



Regional Enablers Program

Program guidelines

3 June 2024



Queensland
Government



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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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Published by the Queensland Government, April 2024, 1 William St, Brisbane Qld, 4000.

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1. About the Regional Enablers Program

The Queensland Government's *Advance Queensland - Innovation for a Future Economy: 2022-2032* 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 need for Queensland to achieve these aims through a well-connected, inclusive, and thriving innovation ecosystem and ensuring Queensland's existing and emerging priority industries, and talent, are globally competitive.

Regional Enablers Program (REP) objective: to amplify local opportunities for Innovation Driven Enterprises (IDE's) to accelerate growth in regions, and activate a more connected network of regional innovation organisations (regional enablers) in supporting a culture of innovation across Queensland.

REP aims to support regional enablers to:

- develop additional innovation activities and services that supports IDEs to ideate, startup and scale in priority investment areas.
- strengthen their role in regional innovation ecosystems by delivering services that support local IDEs in their communities.
- activate and strengthen connected networks that drive collaborative approaches for IDE growth, through capability uplifts, events and knowledge sharing across the region.
- accelerate technological innovation and regional adoption in priority industries to transform regional economies.

What we are looking for

REP is seeking market-led applications from Queensland's regional enablers with:

- (a) a track record in delivering innovation activities and services; and
- (b) the capacity to deliver additional innovation activities and services outside of their current program of work (i.e. additional to business-as-usual activities).

Additional activities and services must demonstrate a delivery focus as relevant to aspiring, new and/or existing regional IDEs, including provision of innovation ecosystem development support.

Definitions

1. Regional enablers are innovation enabler organisations based in regional Queensland.

2. Innovation Driven Enterprise (IDE) is a business or entity that emphasises innovative solutions as a key driver of growth, competitive advantage, sustainability, and value creation.

IDEs focus on developing and commercialising new products and/or services to address identified market needs, achieve their strategic objectives or investigate opportunities for growth for their community, their business or region.

3. Innovation activities and services are additional to business-as-usual activities, including where that additionality is scaling existing activity and service offerings for regional IDE impact.

Applications that include innovation activities and services within the *Advance Queensland Priority Investment Areas* and/or support inclusion of IDEs including First Nations, female founders and youth innovators in the Queensland innovation ecosystem will be highly regarded.

Priority Investment Areas

Applications which propose providing additional innovation activities and services to IDEs focussed on the following industries and technologies will be highly regarded:

- AgTech e.g., using innovative digital solutions to improve agriculture and food including novel proteins and low emissions production systems
- Autonomous systems
- Robotics and artificial intelligence
- Nanotechnology
- Quantum technologies
- Cybertechnology
- Defence technology
- Space industry/technology
- Sports-tech
- Tourism
- Decarbonisation technology
- Technology to support natural resource management
- New ways to manage Queensland's waste and pollution including through the establishment of the circular economy
- New ways to manage climate change impacts
- Sustainable energy and energy storage solutions and renewable energy systems
- New ways to manage natural disaster preparedness and resilience.

Example – Priority Investment Area

The Queensland AgTech Roadmap 2023-2028 supports Queensland's innovation ecosystem and journey by setting a vision and path to accelerate the advancement and adoption of world class AgTech innovation in Queensland.

AgTech applications offering delivery of innovative annual programs of activity and events, over three years, will be highly regarded. This means, regions are provided with additional value adding services and events that focus on leveraging regional IDEs opportunities, such as building their connectivity across the ecosystem, developing local leadership, investment attraction and activating networks, as responsive to regional needs.

2. Available funding

Funding of up to \$100,000 (excluding GST) per annum over three years is available for organisations with proposals to deliver additional innovation activities and services outside of their business-as-usual activities.

3. Eligibility

3.1 Applicant

To be eligible to apply for this program, the applicant must, at the time of application:

- be an organisation (not an individual)
- have an ABN and be registered for GST (at the time of application)
- be based in a Queensland region, being any local government area, except Brisbane City Council.
- have a demonstrated track record (over a minimum of 12 months prior to date of application) of delivering innovation activities, services, and/or events to develop regional innovation ecosystems
- not have any outstanding reporting or acquittals for grants awarded by Advance Queensland

Applicant organisations

Applicants are those recognised for delivering innovation activities and services in their communities that can be run on a for profit, not for profit or semi commercial basis.

Applicants and their related corporate entities are limited to **one** application per funding round.

The program **will not** support:

- applications from regional enablers that are currently receiving Queensland Government funding for the proposed additional innovation activities and services
- applications for **delivery of general business support services**, e.g., business basics for small business/business in general. (Applications must demonstrate a focus on delivery of innovation activities and services).
- applications from consulting firms, financial institutions, government agencies (state and federal) and government owned corporations.

4. Using the grant funding

REP is seeking market-led applications to deliver activities and services outside of the applicant's current program of work. Funded activities or services must demonstrate a delivery focus as relevant to aspiring, new and/or existing regional IDEs, including provision of innovation ecosystem development support.

Examples of eligible activities:

- present and host events, e.g. hackathons that support and foster innovation
- local ecosystem engagement and IDE support services
- facilitation of IDE connections to specialised industries or technologies
- mentoring and advocacy services – matching founders with expert mentors that help grow businesses, open doors to business and investment networks and opportunities.
- access to facilities/equipment e.g., hubs, makerspaces, and technical facilities
- support and/or lead regional delegations and/or travel to attend identified innovation events and activities in Queensland that foster new networks/connections

Examples of allowable program expenditure:

- an administration service fee for delivery of the additional innovation activities and services capped at 5 per cent of the total grant funding.
- pro-rata staffing costs to deliver the additional innovation activities and services
- small equipment costs (not exceeding a total of \$10,000 excluding GST over the three-year funding period)
- reasonable costs associated with the delivery of the funded activities or services e.g., resource materials, venue hire, and marketing costs
- reasonable catering costs for workshops and events only.
- costs to deliver or procure services such as ideation, incubator, pre-accelerator, accelerators, skills development, and adoption including new technologies.
- travel necessary to undertake project activity, economy airfares and reasonable accommodation costs only will be considered, including to support and/or lead regional delegations and/or travel to attend identified innovation events* and activities in Queensland in order to foster new networks/connections.

*Innovation events include, but are not limited to, Tropical Innovation Festival (Cairns), FWD FEST (Sunshine Coast), Something Fest (Brisbane) and a **mandatory** annual REP recipient meeting (Brisbane).

Travel costs are limited to return economy class return airfares and an accommodation subsidy (up to \$200 per night/per person) to support:

- 1 x regional delegation leader; and
- maximum of 10 delegates from the local innovation ecosystem

Only eligible expenditure incurred on or after the project commencement date (specified in the executed Funding Agreement) can be claimed by the successful applicant organisation.

It is expected that REP grant funding will be expended in Queensland, unless it can be demonstrated that expenditure outside Queensland is essential to ensure successful delivery of the project.

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

Costs **not eligible** to be paid for from the REP grant funding include:

- administrative costs associated with the delivery of the additional innovation activities and services over 5 per cent of the total grant funding.
- general business operating costs including but not limited to rent, electricity, water, internet, insurance, software, and accounting fees to support business-as-usual activities
- salaries for staff to deliver existing services
- organisational overheads
- plant and equipment (excluding small equipment costs not exceeding a total of \$10,000 excluding GST over the three-year funding period)
- costs associated with the core business of the applicant
- capital works and/or physical infrastructure including any buildings, telecommunications, and IT networks, land acquisition costs or leases
- first class or business class travel.
- alcohol costs to support workshops/events where delivery of workshops/events are part of the proposed activities

- prizes and/or gifts (e.g., pitch prizes)
- costs associated with securing the REP funding (e.g., grant writers)
- any other costs not directly related to the delivery of the new services.

5. Assessment criteria

Applications will be assessed in accordance with the following assessment criteria. The application form contains questions which support the applicant to address the assessment criteria.

All criteria are equally weighted.

Criteria 1: **Significance of the funding opportunity to support the regional innovation ecosystem**

The application must demonstrate:

- how the funding opportunity will **add value** through the delivery of additional service offerings in the region and position the region for growth over the next three years
- how the proposed additional service offering builds on existing innovation activities and services in the region
- the impact, outputs, and outcomes the applicant organisation and its regional IDEs are expected to achieve from the additional service offering over the next three years.

The following documentation is required to support your application and can be uploaded in the application form in SmartyGrants:

- An annual program of the proposed additional activities or services to be delivered by the organisation for each of the three years

Criteria 2: **Strength of the regional innovation enabler organisation**

The application must demonstrate:

- the **track record** of the applicant organisation in delivering innovation activities and services over the past 12 months to its regional innovation ecosystem, including to new and existing startups and scaleups.
- the organisation has the **capability, skills and experience** required to value add to the current innovation activities and services available to its regional innovation ecosystem through the additional service offering, including knowledge and experience of their regional innovation ecosystem and the new and existing startups and scaleups that exist within it.

- the organisation has **capacity** and **resourcing** to deliver the additional service offering.

The following documentation is required to support your application and can be uploaded in the application form in SmartyGrants:

- An annual program of business activities delivered by the organisation over the past 12 months, including current service offerings for regional innovation activities and services including impacts and outcomes, and
- CVs of key organisational staff involved in the delivery of the additional service offering.
- Letters of support including those from other organisations in your regional innovation ecosystem will be considered under this criterion.

Criteria 3: **Value and viability**

The application must demonstrate:

- value for money – the additional service offering can be delivered within the nominated timeframe, and is able to be delivered within the **project budget**
- the additional service offering outlined in the application is **commensurate** with the level of funding support
- the organisation has adequate staffing and risk management strategies to ensure successful delivery of the additional service offering over the three-year funding period.

Criteria 4: **Resilience of the regional organisation**

The application must demonstrate:

- the applicant organisation is operationally sustainable, resilient and will be able to continue to deliver its business-as-usual activities and the additional service offering over the next three years
- the additional service offering includes opportunities for the applicant organisation to establish connections and networks that open doors and support its growth beyond the three years of funding

The following documentation is required to support your application and can be uploaded in the application form in SmartyGrants:

- One year (12 months) of accountant prepared financial statements, or
- A letter from your board (or chief executive officer or equivalent if there is no board) that confirms the project is supported and the applicant is a going concern and is financially viable to deliver the project as detailed in the application.

6. Application and assessment process

6.1 Submit an application

An application can be submitted online via SmartyGrants. Refer to the Advance Queensland program website for the application link.

A Full Application will include:

- a completed online application form including detailed responses to each of the assessment criteria and required supporting documentation
- CVs of key organisational staff involved in the delivery of the additional service offering
- letters of support
- one year (12 months) of accountant prepared financial statements **or** a letter from your board (or chief executive officer or equivalent if there is no board) that confirms the project is supported and the applicant is a going concern and is financially viable to deliver the project as detailed in the application.

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 competitive, merit-based approach by a panel of independent assessors against the assessment criteria.

Applicants 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 REP 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.

The Department of Environment, Science and Innovation 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 <https://www.des.qld.gov.au/>.

7. Key dates

Activity	Date
Applications open	3 June 2024
Applications close	4 July 2024

All applications must be submitted by 1.00 pm AEST on the closing date. Any further round dates will be published on the Advance Queensland website.

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.

Payment of grants will be made based on agreed periodic project milestones. A final milestone payment will be made upon the provision of documentary evidence that all project activities have been completed, including evidence that total project expenditure has been incurred and project contributions have been made by all relevant parties.

The agreement will provide details on general and specific conditions associated with delivery of the approved initiative or project, including:

- the scope of the approved program of activities
- milestone deliverables and dates
- funding amount and payment terms, including payment of an administration service fee in the first payment.
- eligible and ineligible costs
- applicant's obligation to acknowledge Queensland Government support
- record-keeping requirements
- reporting requirements.

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 relating to the proposed project.

10. Privacy

The Department of Environment, Science and Innovation (the department) is collecting personal information from you such as your name, address, contact details of yourself and your business (including employees and partners), resume, employment and directorship, corporate officer history, 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 otherwise the department's function of supporting businesses and industry through innovation programs and grants and may be shared with the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries for that purpose.

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, to publicly announce or publish as identified in the guidelines and 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 progress.

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

Your personal information will also be used to provide the services outlined in the guidelines and application help guide, and for the purposes of research, evaluation, promotion, and monitoring of 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 provisions of the Right to Information Act 2009 apply to documents in the possession of the Queensland Government.

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

11. Further information

Web: advance.qld.gov.au

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