

Building Better Regions Fund Merit Criteria Workshop

Berri 23 January 2017

BBRF Program Outcomes

The Program has been designed to achieve the following outcomes in regional and remote communities

- create jobs
- have a positive impact on economic activity, including Indigenous economic participation through employment and supplier-use outcomes
- enhance community facilities
- enhance leadership capacity
- encourage community cohesion and sense of identity.

Workshop Agenda

- Understanding the Objectives, Assessment and Decision making factors to consider and prepare a winning application.
- Merit Criteria – How to demonstrate and provide evidence to support your proposal. Mandatory Requirements. Followed by opportunity for questions.
- Other information and evidence to prepare.

Project Assessment Process

1. Eligibility Assessment (competitive fund & non-compliance)
2. Merit Assessment for Recommendation
 - Application must score highly against each merit criterion
 - Assessed relative to size, complexity and grant amount.
 - Larger projects require greater detail and evidence
 - Remoteness classification loading applied to assessment score
 - Inner Regional; Outer Regional; Remote
3. Ministerial Panel provided with recommendations and may consider other factors.

Ministerial Panel Considerations

- The spread of projects and funding across regions
- The regional impact of each project, including indigenous employment and supplier-use outcomes
- Other similar existing or planned projects in the region to ensure that there is genuine demand and/or no duplication of facilities or services (regional leadership)
- Other projects or planned projects in the region, and the extent to which the proposed project supports or builds on those projects and the services that they offer
- The level of funding allocated to an applicant in previous programs
- Reputational risk to the Australian Government
- The Australian Government's priorities.

SMART Project Objectives & Outcomes

- What is it the Project going to achieve? Describe:
 - What is going to be done
 - What will this achieve
 - How this benefits your community
- Be SMART – Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, Timely
- Description to someone who has no understanding of the project
- Meets the “supermarket” or “elevator” test

Grant success – Making the cut

Competing in a highly competitive pool - Every point counts

1. Objective assessment against merit criteria by Department staff

- Process of multiple independent assessors and assessment cross reference
- They may need to justify assessment – based on strength of the evidence you provide.
- They can't infer your information.

Ask yourself – How does this demonstrate achievement the program outcomes and priorities of the Australian Government?

2. Panel decision against other worthy recommended projects

- Highlight & address factors considered by the Ministerial Panel.
- Address issues of duplication or other negative impacts, real or perceived, and draw attention to positives.
- All projects assessed worthy of funding.
- Every additional positive can raise a project's ranking,
- Any doubt can make a project less attractive against other applications.

Merit criterion 1 – Economic benefit (15 Points)

The economic benefit your project will deliver to the region during and beyond the construction / project phase

Economic benefits for a region may cover increases in economic activity, improvements in productivity, wider access to markets or fairer and more equitable economic outcomes. Examples of how your project could demonstrate these economic benefits include

- increasing the number or value of jobs, new businesses or the production of goods and services in the region (this includes direct and indirect opportunities created through the project)
- providing opportunities for growth in existing sectors, e.g. tourism, agriculture, manufacturing
- the use of local suppliers and goods
- increasing efficiency of the transport system or service delivery
- increasing Indigenous economic participation – including Indigenous employment and supplier-use outcomes
- the degree to which the project delivers benefits beyond the project / construction phase.

Merit criterion 1 – Economic benefit (15 Points)

Determining economic benefit

1. What are the reasons / objectives for the project?
 - Helps understand where the project will impact on economic resources (industry, government, households, products, services etc.) and scale of impact
2. Where will the project have a direct impact?
 - Jobs (construction / operational); Spending on local suppliers; ongoing revenues / savings in dollars and / or time etc
3. Who are the stakeholders impacted by the project? What benefit does the project deliver to these stakeholders? How might this be quantified?
4. Indigenous Economic Participation – if not specifically a primary objective, consider your community and the likelihood of this benefit. Is there anything that could be done to facilitate this?
5. Quantify every detail you know – jobs (construction, operational), dollars spent / earned – where and by whom, reductions in travel / production time, increases / decreases in spending etc.

Must be supported by evidence

Merit criterion 1 – Economic benefit (15 Points)

Potential Evidence:

- Independent expert analysis / report
- Independent validation or conformation of claims (i.e supplier arrangements, undertaking to participate / purchase, that some other action / event / thing would in fact occur)
- Internal professional analysis
- Secondary data such as ABS
- Published research
- Modelling tools
 - Cost / Benefit analysis (for the project and options considered)
 - Economic Impact Modelling
 - Event Impact Assessment
- Any modelling or unpublished report must be included as an attachment. Published sources referenced.

Merit criterion 2 – Social benefit (10 Points)

The social benefit your project will deliver to the region during and beyond the construction / project phase

Social benefits for a region may cover increases in regional amenity, improving community connections and inclusion and providing opportunities for learning and knowledge creation. Examples of how your project could demonstrate these social benefits include

- making a region a more attractive place to live
- improving community connections and social inclusion
- supporting or protecting local heritage and culture
- strengthening community institutions, governance and leadership capacity
- increasing community volunteering
- the degree to which the project delivers benefits beyond the construction phase
- addresses disadvantage within the community.

Merit criterion 2 – Social benefit (10 Points)

Potential Evidence:

- Letters of support – highlighting various elements of your proposal, not just copy/paste
- Community consultation
- Socio-economic data

ABS <http://www.abs.gov.au/>

- Basic Community Profiles via clickable map on homepage
- Examples of other ABS products & statistical regions
 - Place of Enumeration Profile
 - Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples (Indigenous) Profile
 - Time Series Profile
 - Expanded Community Profile
 - Working Population Profile

Merit criterion 2 – Social benefit (10 Points)

Evidence cont.

Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas (SEIFA)

<http://www.abs.gov.au/websitedbs/censushome.nsf/home/seifa?opendocument&navpos=260>

- The Index of Relative Socio-Economic Disadvantage (IRSD)
- The Index of Relative Socio-Economic Advantage and Disadvantage (IRSAD)
- The Index of Education and Occupation (IEO)
- The Index of Economic Resources (IER).

Some common uses of SEIFA include:

- determining areas that require funding and services
- identifying new business opportunities
- research into the relationship between socio-economic disadvantage and various health and educational outcomes.

Merit Criterion 3 – Value for Money (5 Points)

The value for money offered by your project

You may demonstrate the value for money through identifying:

- the extent to which the project leverages additional funding (this includes cash contributions above the co-funding requirement and in-kind contributions)
- the extent to which the project leverages additional partnerships
- the likelihood of the project going ahead without the grant funding. Explain how the grant will impact the project in terms of size, timing and reach.

Merit Criterion 3 – Value for Money (5 Points)

Demonstrating the value for money offered by your project

- What partners are involved in your project?
- Are these of a financial or non-financial nature?
- Do you have letters of support from these partners for the project which provide confirmation of the partner's commitment and/or contribution?
- What other partners could involve to improve the outcomes of your project?

Merit Criterion 4 – Project Delivery (5 points)

Your capacity, capability and resources to carry out the project

You may demonstrate this through identifying:

- your readiness to commence the project with appropriate approvals planned for or in place
- your track record with similar projects including managing similar grant funding
- your access to people with the right skills and experience
- your access to infrastructure, capital equipment, technology, intellectual property
- how you will operate and maintain the infrastructure and benefits of the project (see section 9.4 of the Program Guidelines).
- a detailed Project Management Plan

Merit Criterion 4 – Project Delivery (5 points)

Demonstrating your capacity, capability and resources to carry out the project

- Can you demonstrate three years of financial viability?
- Have you delivered a similar project before?
- What approvals do you require? Do you have these?
- Will current project documentation demonstrate you can commence the project within the required timeframe?
- Will the project be completed within the required timeframe?
- Have you projected your P&L and balance sheet post project?
- What testing have you undertaken on your financial projections?
- What is the capability of your board/management team to achieve the project?

Merit Criterion 4 – Project Delivery (5 points)

A detailed Project Management Plan which addresses project:

- scope
- implementation methodology and how you will manage project dependencies
- timeframes
- budget/costing
- risk.

A project management plan shows all the steps in implementing the project from commencement to completion. Its complexity is relative to the scope and scale of the project.

It defines what, when, duration, resources, costs for each stage of the project. Principles and generic guidelines on project management are provided in ISO 21500:2012

Business Case

An effective business case is one that matches the purpose and parameters of the funding program that it seeks to attract. In short, an effective business case justifies:

- why a project should be undertaken,
- why a private or public partner should invest in it, and
- why the project represents a worthy expenditure of public funds.

BBRF asks for a Business Case clearly explaining how and why the project will achieve its stated objectives, providing assurance that the required thinking and robust planning has occurred.

Generic template

The format can be adapted to almost any project, but be sure to present the business case in a manner that will create a favourable impression on the program assessors & Ministerial Panel.

Tailored to your project – not cut and paste.

Supporting Documentation

Documents Required	Infrastructure Projects for grant requests		Community Investments for grant requests		
	\$20,000 to \$1 million	Over \$1 million	\$5,000 to \$20,000	\$20,000 to \$100,000	Over \$100,000
Letters evidencing the cash or in-kind contribution from each contributing organisation	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory
Project Management Plan which addresses <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ scope ▪ implementation methodology ▪ timeframes ▪ budget/costing ▪ approvals 	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory
Asset Maintenance/ management plan	Mandatory	Mandatory	NA	NA	NA
Business Case	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory
Risk Management Plan	Optional	Mandatory	Optional	Optional	Mandatory
Cost Benefit Analysis	Optional	Mandatory	Optional	Optional	Optional
Procurement Plan	Optional	Mandatory	NA	NA	NA

For further help:

- RDA Murraylands & Riverland website – range of tools and templates available at the end of month.
- Individual discussion with our Regional Development Manager team – helpful in linking to relevant reports/information that you may not be aware of.
- Highlighting the areas of weakness currently in your proposal and working on the case for them first.
- Don't wait till the last minute.