

# New Industries Fund – RNIF Guidelines

## 1. Introduction

The **New Industries Fund (NIF)** is a \$16.7 million State Government project designed to support venture creation and accelerate business growth to diversify the Western Australian economy and create new jobs. To optimise State-wide economic outcomes, \$4.5 million of the NIF has been allocated to the State's nine regions as a sub-program referred to as the **Regional New Industries Fund (RNIF)**.

Extensive consultation with the State's innovation community identified four pillars required to support innovation. The pillars are recognised as essential foundations for job creation, competitiveness, and new industry development. Initiatives, programs and projects proposed for RNIF support will need to align with the following pillars:

### **Pillar 1: Talent, Skills and Entrepreneurship**

A sustainable innovation environment requires the right people with the right skills. Western Australia needs to develop, attract and retain the right people.

### **Pillar 2: Investment and Infrastructure**

Infrastructure and capital are important to innovation to enable the collaboration necessary for start-ups, emerging businesses and small to medium enterprises (SMEs) to grow, commercialise and create jobs.

### **Pillar 3: Culture and Collaboration**

Western Australia has significant human, natural and infrastructure assets. By fostering the right culture and facilitating collaboration, the State Government can maximise their value.

### **Pillar 4: Marketing and Promotion**

Raising the State's profile on the global stage is essential. Leveraging the State's brand will allow Western Australia's strengths to become synonymous with innovation, and critical global networks to be forged.

The Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development (the Department) is responsible for administering the RNIF on behalf of the State Government.

Additional information on the NIF and RNIF, including funding rounds and dates will be published on [www.newindustries.wa.gov.au](http://www.newindustries.wa.gov.au).

## 2. RNIF Objectives

### **The RNIF aims to:**

Catalyse Western Australia's competitiveness by building entrepreneurial, innovation and commercialisation capabilities in the regions. It will support and accelerate new and growth orientated businesses to create sustainable regional economies that generate new jobs and industries.

### **The RNIF objectives are to:**

- support business venture creation and SMEs to grow;
- support the transformation of mature industries and economic diversification;
- develop business venture opportunities in international markets;
- support Aboriginal business development; and
- promote co-investment opportunities between business, government and other organisations.

### **The intended RNIF deliverables are:**

- increased skilled job growth;
- increased venture creation and SME growth;
- increased R&D spending and commercialisation rates;
- increased private investment;
- contribution to increased gross regional product; and
- contribution to increased per capita income.

## 3. Regions Defined

The RNIF will support the nine regions defined in the *Regional Development Commissions Act 1993*, namely:

- Gascoyne
- Great Southern
- Goldfields - Esperance
- Kimberley
- Mid West
- Peel
- Pilbara
- South West
- Wheatbelt

## 4. Funding

The RNIF comprises of two allocations, a **Regional Stream** and a **State Network Stream**, totalling \$4.5 million over four years.

Previous regional funding commitments and allocations by the State Government will be taken into consideration in the assessment of applications. All funding is subject to the assessment criteria described in Section 5 of these guidelines.

### Regional Stream

The Regional Stream allows for funding of up to \$300,000 for each of the State's nine regions.

Each of the nine Regional Development Commissions will establish and coordinate a Regional Innovation Partnership to drive innovation and entrepreneurship in their region. The Regional Innovation Partnership is to be inclusive and consists of an appropriate mix of public, private and academia stakeholders with an interest in innovation and business growth.

A Regional Innovation Roadmap (roadmap) has been developed by each of the Regional Development Commissions with consultation from Regional Innovation Partnership members. Project proposals are required to demonstrate alignment to the roadmap and ability to enhance the region's economy.

A project Delivery Lead is defined as an organisational partner of the Regional Innovation Partnership that is an eligible incorporated body with the management, financial and technical capability to deliver a project. Delivery Leads are to submit their project applications to the relevant Regional Development Commission for endorsement of eligibility and alignment to the region's roadmap.

Regional Development Commissions will then submit endorsed projects to the Department on behalf of the Regional Innovation Partnership and Delivery Lead.

### State Network Stream

The State Network stream has been allocated a minimum of \$1.4 million.

The State Network Stream will fund projects that increase connectivity and build capability across multiple regions. In particular, the stream prioritises initiatives that enable technology development, service innovation and market development.

Organisations that wish to be a project Delivery Lead and submit a proposal to this stream can apply via their Regional Development Commission or register their interest and project with the Department on the [Regional New Industries Website](#).

Delivery Leads will need to demonstrate that they have state-wide or inter-regional buy-in via the Regional Development Commissions. To do this, submissions to this stream will be supported by a working group coordinated by the Department and the

nine Regional Development Commissions to enable state-wide collaboration to maximise project outcomes across the state.

## 5. Assessment Criteria

The following eligibility and merit criteria apply to the assessment of Regional Stream and State Network Stream applications.

### What are the eligibility criteria?

To be eligible for funding, the Delivery Lead should:

1. ensure they are a valid legal entity that can enter into a funding agreement with the Western Australian Government (see Section 6);
2. demonstrate that they have the appropriate management and technical capability to deliver;
3. request funds for a minimum of \$20,000 (excluding GST);
4. aim to achieve a 1:1 ratio of matched funding that may include in-kind services;
5. describe alignment to the governance, evaluation and reporting measures provided; and
6. Put forward a proposal that is consistent with NIF pillars, RNIF objectives and the region's roadmap if submitting to a regional stream.

### What are the merit criteria?

All proposals will be scored against the following weighted merit criteria:

- 1. Impact (50%):** applications must demonstrate how funding will achieve one or more of the following:
  - a. leverage industry strengths and opportunities to support innovation and economic transformation;
  - b. provide an environment to promote and accelerate entrepreneurs and start-ups; and
  - c. support high growth SMEs to scale activities and access new markets;
  - d. have a strong emphasis on, and be inclusive of, Aboriginal business development.
- 2. Collaboration (20%):** applications must demonstrate how funding will be used to:
  - a. build partnerships that expand the existing regional innovation ecosystem to accelerate competitiveness, job creation and business opportunities.
- 3. Value for money (30%):** applications must demonstrate how:
  - a. leveraged external funding and in-kind services will be used to create additional value; and
  - b. funding will be used to build regional capabilities and generate sustainable outcomes.

## 6. Project Delivery Lead

Organisations wishing to nominate as a project Delivery Lead are to register their interest at the [Regional New Industries Website](#) or contact their respective Regional Development Commission.

The following are examples of the types of organisations that would be considered eligible as a project Delivery Lead:

- incubators, co-working spaces, or other innovation service providers;
- Local Government Authorities;
- private and public organisations that work in collaboration with other organisations;
- not-for-profit entities; and
- publicly funded research organisations.

A project Delivery Lead must:

- have an Australian Business Number (ABN);
- demonstrate collaboration with other organisations in the region/s where the project will be delivered;
- be able to provide programs and services to multiple locations;
- demonstrate they have the management, financial and technical capability and professional networks to deliver activities outlined in the regional proposal;
- provide a statement of viability from the Chief Financial Officer (CFO) and two years' of audited financial statements.

### Who is not eligible to apply to be a Project Delivery Lead?

- An individual, partnership or trust (however, an incorporated trustee may apply on behalf of a trust), as defined by the Australian Tax Office.
- A Commonwealth or State Government agency or body (including government trading enterprises).

### Ineligible uses of funding

Funding is only for the delivery of project outcomes as defined against the criteria and may not be used for the following costs:

- capital works and/or physical infrastructure including any buildings;
- tenancy, including rental or lease of floor space; or
- consultation or publication services.

## Matched funding

Funding from the RNIF is required to be matched on a 1:1 ratio against other contributions from project partners, external public and private sources or in-kind services.

A minimum of 50 per cent of the co-contribution must be raised as cash. The rest of the contribution can be raised from in-kind contributions directly related to the project activities. Examples of in-kind contributions include:

- third party staff salaries;
- access to facilities such as office space;
- access to services such as coaching and mentoring; and
- access to resources such as IT equipment and software.


Calculations of in-kind contributions must be consistent with current market rates and applicants must provide details for calculation of the dollar value of any in-kind contribution.

RNIF funding can be used to attract leverage funds. Payment timing will be conditional upon the Delivery Lead securing these funds.

The assessment panel may consider projects that have not been able to achieve the full leverage requirement if they are able to demonstrate exceptional alignment to the eligibility and merit criteria. Delivery Leads are required to raise this with the Department prior to submitting an application to ensure all opportunities have been explored.

Table 1 provides an example of how the project budget should be matched.

**Table 1: Total Project Cost**

Total project cost \$100,000		
RNIF Grant \$50k	Cash contribution 25k	In-kind contribution 25k
		

## 7. Application Process

### REGIONAL STREAM

### STATE NETWORK STREAM

#### Stage 1: Develop and submit application

**1.1** Register your interest to participate in the Regional Innovation Partnership.

**1.2** Develop proposal with the support of the Regional Development Commission.

**1.3** Complete and submit application form to the Regional Development Commission.

**1.1** Register your interest to participate in the Regional Innovation Partnership.

**1.2** Develop proposal with the support of the Regional Development Commission or the Department.

**1.3** Complete and submit application form to the Department.

#### Stage 2: Eligibility and alignment checks

**2.1** Regional Development Commissions will undertake eligibility checks and confirm alignment to the region's roadmap to ensure project qualifies for consideration of funding.

**2.2** Regional Development Commissions will refer regionally endorsed projects to the assessment panel via the Department.

**2.1** The Department will undertake eligibility checks to ensure project qualifies for consideration of funding, before referral to assessment panel.

#### Stage 3: Evaluating merit

**3.1** Assessment panel assess and score eligible projects against merit criteria.

**3.2** Assessment panel may request additional information.

#### Stage 4: Approvals

**4.1** The Department refers recommended projects to Minister for Regional Development and Minister for Innovation for approval.

#### Stage 5: Notification of outcome

**5.1** Notification of unsuccessful and successful outcomes via emailed letter to nominated contact.

**5.2** Successful applicants sign Financial Assistance Agreement with the Department and first invoice paid.

All RNIF Streams

Additional information and templates can be found in the Application Guide found on the [Regional New Industries Website](#).



## 8. Conditions of funding

- Successful applicants will be required to enter into a legally binding financial assistance agreement with the Western Australian State Government.
- The terms and conditions of the financial agreement will not be negotiable at the time a funding offer is made. A template is available in advance.
- The funded project must commence within 90 days after the Western Australian State Government signs the application approval and be completed within the agreed timeframe (maximum four years).
- Only eligible expenditure incurred on or after the project's start date can be claimed by successful applicants.
- Any project expenditure made prior to notification of outcomes for the RNIF, is made at the project partners own risk—there is no guarantee of funding approval at any stage of the application process.
- Funding recipients must be willing to provide information as and when required and be open to attend media/promotion events if requested.
- The successful applicant partners must acknowledge the Western Australian Government's funding, and where applicable relevant Minister for Regional Development and Minister for Innovation, in all relevant published material, media releases and public statements.
- You must advise the Department of changes which are likely to impact on your eligibility for the Fund.
- The Department may consult with other Western Australian State Government agencies, local governments and the Australian Government to confirm information provided in the application.
- Monitoring and evaluation plans and reporting will be required.
- Project funding will be subject to the Delivery Lead demonstrating that they have satisfied achievement of project milestones as outlined in the funding agreement.
- No contractual or other legal relations shall exist between any applicant for funding on the one hand and the State of Western Australia (including any agent, agency, instrumentality or emanation of that State) on the other hand unless and until a formal legally binding financial assistance agreement is entered into by and between them. Neither this document nor anything else shall be creative of or give rise to legal or equitable rights or obligations; such rights or obligations shall only come into being if and when a formal legally binding financial assistance agreement, referred to in the previous sentence, comes into existence.



## 9. Privacy

The Western Australian State Government collects and collates information from the application form to evaluate applications for the RNIF. Only authorised State Government officers and approved grant assessors have access to this information.

Applicants' personal information will not be disclosed to any other third party without your consent, unless required by law or for the purposes of agreement.

Applicants should note that broad details of successful proposals, agreed outcomes, progress and the level of funding awarded may be published by the Western Australian State Government. Some information may be used to promote funded projects.

For audit purposes, the Western Australian State Government is required to retain the applications and other supplied supporting material.

You need to be aware that the Department is subject to the *Freedom of Information Act 1992*, which provides a general right of access to records held by Western Australian State and Local Government agencies.

Information that relates to the receipt of State Government financial support may be tabled in the Western Australian Parliament. This information could include names of recipients, the amounts of financial support, the name of the project/activity and, possibly, a brief description of the project/s funded. This could result in requests for more detail to be released publicly.