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6-2020

## RNIF GROUNDSWELL FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development, Western Australia

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### Recommended Citation

Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development, Western Australia. (2020), *RNIF GROUNDSWELL FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS*. Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development, Perth. Book.

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## **RNIF GROUNDSWELL FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

### **1. What is the RNIF?**

The Regional New Industries Fund (RNIF) is a \$4.5M fund under the State Government's overarching New Industries Fund. The RNIF aims to catalyse Western Australia's competitiveness by building entrepreneurial, innovation and commercialisation capabilities in the State's nine regions.

The RNIF objectives are to:

- support new and Small to Medium Enterprises (SME) businesses to grow;
- support 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.

### **2. What is the GroundSwell program?**

The GroundSwell program is a sub-program under the RNIF, with grants of up to \$200,000 available for matched funding per successful application.

Expressions of Interest (EOI) are sought from organisations to run entrepreneurial and technology programs in one or more of the State's nine regions. The programs delivered will need to meet the following themes:

1. Entrepreneurship programs that deliver regional education, training, mentoring, and resources to students and business founders to test business ideas, launch start-ups and grow businesses.
2. Technology programs that support regional SMEs to adopt technologies to streamline internal processes, cut costs and enhance their profitability and competitiveness.

### **3. Why is GroundSwell being run as an EOI?**

An EOI is an invitation to the marketplace, to describe their proven ability to meet specific requirements, in this case providing services in regional Western Australia.

The GroundSwell Program is being run via an EOI process to seek information from proponents on their capability to deliver a regionally based program, alignment to regional needs and ability to achieve the desired objectives.

### **4. Am I eligible to apply?**

Eligible organisations must the eligibility criteria defined in the GroundSwell Guidelines and:

- 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 the management, financial and technical capability and professional networks to deliver activities outlined in the regional proposal; and
- provide a statement of viability from the Chief Financial Officer (CFO) and two years' of audited financial statements.

Government agencies or bodies (including government-trading enterprises), individuals, partnerships or trusts as defined by the Australian Tax Office, are not eligible to apply.

Organisations based in the metropolitan area are eligible to apply, provided the program seeking funding is delivered in regional WA for the benefit of regionally based participants.

## **5. How do I know if my program is eligible?**

Eligible programs will coordinate a number of related activities and projects over a specified timeframe, to deliver benefits to program participants and regional WA. To be eligible for funding, the program must:

- demonstrate collaboration with other organisations in the region/s where the project will be delivered
- aim to achieve a 1:1 ratio of matched funding that may include in-kind services
- deliver on at least one of the RNIF objectives (see FAQ 1) and at least one of the GroundSwell themes (See FAQ 2).
- Provide a solution to a proven/identified market need within the regional innovation ecosystem;
- Build connectivity between regions, across the state and/or to international markets; and
- Build and utilises local capability to grow the regional innovation ecosystem.

The application should also detail the program's:

- plan of action to achieve the objectives;
- details on the activities;
- start, end and milestone dates;
- intended participants and stakeholders; and
- what funding (including grant requested and match funding) will be used.

## **6. How do I calculate 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 matched funding 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:

- salaries of staff brought in to specifically undertake the project;
- 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. Table 1 provides an example of how the project budget should be matched.

The level of cash contribution will be weighted highly in the assessment process. Projects that have not been able to achieve the full leverage requirement may be considered if they are able to demonstrate exceptional alignment to the assessment criteria.

**Table 1: Total Project Cost**

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

## 7. Where can the program be run?

Organisations based in the metropolitan area are eligible to apply, provided the program seeking funding is delivered in regional WA for the benefit of regionally based participants. The State's regions defined in the *Regional Development Commissions Act 1993*, namely:

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

Applicants are encouraged to contact the relevant Regional Development Commissions or the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development (DPIRD) for local information. Contact details are available [here](#).

## 8. How do I apply?

In order to be considered eligible, and to be included in the evaluation process, an application must be received via the Smarty Grants RNIF GroundSwell online platform by the due date and time, 5pm AWST Monday, 10 August 2020. Applications will not be accepted after this time and will not be accepted outside of the [Smarty Grants GroundSwell online platform](#).

## **9. How will my application be assessed?**

Applications that meet DPIRD's due diligence requirements and the assessment criteria will be shortlisted by an internal assessment panel and provided to the Minister for Regional Development and the Minister for Innovation for final decision on funding. The Ministers' reserve the right to negotiate application scope, funding requested and outcomes as part of the EOI process

## **10.If successful, what additional responsibilities are required by my organisation?**

Before the receiving funding, successful organisations will be required to sign a Financial Assistance Agreement detailing project conditions, milestones, outcomes, leveraged funding and drawdowns. Recipients will be required to undertake regular project reporting and at the end of the project, complete a project acquittal with audit statement.

## **11.When must my program commencement by?**

The program must commence within 90 days from when the Western Australian State Government signs the application approval. It is anticipated that all financial agreements will be signed by the end of November 2020.

## **12. Can I get feedback on my draft application?**

Yes, the DPIRD can provide early stage feedback. However, it does not guarantee project success. For feedback please contact the Department at email: [RNIF@dpiird.wa.gov.au](mailto:RNIF@dpiird.wa.gov.au) or telephone (08) 6552 1860.