operational (land and building/asset) assessment strategies.

The strategic advice must set out tangible and achievable actions that will be implemented within 12 months.

What is a governance framework?

As a guide, a best-practice governance framework should recommend a governance for the innovation place including:

- effective and place relevant board and advisory board governance structures
- documented management, delivery and development responsibilities for ongoing service delivery,

- operational partnerships, and precinct delivery
- responsibilities for precinct activation and development
- tangible and achievable actions to implement the recommended governance framework.

What is an investment attraction strategy?

As a guide, an investment attraction strategy should inform the development and future growth of the innovation place including focus on:

- comparative strength analysis, benchmarking against comparators to identify areas of focus to enhance the innovation place's competitive position
- opportunity identification and strategy development
- benefits assessment of future industry potential
- demand analysis to provide point-in-time analysis of emerging and future industries.
- tangible and achievable actions to implement the strategy.

What is an operational (land and building/asset) assessment strategy?

As a guide, an operational (land and building/asset) assessment strategy should be based on a strategic assessment of potential land and buildings/assets to expand clustering at the innovation place including a focus on:

- land/tenure availability issues
- assessments to utilise the land and buildings/assets available for expansion and future development.
- Master planning including expansion and long-term development opportunities.
- tangible and achievable actions to implement the strategic advice.

What is a third-party expert? (AMENDED)

Third-party experts must be independent of the applicant, the precinct or place partners and the collaborative partners.

Third-party experts are experienced individuals or firms who have experience in providing practical advice which has resulted in successful and sustainable innovation precincts and places, ideally within an innovation context.

Applications that propose engaging a Queensland-based third-party expert to provide the strategic advice including action plan will be highly regarded.

What cannot be funded through the Strategic Initiatives Program?

Your application is ineligible (and won't be considered) if the proposed strategic advice focuses on a:

- construction plan
- developed design or detailed design plans
- property development proposal
- construction development approval
- creation of a capital raising proposal

Applications made by applicants that are part of a conceptual or proposed innovation place which does not have a physical site at the time of application will also not be considered for funding.

What kinds of costs are eligible for payment through the fund?

Grant funding may be used for the following eligible project costs:

- engagement of a third-party experts to conduct strategic assessments of governance, investment attraction, and/or operational (land and building/asset) assessment strategies to inform production.

What kinds of costs are ineligible for payment through the fund? (AMENDED)

Items not eligible to be paid for from grant funding include:

- organisational overheads
- capital works and/or physical infrastructure including any buildings, telecommunications, IT networks, land acquisition or leases
- plant and equipment
- staff salaries of the applicant organisation and/or precinct or place partners. Can I apply for additional funding if I am already receiving other Queensland or Federal Government support for this initiative?

Applicants cannot apply for funding of initiatives that have already been funded by other government agencies.

When can I start incurring costs that will be funded through the program? (AMENDED)

Only eligible expenditure incurred on or after the project commencement date can be claimed by successful applicant organisations. The agreed project commencement date will be confirmed in the funding agreement with the department, and will be no earlier than the date of funding approval.

When do deliverables need to be provided by?

If your application is successful, the strategic advice including an action plan must be obtained within six months of being advised of grant funding approval. In addition, the implementation of the actions must be commenced within 12 months of being advised of grant funding approval.

Are federally funded or local government funded innovation precincts eligible?

Applications can be accepted from any precinct or place partner in an existing Queensland-based innovation precinct or place providing they meet the eligibility criteria and the program intent.

Does a university makers space or entrepreneurship space count as a precinct?

It is up to the applicant to determine whether the definition of an innovation precinct or place applies to their site:

- a brand/identity as an innovation precinct or place
- an existing, clearly defined, established physical site
- the site co-locates two or more entities who have a shared vision/agreement and/or common interest, at least one of which is a commercial and/or research entity
- an objective to foster innovation and collaboration across the precinct or place partners

Can the lead applicant be a local or state government authority or agency? (AMENDED)

There is no requirement regarding which precinct or place partner can lead an application.

Assessment criteria 2 includes the requirement to demonstrate the project will be led by an applicant with the resources, knowledge, skills and experience to successfully deliver on the actions contained in the strategic advice and action plan.

Can a precinct have multiple partners that are smaller businesses or organisations rather than one large or significant partner?

There are no restrictions on the number of precinct or place partners a precinct may have providing:

- the site co-locates two or more entities who have a shared vision/agreement and/or common interest, at least one of which is a commercial and/or research entity
- an objective to foster innovation and collaboration across the precinct or place partners

When does an innovation precinct or place need to be 'existing' to be eligible for funding consideration?

The innovation precinct or place must be established with all the attributes noted below at the time of application:

- a brand/identity as an innovation precinct or place
- an existing, clearly defined, established physical site
- the site co-locates two or more entities who have a shared vision/agreement and/or common interest, at least one of which is a commercial and/or research entity
- an objective to foster innovation and collaboration across the precinct or place partners.

Is there a list of identified Queensland Innovation Precincts and Places and does the precinct have to be on that list?

While a list of innovation places was identified as part of developing the [A Place to Innovate: Queensland Innovation Precincts and Places Strategy 2022 - 2032 \(advance.qld.gov.au\)](https://advance.qld.gov.au) these were considered to reflect a point in time only. Queensland's Innovation Precincts and Places continue to evolve in response to changing market, industry, technology and stakeholder requirements and a list is not maintained by the department.

It is up to the applicant to determine whether their precinct or place aligns with the definition noted in the guidelines, ie an innovation precinct or place has the following elements:

- a brand/identity as an innovation precinct or place
- an existing, clearly defined, established physical site
- the site co-locates two or more entities who have a shared vision/agreement and/or common interest, at least one of which is a commercial and/or research entity
- an objective to foster innovation and collaboration across the precinct or place partners.

Can the precinct cover multiple physical addresses?

An applicant would need to demonstrate the specific attributes of the individual precinct were shared by all physical addresses, ie:

- a brand/identity as an innovation precinct or place
- an existing, clearly defined, established physical site
- the site co-locates two or more entities who have a shared vision/agreement and/or common interest, at least one of which is a commercial and/or research entity
- an objective to foster innovation and collaboration across the precinct or place partners.

Can a precinct exist within a precinct?

An applicant would need to demonstrate the intended precinct has a distinct innovation identity/brand separate to all other precincts (ie not a sub-element) and that the stated specific attributes of the individual precinct were not shared by any other precincts, ie:

- a singular brand/identity as an innovation precinct or place
- an existing, clearly defined, established physical site
- the site co-locates two or more entities who have a shared vision/agreement and/or common interest, at least one of which is a commercial and/or research entity
- an objective to foster innovation and collaboration across the precinct or place partners

Can the partners be in different locations - but same greater area? (AMENDED)

Precinct or place partners need to share the same established, clearly defined physical site as the Queensland Innovation Precinct or Place that is the subject of the application. Collaborative partners are not required to be co-located with the applicant and the precinct or place partners

Is there a definition of regions that relates to this program?

Stream 1 is open to all Queensland based innovation precincts and places.

Application

What documents should I include with my application?

The SmartyGrants application form asks specific questions and will prompt you for any required supporting documentation. Only information submitted at the time of application will be considered. Applicants need to provide additional information to support their application, including:

- Letters of support from precinct or place partners and collaborative partners demonstrating their level of commitment to the initiative and the implementation of any action plan
- Proposal from third-party expert that outlines strategic advice to provided, quote and deliverable timeframes
- A copy of the third-party expert's statement of experience

How many applications can I submit?

An applicant may only submit one application per innovation precinct or place.

How do I submit an application?

All applications must be submitted electronically through the SmartyGrants portal:

<https://dsiti.smartygrants.com.au/QIPP-SIP-2023>

Details on how to apply can be found on the Department's website –

<https://advance.qld.gov.au/industry/queensland-innovation-precincts-and-places-fund>

When do applications open and close?

Project registrations will open at 12pm (AEST) Thursday 20 July 2023 and will close at 1.00pm (AEST) on Thursday, 28 September. Late applications will not be accepted.

Do I need a proposal from a Third-party expert before I apply?

Yes, all applications must include a signed proposal from a third-party expert to provide the strategic advice, that includes a quote, detail of services to be provided and timeframes for deliverables. Applications without this information will not be considered eligible for funding consideration.

Does the proposal need to cover all three types of strategic advice noted or can it be just one?

No. The applicant will need to determine what strategic advice will deliver the most value for their precinct or place, noting the total maximum grant amount is \$300,000 per precinct or place and the advice (including action plan) must apply to one or more of the following best practice:

- governance frameworks
- investment attraction strategies, and/or
- operational (land and building/asset) assessment strategies

Can funding be used to obtain strategic advice AND deliver/implement part (or all of) the nominated action plan? (NEW)

No. Funding can only be used to support strategic advice and cannot be applied to delivery or implementation of any particulars of the action plan. The applicant will be required to demonstrate how the action plan will be delivered as part of Assessment Criteria 4: Sustainability and resilience

Are there any activities in the action plan that can be considered eligible expenditure?

(NEW)

No. Funding can only be used to support activities involved in producing the strategic advice and identifying the actions that will be required. An action plan is expected to be developed as part of the strategic advice hence outputs would not be known at the time of the application.

Can we draw on multiple consultants who bring in diverse expertise?

Content from multiple third-party experts may be included within a grant proposal however please note a maximum of \$300,000 will be awarded to an individual innovation precinct or place and all funds must be paid to a third-party expert.

What does it mean when the guidelines say the third-party expert must be unrelated and independent of the applicant, precinct or place partners and collaborative partners? (NEW)

The applicant, precinct or place partners and the collaborative partners must not have any shareholding (including parent-subsidiary relationship), commercial or personal connection with the proposed third-party expert. Applicants will be required to declare any interest in the entity providing a proposal for strategic advice.

Does the specialist need to be Queensland based?

While not compulsory, applications that involve third party experts that are from Queensland will be favourably regarded.

Is there a list of third-party experts I can use?

The Department is unable to specify or recommend individuals or firms that can provide specialist advice. Applicants are encouraged to undertake their own research to determine who is best placed to support the required advice.

Will an application be disadvantaged if a third party is also on other non-related submission? (NEW)

No.

Can I submit multiple applications if I am a partner of multiple precincts? (AMENDED)

Multiple applications can be made by eligible applicants providing an applicant makes only one application for a particular innovation precinct or place.

All eligible applications from an innovation precinct or place will be assessed however only one funding application will be approved per innovation precinct or place.

Note that applications supported by all precinct and place partners of an innovation precinct or place will be highly regarded.

Can I provide advice as a third-party expert through my area of expertise if I am a partner of an innovation precinct or place that has submitted a funding application? (NEW)

It depends on the circumstances.

You are not permitted to provide advice as a third party expert if the applicant, precinct or place partners and the collaborative partners have any kind of shareholding (including parent-subsidiary relationship), commercial or personal connection with you or your business. Applicants will be required to declare any interest in the entity providing a proposal for strategic advice.

You are permitted to provide third-party advice to innovation precincts or places where there is no shareholding, commercial or personal connection between your business and any of the applicant, precinct

or place partners and/or the collaborative partners in the application.

Can you apply for more than one funding stream (i.e. if you are funded in Stream 1 can you also apply for Stream 3?)

Yes. Each funding stream will be considered independently. Further information will be provided regarding Stream 3 closer to the release date in October 2023.

Do I need to provide a funding contribution to be considered for funding?

While not mandatory, applications that include a cash contribution from the applicant and precinct or place partners will be highly regarded.

What are cash contributions?

Cash co-contributions from applicants, precinct or place partners and/or collaborative partners can take the form of:

- cash to meet the cost of obtaining the strategic advice including action plan
- salaries (including salary-related on-costs) for applicant employees directly involved in developing the strategic advice including action plan with the third-party expert.

Are you asking for valuation of in-kind contributions from the applicant and/or partner organisations in the budgets that may form part of the submission?

While not compulsory, applicants are encouraged to provide an explanation regarding the methodology behind the development of their calculations.

Applications that include cash contributions from the applicant and/or precinct or place partners will be highly regarded.

For the purposes of this fund, cash contributions from applicants, precinct or place partners and/or collaborative partners can take the form of:

- cash to meet the cost of obtaining the strategic advice including action plan
- salaries (including salary-related on-costs) for applicant employees directly involved in developing the strategic advice including action plan with the third-party expert

Can salaries associated with submitting the grant application be captured in 'cash contribution' calculations? (NEW)

No. As noted above only salaries for employees directly involved in developing the strategic advice including action plan with the third-party expert can be considered through the fund.

Can the applicant contribution be completely provided by another entity? (AMENDED)

Yes, contributions can be provided by an entity other than the applicant (ie a Collaborative Partner). A collaborative partner is an organisation or individual who supports the application (either through services or contribution) 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.

A Collaborative Partner is not required to be co-located in the innovation precinct or place which is the subject of the application.

What if I am having technical issues with the SmartyGrants application?

If you need help using the SmartyGrants form, download the [Help Guide for Applicants](#) or check out [Applicant Frequently Asked Questions \(FAQ's\)](#)

Please contact the Department if you continue to have issues with SmartyGrants, by emailing

innovationplaces@dtis.qld.gov.au and quote your submission number.

Contract

How is the funding paid?

Payment of grants will be made based on agreed periodic project milestones and may take the form of:

- an initial payment paid on provision/confirmation of a signed agreement between the applicant and the third-party expert
- a final milestone payment paid on provision of documentary evidence that the advice has been obtained, including evidence that total project expenditure has been incurred and co-contributions have been made by all relevant parties.

Do all funds have to be paid to third party experts? (NEW)

Yes.

Do I need an ABN?

Yes. To be eligible for this program the applicant must have an ABN and be registered for GST.

Are grant payments subject to GST?

Yes. Applicants must be registered for GST and all grant payments will be paid inclusive of GST.

Future Funding

If there are funds remaining after this grant round, will they be made available for other grants?

Any funds not allocated during the program will be reinvested into future Queensland Innovation Precincts and Places initiatives, including considerations for future grant programs.

Is there any support for innovation precincts and places that are not yet established and/or are in the process of being developed?

Applicants for the Strategic Initiatives program need to be from an existing, clearly defined, established physical site. The Queensland Government and Australian Government provides a range of support for startups and scaleups that may not meet this definition and further information is available on the <https://advance.qld.gov.au/innovation-journey> webpage.

Will being accepted into this grant program be a requirement to access future AQ grants?

No. This grant program is independent to all other AQ programs and applications will not form consideration for any other programs.

Further information

How do I find more information about the Program?

Additional information can be found on the Department's website

<https://advance.qld.gov.au/industry/queensland-innovation-precincts-and-places-fund>.

Web: qld.gov.au/advanceqld

Email: innovationplaces@dtis.qld.gov.au **Facebook:** Advance Queensland **Twitter:** @AdvanceQld

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