Regional Futures – Collaborative Projects:

Frequently Asked Questions

1. How to apply

1.1. How do I apply?

An online Regional Futures – Collaborative Projects application form is available on the Queensland Government website. Applicant organisations will need to contact a Regional Engagement Officer to obtain a *Collaborative Projects Regional Engagement Officer Certificate* prior to lodging an application.

1.2. What is the closing date for submitting an application?

The program will remain open until all available funds are exhausted. Applications that have been submitted online will be pooled and assessed on, at least, a quarterly basis. Dates for assessment will we published on the Queensland Government website.

1.3. Can an application be revised after submission?

No. However, applicant organisations must advise the Queensland Government of any changes that are likely to affect their eligibility.

1.4. What support is available from Queensland Government to assist me in completing my application?

A Queensland Government Regional Engagement Officer can:

- provide more information on the program intent
- explain the application and assessment process
- assist in facilitating collaborative partnerships
- explain the eligibility and assessment criteria
- provide advice on the eligibility of a proposed application
- provide potential applicant organisations with the *Regional Futures – Collaborative Projects Regional Engagement Officer Certificate* that is a pre-requisite for applications to the program.

However, a Regional Engagement Officer is not able to:

- review and provide feedback on an application
- provide advice on the merit of an application.

Applicant organisations should email regionalinnovation@dtis.qld.gov.au to contact a Regional Engagement Officer.

1.5. What is a Regional Futures – Collaborative Projects Regional Engagement Officer Certificate?

This is a certificate that will be provided to applicant organisations once they have contacted a Queensland Government Regional Engagement Officer. It provides evidence that the organisation has been made aware of the eligibility criteria and have received advice that the application is eligible. Applicant organisations must submit the certificate with their application for funding.

1.6. How can I obtain a Regional Futures – Collaborative Projects Regional Engagement Officer Certificate?

Please email regionalinnovation@dtis.qld.gov.au to request contact by a Regional Engagement Officer to discuss a proposed application. Following the discussion, the Regional Innovation Officer will issue a *Regional Futures – Collaborative Projects Regional Engagement Officer Certificat*e, where appropriate.

1.7. How can I check the status of my application?

Applicant organisations will be notified in writing of the outcome of their application. No early indication of likely success of an application can be provided to applicants.

1.8. When will I find out if my application is successful?

Applicant organisations will be advised of the success of their application within approximately 12 weeks from commencement of assessment.

2. Eligibility

2.1. Where would I find details of the Queensland Government priority industry sectors?

The Queensland Government has developed industry roadmaps for emerging and priority sectors with global growth potential. More information on these roadmaps can be found on the Queensland Government website.

Information about *Queensland's COVID-19 Economic Recovery Plan – Unite & Recover* can be found on the Queensland Government website.

2.2. Does my project have to support a Queensland Government priority industry sector?

No. It is not a pre-requisite for applying to the program. However, supporting one of the Queensland Government priority industry sectors is likely to be a key component in ensuring your project application is

competitive under Assessment Criterion 3, which requires applicant organisations to demonstrate how the proposed project will contribute to:

- *an increase in the maturity level of the innovation ecosystem of the region(s)*
- *economic growth in the region(s) including support of emerging/new industries and/or Queensland Government priority industry sectors*
- *the support and creation of new / high-value / high-growth jobs in regional Queensland*

2.3. Can I apply for Regional Futures – Collaborative Projects funding if I am already receiving other Queensland Government funding for the proposed project?

No. If the project is currently receiving Queensland Government support, the organisation cannot apply for further funding. If funding was received (and has since been finalised and acquitted) for an earlier phase of the current project, then funding may be considered.

2.4. (a) How is a 'Queensland-based organisation' defined?

The organisation must be operating its business in a physical location in Queensland which must be maintained for the duration of the project.

(b) How is a 'Queensland regionally-based organisation' defined?

The organisation must be operating its business in a physical location in a Queensland region which must be maintained for the duration of the project.

2.5. How is a 'Queensland region' defined?

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

2.6. What organisations are eligible to be the applicant organisation?

Any organisation type that has an ABN and is GST registered can apply to the program, except for Queensland Government departments/agencies and Australian Government departments/agencies.

2.7. Can a Regional Organisation of Councils apply?

Yes. A Regional Organisation of Councils which has an ABN and is registered for GST can be an applicant organisation for the purposes of the Regional Futures – Collaborative Projects program.

2.8. What is meant by "female business"?

A female business is one that is at least 50% female owned and/or led. 'Female-led' means the people leading the organisation in roles such as Chief Executive Officer, Director or Executive. A female business does not need to be female founded.

2.9. What is an "Indigenous business"?

An indigenous business is one that is at least 50 per cent owned by Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people.

2.10. Can an organisation that has been, or is, part of the Queensland Connects program apply?

Yes. An organisation that has been part of a cohort participating in the Queensland Connects program can be an applicant organisation provided that:

- the proposed project is separate activity to any activities funded under the Queensland Connects program
- any Queensland Government funding received as part of a Queensland Connects cohort is not used as part of the organisation's cash contribution to its Regional Futures – Collaborative Projects project.

Regional innovation activities and initiatives identified as part of the Queensland Connects project may form the basis of a project application to this program.

2.11. Can an organisation that has been, or is, part of the Advancing Regional Innovation Program apply?

Yes. An organisation that has been, or is currently, participating in the Advancing Regional Innovation Program (ARIP) can be an applicant organisation provided that:

- the proposed project is separate activity to any activities funded under ARIP
- any Queensland Government funding received as part of the ARIP project is not used as part of the organisation's cash contribution to its Regional Futures – Collaborative Projects project.

2.12. Can I apply for funding support for an activity that has already commenced prior to the application?

No. Only activities which commence after the project commencement date will be funded. The project commencement date will be agreed as part of the negotiation of the Grant Agreement and is generally the date that the Grant Agreement is executed.

2.13. How is a 'collaborative partner organisation' defined?

A collaborative partner is an organisation that is a separate entity to the applicant organisation and is materially contributing to the project and its outcomes, as evidenced by a cash contribution and its involvement in the project.

2.14. What is meant by 'involve partnering organisations that are separate entities'?

The collaborative partner organisations must not be related, i.e., as parent or subsidiaries organisations, and must have separate management personnel. Where a Regional Organisation of Councils, Regional Economic Development Organisation (or other organisation that is formed by a collaboration of local government or other regional organisations) is the applicant organisation, the participant councils in that organisation cannot also be classed as collaborative partner organisations.

2.15. Can the project involve partner organisations that are not Queensland-based?

It is a requirement of the program that the applicant organisation is based in a Queensland region and **at least one** collaborative partner is based in a Queensland region. Any additional partners can be Queensland-based, interstate and/or internationally based organisations.

2.16. Can the project involve collaborative partner organisations that are government departments/agencies?

Yes. Australian Government, Queensland Government and Local Government departments and agencies are eligible to be collaborative partner organisations and contribute toward the matched funding requirement.

For the purpose of the Regional Futures – Collaborative Projects program, any Queensland Government department or agency will be considered as a Brisbane-based organisation regardless of the location of the personnel involved in the project. The only exception to this is a Queensland Hospital and Health Service which can be counted as a regionally based organisation.

2.17. Is there a requirement that the project includes one or more non-government organisation?

No. Assuming all eligibility criteria are met, it is acceptable for the applicant organisation to be partnering with just one (or more) government department or agency. It is acceptable to match the Regional Futures – Collaborative Project with funding from government organisations, provided the application also meets the regional eligibility criteria.

2.18. Is there a requirement that the project includes one or more non-Queensland Government organisation?

Yes, except in projects where the Queensland Government partner organisation is a regional Queensland Hospital and Health Service.

For the purpose of the Regional Futures – Collaborative Projects program, all Queensland Government departments/agencies are considered to be Brisbane-based organisation regardless of the location of the personnel involved in the project, except for regional Queensland Hospital and Health Services. It is acceptable to match the Regional Futures – Collaborative Project with funding from other Queensland Government organisations, provided the proposal also meets the regional eligibility criteria.

2.19. Is there a requirement that the project includes a private sector partner?

No. Assuming all eligibility criteria are met, there is no requirement that a private sector organisation is a collaborative partner in the project.

2.20. How much funding is required from the applicant organisation and the collaborative partner organisation(s)?

The amount of funding sought from the Regional Futures – Collaborative Projects program must be matched, in cash, on a dollar-for-dollar basis. For example, if an organisation applies for $200,000 the (collective) cash funding commitment of the applicant and collaborative partner organisation(s) must be at least $200,000. This can be split in any way between the applicant and collaborative partner organisations.

Confirmation that the applicant and collaborative partner organisations can meet the funding commitment specified in the application must be provided, in the form of (a) declaration(s) from a qualified, independent accountant.

It is acknowledged that in-kind contributions are likely to be made to all projects, and applicant organisations can provide details about this in their application. However, there is no requirement to record 'in-kind' contributions and it does not form part of the matching funding requirements.

2.21. How is 'cash' defined?

For the purposes of the Regional Futures – Collaborative Projects program, cash is either, or a combination of:

- cash as raised directly by the applicant organisation and/or leveraged from collaborative partner organisation(s)
- salary costs, attributed to the project, of employees of the applicant organisation and/or the collaborative partner organisation(s), who are assigned directly to the core business of the project.

In relation to salary costs, by definition employees:

- must have at least 20 per cent of their work responsibilities assigned directly to the core business of the project for the lifetime of the project
- can be full-time or part-time.

2.22. Can salaries of employees be counted as cash for matching funding purposes?

Yes – if the employee is spending at least 20 per cent of his/her working hours on the project, then the cost/time can be counted as part of the cash contribution requirement.

2.23. If a collaborative partner organisation delivers a service as part of the project, can the cost of that service be counted as part of the required matched cash contribution to the project?

If a collaborative partner organisation delivers a service or activity as part of the project, then the actual cost to the organisation in delivering the service or activity can count as the partner's cash contribution. All costs incurred in delivering the service or activity, including salaries must have been paid by the partner and must be evidenced as such. The collaborative partner organisation cannot claim the usual commercial cost that would have been charged to provide the service or activity as matched funding as this is not an actual cost. The collaborative partner organisation can only include the 'cost recovery' value of the services.

The salary costs of applicant organisation or collaborative partner organisation personnel delivering the service or activity can only be claimed as matched funding if the individual is working on the project for 20% or more of their employed time.

2.24. Does the Queensland Government require the applicant organisation to have collaborative agreements with collaborative partner organisations?

No. The Queensland Government does not require copies of collaborative agreements. However, the applicant organisation may independently decide to enter into agreements with collaborative partner organisations to clarify and outline the details of the collaborative arrangements.

For the avoidance of doubt, the terms and conditions of the Grant Agreement place the obligation to carry out the project and receive and expend the matching cash contribution from the collaborative partner(s) on the applicant organisation.

2.25. What happens if a collaborative partner organisation leaves the project?

The recipient organisation is required to notify the Queensland Government immediately. The department, at its discretion, may allow the project to continue, may require the collaborative partner organisation to be replaced, or may terminate the Grant Agreement.

2.26. Do I have to spend all the grant funding in Queensland?

It is expected that, wherever possible, the grant funding will be spent within Queensland, i.e., if purchasing goods or services that are available in Queensland, it is expected these would be purchased within Queensland.

Expenditure outside Queensland is acceptable only where it is a prerequisite to ensure successful completion of the project. For example, the costs of procuring expertise, products, or services that are essential to the project but not available within Queensland.

2.27. Can organisations submit multiple applications that are related and interdependent?

Organisations are encouraged to collaborate within and across regions to develop and undertake projects. If there are a number of projects that are related and interdependent, then wherever possible these should be combined into one collaborative project with one organisation taking the lead. If this is not possible, applicant organisations should identify the related/interdependent applications in the relevant section of the application form and ensure all related applications are submitted at the same time.

Organisations planning multiple, interdependent projects should seek advice from their Regional Engagement Officer on the most appropriate way to proceed.

2.28. Is there a minimum amount of grant funding that I can apply for under this program?

There is no minimum funding amount under this program. However, as outlined in the guidelines and in order to be competitive under the program, projects must be able to demonstrate that they will be substantial enough to be transformative for the regions in terms of delivering significant tangible benefits; increasing capacity and maturity of the regional ecosystem; assisting in ensuring the future prosperity and resilience of the region(s) and/or positioning Queensland and the region(s) as innovation leaders nationally or internationally.

3.   Completing the application form

3.1. The online form will not allow me to provide my full response to a question.

The text fields contained in the online forms have been restricted to the word limits considered appropriate for each question and these limits cannot be extended. Answers to questions should be clear, concise and highly relevant.

3.2. Why am I required to complete the Publishable Project Description in plain English?

Information provided in response to this question in the application form will be used to inform politicians and senior government officers of the proposed project and may be used to promote the project to the general

public. It is therefore important that it is clear and easy to understand by a person with limited knowledge of the subject matter and should succinctly promote the benefits of the project. Applicant organisations should avoid the use of technical or industry specific jargon or terms.

As this project summary may be used publicly, applicant organisations should ensure that it does not include any sensitive and/or commercial-in-confidence information.

3.3. How do I demonstrate that the applicant and collaborative partner organisations has/will have access to the technical and management skills to successfully deliver the project?

Applicant organisations should consider:

- including background information on the founder/management team/investor(s) illustrating their relevant skills and experience
- providing evidence of any prior projects delivered
- identifying the ability to secure critical external expertise, where required
- including details of any advisory boards.

3.4. What is meant by the "regional innovation ecosystem"?

A "regional innovation ecosystem" is a regional network of people supporting entrepreneurs, and the culture of trust and collaboration that allows them to interact successfully. A thriving ecosystem usually includes the following elements:

- entrepreneurs who aspire to start and grow new businesses, and the people who support entrepreneurs
- talent that can help companies grow
- people and institutions with knowledge and resources to help entrepreneurs
- individuals and institutions that serve as champion and conveners of entrepreneurs and the ecosystem
- onramps (or access points) to the ecosystem so that anyone and everyone can participate
- intersections that facilitate the interaction of people, ideas, and resources
- stories that people tell about themselves and their ecosystem
- culture that is rich in social capital – collaboration, cooperation, trust, reciprocity, and a focus on the common good – makes the ecosystem come alive by connecting all the elements together.

3.5. What are the different maturity levels of a regional innovation ecosystem?

The framework below can be used as a guide to assess the maturity level of a regional innovation ecosystem.

	1. Early stage	2. Mid stage	3. Established
Places and spaces	Temporary/fragmented Occasional pop-up events and meet ups	Existing operators and facilities reconfigured (libraries or private offices) One or two formal co-working businesses established Public bodies support space establishment in lieu of private demand	More than one privately-operated co-working space Well-established links between universities and businesses Public support shifts to program funding
Connectivity	Entrepreneurs maintain individual networks No common coordinators Low rate of inter-region communication	Ecosystem participants connect mostly through common projects Internal ecosystem news and links are shared Limited common platform participation	Ecosystem has a recognised domestic and international identity Open communication platforms seed and maintain channels to encourage new participation
Collaboration	Sporadic projects Collaboration mostly through events and startup weekend style innovation activities	Regular events with business and startups Joint projects more common and focused on leveraging collective assets to drive regional development	Long-term industry-led research Public–private co-investment in new assets and infrastructure
Leadership	Minimal leadership Individual entrepreneurs are advocates Visiting entrepreneurs	Chambers of Commerce, RDAs and NGOs coordinate advocacy and specialisation to secure resources Individual entrepreneurs as representatives, case studies and success stories	Leaders as hosts Coordination and distribution of resources rather than control Expert thought-leadership
Communities of practice	Limited or no local learning communities (online access only) Capability development—mostly facilitated by formal education and registered training organisations	Regular accelerator and incubator programs delivered Emerging specialist communities (code clubs, maker spaces) meeting regularly	Self-organising communities of practice Diversity of specialisation Communities maintain active presence in other regions

Regional Innovation Ecosystem Lifecyle
(Advance Queensland Regional Innovation Hubs Program Discussion Paper – August 2016)

3.6. How should I complete the Project Plan – Planned Activities and Expected Outcomes section of the application form?

Applicant organisations should detail the:
- key project activities to be completed, split into six-monthly periods
- expected outcomes of these activities (i.e., how will the success of the project be measured at the end of each six-monthly reporting period; what does success look like (outcomes)).

As a guide, each milestone should have four to eight dot points describing the key activities and outcomes for the particular stage of the project with numbers, targets or rates of completion, including any jobs to be supported or created.

It is important to be as realistic and specific when completing this section. Should the application for funding be successful, the project plan wording provided by the applicant organisation will be included in the Grant Agreement (see example below) and applicant organisations will be required to provide regular reports on actual progress and achievements against the *Milestones Activities and Outcomes.*

Project Period 1	**Start Date:** Activity Commencement Date
	Completion date: 6 months (less one day) from the Activity Commencement Date
Planned activities	• Finalise consultation with impacted communities on the placement of a rainwater storage system. • Finalise designs for the effective placement and construction of the rainwater storage system. • Commission a construction provider to deliver the project within timeframes and costs. • Commence construction of the rainwater storage system.
Expected outcomes	• An appropriate construction provider has been chosen to commence the construction. • Construction has begun at the decided location within the agreed timeframes.
Project Period 2	**Commencement date:** 6 months from the Activity Commencement Date
	Completion date: 12 months (less one day) from the Activity Commencement Date
Planned activities	• Monitor the continued construction of the rainwater storage system. • Manage the milestones and expected finishing date of the project with the construction provider. • Monitor community concerns over construction and environmental impact.
Expected outcomes	• Construction has met and proceeds with expected timeframes. • Communities are aware and involved in the ongoing delivery of the project.
Project Period 3	**Commencement date:** 12 months from the Activity Commencement Date
	Completion date: 18 months (less one day) from the Activity Commencement Date
Planned activities	• Manage the expected finishing date and handover with the construction provider. • Organise testing and certification of the water quality. • Finalise distribution connections to the system and ongoing maintenance schedule.
Expected outcomes	• Handover of the new rainwater storage system. • Increased community access to clean water. • Increased preparedness for drought seasons and fire response.

3.7. What supporting documents should I include with my application?

The following supporting documents must be included with the application:

• a completed *Regional Futures – Collaborative Projects Regional Engagement Officer Certificate*
• brief (one-page) resumes of key project personnel
• evidence that the applicant and collaborative partner organisations can each meet its share of the matching funds requirement in the form of a declaration from a suitably qualified party that is a member of:
  o the Institute of Chartered Accountants, or
  o CPA Australia, or
  o the Institute of Public Accountants with a Professional Practice Certificate.

  This can be the qualified Chief Financial Officer of the organisation or an independent accountant, as appropriate.

No other supporting documents are required and therefore no other supporting documents should be submitted as they will not be considered as part of the assessment process. Applicant organisations should ensure all information pertaining to the application is included in the application form.

3.8. How is a "job" defined?

For the purpose of the Regional Futures – Collaborative Projects program:

- jobs supported by the project and based in Queensland are considered to be "new" (i.e. not safeguarding an existing job)
- jobs reported must be established, or forecast to be established as a direct result of Advance Queensland funding
- jobs includes full and part time, as well as temporary and permanent employment
- jobs reported does not include public service positions, or indirect jobs (jobs that flow on through supply chains).

4. Funding

4.1. How much can I apply for?

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

4.2. How is the Regional Futures – Collaborative Projects funding paid?

Funding is paid in instalments throughout the lifetime of the project. Generally, the first payment is made upon execution of the Grant Agreement. The remaining payments are made following the submission of satisfactory reports detailing the progress and outcomes of the project against the project plan. A final instalment is tied to evidence of completion of the project as set out in the project plan and expenditure of all project funding.

4.3. What are 'organisational overheads'?

For the purpose of this funding program, organisational overheads are the institutional and administrative overhead costs attributed to a position, such as facilities and accommodation-related costs, ICT costs, general administrative support costs. In some organisations this is calculated as a percentage of the salary costs. These on-costs are not eligible for Regional Futures – Collaborative Projects funding.

4.4. Are salary on-costs eligible for funding?

Costs directly associated with the employment of an individual, such as superannuation, workers compensation, payroll tax and leave loading are eligible.

4.5. Are capital costs eligible for funding?

Yes. Capital expenditure is limited to expenditure on small items of plant and equipment to support project activities, capped at a total of $10,000 during the term of the grant.

5. Conditions of award

5.1. If my application is successful, when would my project start?

Successful projects must commence within 60 business days of being advised that funding has been approved.

5.2. What is a Grant Agreement?

The Grant Agreement is a legally binding document that outlines the terms and conditions of the Regional Futures – Collaborative Projects program grant, including the payment schedule, project plan and the reporting requirements.

5.3. Are the Terms and Conditions of the Grant Agreement negotiable?

No. If an organisation is offered funding from the Regional Futures – Collaborative Projects program, it will be required to execute the standard Grant Agreement within 30 business days of being notified that the funding application has been successful, or the offer of funding will lapse.

5.4. If the application is successful, will Queensland Government enter into Grant Agreements with each organisation involved in the project?

No. The Queensland Government will enter into a Grant Agreement with the applicant organisation. The applicant organisation will be responsible for driving the project, ensuring that the obligations of the Grant Agreement are met and that each party contributes to the project in accordance with its commitment.

5.5. What information will be required for progress reports?

An online progress report template will be provided for completion by recipients. Recipients will be required to complete the report to outline the progress of the project against the planned *Milestone Activities and Outcomes*; the number of jobs created; details of expenditure of Regional Futures – Collaborative Projects funding and applicant and collaborative partner organisation funds; and any potential media opportunities.

5.6. What evidence is required in order to receive grant payments?

Recipients must demonstrate that the project has been carried out in accordance with the Grant Agreement and provide evidence that the outcomes have been achieved and expenditure has been incurred to the satisfaction of the department.

Prior to receiving the final payment, recipients must provide details of all expenditure on the project in the form of a transaction listing. In addition, recipients will be required to provide evidence in the form of invoices, payslips, receipts and bank statements, as appropriate.

5.7. If my application is successful, am I under any obligations regarding communication/publicity?

Regional Futures – Collaborative Projects program recipients will be required to acknowledge the support of Queensland Government in all public communications. Recipients will be required to evidence these communications throughout the lifetime of the project.

5.8. How will my personal information be managed?

The Queensland Government and the Department of Tourism, Innovation and Sport (DTIS) manages personal information in accordance with the *Information Privacy Act 2009.* Your personal information will not otherwise be used or disclosed unless authorised or required by law.

DTIS collects your personal information for the purposes of:
- assessing eligibility for the program;
- promoting relevant information or services to you; and
- research, review, audits, evaluation and reporting

DTIS, including its employees, may use and disclose the personal information provided in the application to third parties for the above purposes. Third parties include:
- Queensland Government departments and agencies

- Commonwealth Government departments and agencies, and
- non-government organisations.

DTIS or the Minister responsible for the innovation portfolio may publish grant recipient information on government websites, including Advance Queensland site or in media releases while publicising the outcomes of the program. Published information may include business name, funding amount, suburb/postcode, and outcome details.

6.   Further information

Web: qld.gov.au/advanceqld

Email: regionalinnovation@dtis.qld.gov.au

Facebook: Advance Queensland

Twitter: @AdvanceQld

Phone: 13 QGOV (13 74 68)