



Regional Futures – Collaborative Projects program

Program guidelines

31 August 2023



Queensland
Government



The Department of Tourism, Innovation and Sport (the department) will provide and pay for qualified interpreting services for customers who are hearing impaired or have difficulties communicating in English. Please [contact the department](#) if you require interpreting services.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

The department respectfully acknowledge and recognise Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the Traditional Owners and Custodians of the lands, winds and waters where we live, learn and work.

We pay our respects to the Elders past, present and emerging for they hold the memories, the traditions and the cultures of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people across the nation.

We will walk together with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, communities and organisations in our journey to enrich lives and strengthen community connection through the power of innovation, sport and recreation.

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1. Program overview

The Queensland Government's *Advance Queensland: Innovation for a Future Economy 2022-2032 Roadmap* (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 Regional Futures – Collaborative Projects program is an Advance Queensland initiative that aims to accelerate economic diversification in the regions and support the roadmap's key priority outcome of a *well-connected, inclusive and thriving innovation ecosystem in Queensland*.

1.2 What we are looking for

Building on Advance Queensland's past successes and learnings, the program acknowledges the maturity and diversity of local innovation ecosystems and economies throughout Queensland and seeks to enable entrepreneurially minded organisations and partners to collaborate by undertaking projects that will:

- unlock potential by targeting issues of regional significance
- provide innovative solution/s to a regional issue or opportunity
- have a clearly defined strategic intent aligned to the growth priorities of the region or sector
- demonstrate alignment to an existing commitment, investment or strength
- involve tangible activities that accelerate a change that is needed to position the region or sector for growth and jobs
- be locally led and involve suitable representatives from innovative partners and leaders that have the responsibility, authority and/or capability required to influence change
- create a legacy of sustained change for a Queensland sector or region by tackling an issue which is regionally significant or has cross-industry relevance
- enable the uptake of talent and/or technology that will strengthen Queensland sectors and/or regions.

Funded projects will:

- increase participation in Queensland's innovation ecosystem
- increase regional economic diversification and/or leverage regional competitive advantages
- enhance Queensland's reputation as a destination of choice for entrepreneurs, investors and businesses engaging in the innovation economy.

The program **will not** support:

- research and development, feasibility studies or strategy development
- commercial collaboration projects where the commercial benefits primarily flow to a single entity, partnership, or joint venture.

2. Available funding

Grants of up to \$200,000 (excluding GST) are available for projects with a duration of up to 18 months.

Prior to submitting an application, all applicants must request a meeting with a departmental Regional Engagement Officer, via the [online request form](#), to discuss the proposed project and its suitability for the program.

3. Eligibility

3.1 Applicant eligibility criteria

To be eligible to apply, the applicant organisation must, at the time of application:

- be based in a Queensland region[#]
- have an ABN and be registered for GST
- have a collaboration with at least one other project partner based in a Queensland region^{# ^}
- provide a signed *Regional Futures – Collaborative Projects Regional Engagement Officer Certificate*
- have a total cash contribution from the applicant and/or collaborative partner/s that is equal to or greater than 50 per cent of the grant amount sought from the Regional Futures – Collaborative Projects program.

Note: If there are a number of projects within a region that are related and interdependent, wherever possible these should be combined into one collaborative project with one organisation taking the lead.

[#] For the purpose of the Regional Futures – Collaborative Projects program, a Queensland region is any local government area except Brisbane City Council. Applicant organisations can check within which local government they are located on the Electoral Commission Queensland Interactive Map.

[^] For the purpose of the Regional Futures – Collaborative Projects program, the partners must not be financially affiliated with the lead applicant or other collaborative partners (i.e. a subsidiary, have shared ownership interests / directors in common, or an agreed funding relationship).

4. Project costs

4.1 Eligible project costs

Regional Futures – Collaborative Projects funding must be used for project specific activities and fall within the following **eligible project cost** categories:

- salary expenditure (including salary-related oncosts) for staff directly contributing to the delivery of the project
- consumables required specifically for the project
- plant and equipment required specifically for the project, up to a total cumulative value of \$10,000 during the term of the grant
- reasonable travel costs necessary to undertake the project activity
- specialist advice and services provided by unrelated (external) providers.

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

It is expected that all Regional Futures – Collaborative Projects program 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 grant funding include:

- organisational overheads
- costs associated with ongoing programs of work and/or core business of the applicant or collaborative partner/s
- capital works and/or physical infrastructure including any buildings, telecommunications, and IT networks, land acquisition costs or leases
- motor vehicles and motor vehicle leases
- first class or business class travel
- plant and equipment exceeding \$10,000 during the term of the grant
- alcohol costs to support workshops/events where delivery of workshops/events are part of the proposed activities.

4.2 Cash contribution

Applicants and/or collaborative partner organisation/s must make a combined cash contribution equal to or greater than 50 per cent of the grant amount sought from Regional Futures – Collaborative Projects program.

For example, if grant funding of \$200,000 is sought, the applicant and collaborative partner organisation/s must commit not less than \$100,000 combined cash contribution to the project.

The combined cash contribution committed by the applicant and collaborative partner organisation/s can be either/or a combination of:

- cash contributed directly to the project by the applicant and/or collaborative partner organisation/s to cover direct project costs
- pro-rata salary costs, attributed to the project, of employees of the applicant and/or the collaborative partner organisation/s, who are spending at least 20% of their time working directly on the project activities.

At the time of application, the applicant and each collaborative partner organisation/s must provide written letters of support confirming the cash and cash as salaries contributions which will be committed to the project, if the application is successful.

These letters must be signed by the applicant and each collaborative partner organisation/s who is contributing to the combined cash contribution.

In-kind contributions cannot be included as a component of the combined cash contribution. The application should include details of any in-kind contributions to enable assessment of all applicant and collaborative partner contributions to the proposed project.

5. Assessment criteria

The *Regional Futures – Collaborative Projects Frequently Asked Questions* must be reviewed prior to completing an application form.

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 opportunity or innovation activity

Projects must demonstrate they will:

- identify and address a problem to be solved or an opportunity to be leveraged through a place-based or sector specific collaboration
- impact regional innovation for the benefit of the applicant, partner organisations, the sector and the region
- deliver an innovative approach to the problem to be solved or opportunity to be leveraged.

Criteria 2: Strength of the collaboration

Projects must demonstrate they will:

- involve the collaborative efforts and resources of the applicant organisation and at least one project partner based in a Queensland region# who will share the responsibility for the delivery of the project
- be locally driven
- involve leaders from within the innovation ecosystem who are aligned with the project's focus/outcome
- involve meaningful collaboration between organisations, partners and leaders who possess a shared purpose and have complementary expertise.

Note: Letters of support from the partner organisation/s must be attached to the application, to demonstrate commitment to the project.

Letters of support from other relevant regional/industry/innovation stakeholders who are making a contribution to the project and/or will benefit from the success of the project, may also be attached to the application to demonstrate how the proposal will benefit the region/industry, and will be considered in assessing this criterion.

Criteria 3: Viability of the project

Projects must demonstrate they will:

- provide a clear project plan including project activities, outcomes, risks, and mitigation strategies
- involve collaborative partner organisation/s that have a track record in delivering comparable initiatives in Queensland and/or the broader innovation economy
- engage the local industry leaders who have the capacity and authority needed to effect the change required
- be well planned and achievable within the timeframe and budget whilst demonstrating value for money.

Criteria 4: Benefit to the region / sector and Queensland

Projects must demonstrate they will:

- be designed to deliver tangible benefits beyond the commercial interests of the collaborative partner organisation/s
- have the potential to create sustainable change / quantifiable benefits beyond the life of the project
- demonstrate job opportunity pathways.

6. Application and assessment process

The application process will include the following steps:

6.1 Meet with a Regional Engagement Officer and certificate issued

Prior to submitting an application, an applicant must meet with a Regional Engagement Officer to discuss whether the proposal meets the eligibility criteria and the intent of the program.

To arrange a meeting, please complete the form [here](#).

Responses in the form will be reviewed by DTIS officers, and those applications that are eligible to apply and meet the intent of the program will be invited to meet with a Regional Engagement Officer.

The Regional Engagement Officer can provide the following support:

- an explanation of the application and assessment process, including the eligibility and assessment criteria
- advice on eligibility of a proposed application
- assistance with facilitating collaborative partnerships to strengthen the application and the potential outcomes of the project
- identification of opportunities for related projects to be combined to submit a stronger proposal.

Please note the Regional Engagement Officer is not able to:

- review or provide feedback on an application
- provide advice on the merit of an application
- provide insight into the progress of the assessment of applications received.

It is advisable that the applicant organisation be accompanied by representatives from the partner organisation/s at the meeting.

Following the meeting with the Regional Engagement Officer, applicants with eligible projects will be issued a *Regional Futures – Collaborative Projects Regional Engagement Officer Certificate* that must be attached to the Regional Futures – Collaborative Projects application form.

6.2 Submit a full application

A full application, including the required *Regional Futures – Collaborative Projects Regional Engagement Officer Certificate*, can be submitted via SmartyGrants. Refer to the program webpage for the application link.

6.3 Assessment

All applications will be assessed against the eligibility criteria. Only eligible applications will be considered for funding support.

Eligible applications will be assessed in a competitive, merit-based process 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 Regional Futures – Collaborative Projects program and conduct the assessment and approval processes at 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 regions and industries, and to recognise regional opportunities outside of South-East Queensland.

7. Timeframes

Activity	Timeframes
Applications open	Thursday, 31 August 2023 and remain open until all funding is committed
Applications assessed	Applications will be assessed at set intervals (refer to the Advance Queensland website for assessment cut-off dates)

8. Funding agreement

Successful applicants will be required to enter into a legally binding Financial Incentive Agreement with the State of Queensland through the Department of Tourism, Innovation and Sport.

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 project
- milestone deliverables and dates
- funding amount and payment of agreed terms
- applicant's obligation to acknowledge Queensland Government support
- record-keeping requirements
- reporting requirements.

Applicants should ensure that they have read and accept the terms and conditions of the Financial Incentive Agreement prior to applying for funding, as they will not be negotiable at the time a funding offer is made.

Successful applicants will be required to:

- provide a written declaration from a suitably qualified independent party evidencing the applicant's commitment of their matched funding contribution to the project, within 20 Business days of being notified that the funding application has been successful
- provide a written declaration from a suitably qualified independent party for each collaborative partner organisation/s evidencing their commitment of their matched funding contribution to the project, within 20 Business days of being notified that the funding application has been successful
- execute a Financial Incentive Agreement within 40 business days of being notified that the funding application has been successful
- commence projects within 30 business days of the execution of the Financial Incentive Agreement.

Suitable qualifications for the declarations required include members of:

- the Institute of Chartered Accountants
- CPA Australia
- the Institute of Public Accountants with a Professional Practice Certificate.

9. Change to Collaborative Partner Organisation/s

Following commencement of the project, the applicant organisation must immediately notify the Department in the event a collaborative partner organisation ceases to be part of the project. In the event of such notice, the Department may do one of the following:

- agree to the project continuing without the exiting collaborative partner organisation
- suspend the project activity until the Department is satisfied the project can be delivered without the exiting collaborative partner organisation or with a replacement collaborative partner organisation
- terminate the Financial Incentive Agreement, thereby ending the project with the potential to not make any further scheduled grant payments and/or seek repayment of some/all grant monies paid to that point.

10. Promotion of Supported Projects

Funding recipients will be expected to actively promote their projects and 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.

11. 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

Email: regionalinnovation@dtis.qld.gov.au

Facebook: Advance Queensland

Twitter: @AdvanceQld

Phone: 13 QGOV (13 74 68)

12. Department contact

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