# REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT GRANTS PROGRAM ROUND 5 USER GUIDELINES

## INTRODUCTION

Thanks for your interest in applying for the Regional Economic Development (RED) Grants program – Round 5.

You are about to embark on an exciting journey to support regional development in the Mid West.

The RED Grants program is a State Government initiative that invests in projects that contribute to economic growth and development in regional Western Australia.

Successful applications may receive financial support of up to $250,000 aimed to help businesses grow and to make a significant contribution towards job creation, improve career opportunities and to help develop and broaden the economic base of the Mid West region.

In this guide, you will find useful information about eligibility, assessment criteria and how to develop a quality submission which increases the chances of a successful application.

We wish you all the best and we look forward to receiving your application and to the possibility of working together for the overall development of the Mid West.

# OBJECTIVE

The overall objective of the RED Grants program is to promote regional economic development through supporting local and regional businesses to:

- Create sustainable jobs
- expand or diversify local and regional industry
- develop skills or capabilities
- attract new investment into the Mid West region, and
- increase productivity of business

The Mid West Development Commission (MWDC), based on its legal mandate (Development Commissions Act 1993), strongly encourages applications that are aligned with the region's priorities including investments aimed to maximise job creation, improve career opportunities and to develop and broaden the economic base of the region.

For this Round, the eligibility criteria focus on attracting and promoting investments that will directly contribute to:

- **Economic participation for Aboriginal people** – supporting Aboriginal people in their endeavours to participate in the Mid West economy

- **Critical economic infrastructure** – ensure that the Mid West region has the economic infrastructure required to facilitate industry growth and diversification

- **Industry growth and diversification** – development of new and existing industries in the Mid West region

- **Enhance liveability** – focus on job creation, workforce development and housing construction.

# DEVELOPING YOUR APPLICATION

Applicants may apply for funding from the RED Grants program by completing an electronic application form, providing project details and by demonstrating its eligibility and how the expected project outcomes meet the assessment criteria.

It is always important to bear in mind that insufficient or weak responses to the assessment criteria may disqualify the application.

As competition for available funding is always strong, applicants need to ensure that, beyond the eligibility criteria and the project's planning and analysis, that they can deliver the project within a timeframe between 12 to 24 months.

To increase the chances of a successful application, applicants, at their own cost, should ensure that relevant studies, including economic impact and feasibility analysis, designs, costing, etc. are conducted and included in their application.

It is always important to remember that sufficient time should be allocated to these processes, as the effort required to prepare them is often underestimated.

# ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

## APPLICANT ELIGIBILITY

### <u>Who is</u> eligible?

To be eligible for RED Grants funding the applicant **<u>must</u>**:

- be a legal entity capable of entering into a legally binding and enforceable financial assistance agreement (**Grant Agreement**) with the Western Australian State Government.
- have an Australian Business Number (ABN).
- have an account with an authorised deposit-taking institution (an Australian financial institution or bank) registered with the Australian Prudential Regulation Authority.

For instance, an **<u>eligible</u>** applicant can be a/an:

- Local government.
- Not-for-profit organisation that is a legal entity.
- Australian registered business.
- Industry association, cooperative or business group
  - NB: Business groups can apply but one lead business must meet the criteria and accept responsibility for contractual obligations on behalf of the business group.
  - The business group should be capable of entering into sub agreements with the lead business that reflect the head agreement and terms.
- Incorporated body, or have equivalent status (i.e., represented by an incorporated auspicing body).

### <u>Who is not</u> eligible?

As per the RED Grants program eligibility criteria, the following **may not apply** for funding from the Program:

- State or Federal Government Agencies
- Government Trading Enterprises (GTE)
- Schools
- Hospitals
- Trustees that are not empowered through the Trust Deed to enter into an agreement with the State Government to receive funding

**IMPORTANT:** Applicants must ensure they meet the eligibility criteria as failing to do so will result in their application be ineligible.

# PROJECT COSTS ELIGIBILITY

### What is not Eligible?

Goods and Services that are **not eligible** for funding include:

Ongoing costs incurred after the project is completed (e.g. operating and maintenance costs).

- This could include ongoing salary costs, depreciation, software renewals, subscription services beyond establishment phase etc.

Retrospective payments or expenditure incurred prior to execution of a RED Grants agreement.

- Please ensure you consider in your planning of the project timelines.
- Expenditure refers to the grant and your matching cash contribution

GST payments.

- Ensure your budget does not include GST if you are GST Registered.
- If you are not GST registered please discuss with the Commission.

Operational overheads (such as rent, insurance, telephone etc.)

- These costs should not be included in the cash budget, even as a matching cash contribution.

Existing staff salaries

- Staff working on the project as part of their core hours are not eligible for funding or as matching cash contribution. If can demonstrate through a contract variation / payroll that the hours will be increased for the project or new person appointed to deliver a key aspect of the project, this is likely to be eligible. Discuss your individual circumstance with the Commission.

# ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

For Round 5, beside the overall Program Objective, the Mid West Development Commission (MWDC) is strongly encouraging applications that can demonstrate capacity to deliver and contribute directly to:

- **Economic participation for Aboriginal people** – supporting Aboriginal people in their endeavours to participate in the Mid West economy.

- **Critical economic infrastructure** – ensure that the Mid West region has the economic infrastructure required to facilitate industry growth and diversification.

- **Industry growth and diversification** – development of new and existing industries in the Mid West region.

- **Enhance liveability** – focus on job creation, workforce development and housing construction.

# ADDRESSING THE CRITERIA

**Applicants are required to complete all questions in the application form and demonstrate**:

a)  How the project meets the assessment criteria and at least one of the following economic growth and development objectives:
   - sustainable jobs.
   - expanding or diversifying industry.
   - developing skills or capabilities.
   - attracting new investment in the region.
   - Increasing productivity.

*For clarity on addressing these objectives, please refer to Sections 4 and 5 of the application form.*

b)  A minimum 50% **cash contribution** to the project (not-for-profit and Aboriginal Owned Organisations may be considered on a case-by-case basis). Proponent cash contributions are expected to exceed the minimum requirement.  This will be considered in the application assessment process. Other State Government funding will not be considered as part of the 50% co-contribution towards the project.
c)  Local partnerships and collaboration including co-investment/supported by key regional stakeholders.
d)  Delivery of local content outcomes.
e)  Alignment with region's themes/priorities (refer to Section 5 of the application form).
f)  A wider economic development benefit outside of the applicant entity.

g) The capacity to undertake and complete the project (past grant experience, project management and governance structure, experience of key personnel, project risk identification and mitigation);

h) The capacity to meet ongoing operating and maintenance costs following the conclusion of the grant funding (if applicable).

i) Financial capacity and sustainability and provide two years of financial statements verified by a member of the Certified Practising Accountants (CPA), Chartered Accountants Australia and New Zealand (CA), Institute of Public Accountants (IPA) or a registered auditor.

## Local content

Applicants must also address what the project means for the local community/region in relation to job creation and economic growth and development.

Preference will be given to projects that demonstrate:

- Building the capability of local suppliers, and the opportunity for regional businesses to supply items/services for the project.
- Increased regional employment and regional business participation through subcontractors, suppliers, apprenticeships and traineeships.
- Support for emerging or new industries in the region, promotion, and awareness of local industry/businesses; and
- Benefit to the regional economy through any other identifiable means.

**IMPORTANT:** Ensure that you provide us with a complete understanding of your project – remembering that MWDC is unlikely to have the detailed understanding of your project that you have. Applications should therefore be written on the basis that the reader/assessor knows very little about the background and merits of your project.

# ASSESSMENT PROCESS

The assessment process involves the following:

- **Step 1** – Applicant submits application on-line via the SmartyGrants portal.

- **Step 2** – MWDC Grants team assess each application against the criteria outlined in Sections 4 and 5 of the application form to determine the eligibility.

- **Step 3** – If eligible, application is submitted to the MWDC Board for review and to make recommendation, based on regional priorities, to the Minister for Regional Development.

- **Step 4** – Minister makes final decision, and all Applicants are advised of the outcome.

- **Step 5** – Successful applicants receive the Grant Agreements to be legally executed.

- **Step 6** – Funds are disbursed based on the evidence provided by the grant recipient of the achieved milestones.

- **Step 7** – Upon project completion, grant recipient must submit final report to acquit the grant.

**IMPORTANT:** All applications are assessed on a competitive and merit-based process. Applicants should note that the assessment and decision-making process could take up to six months and should be considered during project planning. MWDC reserves the right to request more information to clarify any aspect of the application.

# RED GRANT PROCESS

**Step 1**

Application submitted online via SmartyGrants

**Step 2**

Grant team assess application against the criteria to determine the eligibility

**Step 3**

Application reviewed by the MWDC Board and recommended to the Minister

**Step 4**

Minister makes final decision and applicants are advised of the outcome

**Step 5**

Grant Agreement is issued and legally executed

**Step 6**

Funds are disbursed as per agreed milestones

**Step 7**

Grant Recipient submits final report to acquit the grant

# RED Grants Discovery Workshops

## Attracting and promoting development investment in the Mid West

The RED Grants Discovery Workshops are aimed to provide more information about the objectives of the Program but, most importantly, to identify and encourage applications for locally driven projects that promote local content and contribute to local economic growth and development in regional communities throughout the Mid West.

MWDC may conduct sub-regional workshops and will work in close partnership with industry and LGA representatives to identify and attract projects that are aligned with regional and local priorities.

Both industry and LGAs may promote the RED Grants opportunity by sharing information about eligibility criteria and process timeline with their members and encourage potential applicants to attend in the workshops.

Participants in the workshops will also have an opportunity to clarify any question they may have regarding the Eligibility and Assessment Criteria (i.e. who can apply, what is the cash contribution, promoting local content and partnership) and about project implementation timeline and acquittal.

The dates and locations of the RED Grants Discovery Workshops will be announced by MWDC on its website and shared with industry and LGA representatives. Admission to the workshops is free of charge.

# 9 TIPS FOR WRITING A QUALITY APPLICATION

## FOR PREPARING YOUR APPLICATION, CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING:

1. **How does your project meet at least one of the economic growth and development objectives (i.e., sustainable jobs; expanding or diversifying industry; developing skills or capabilities; attracting new investment in the region; and/or Increasing productivity)?**

- Be specific in your responses and make it clear which economic growth and development objective(s) your project will contribute to.
- Will your project result or support economic participation for Aboriginal people?
- How many direct or indirect jobs will (potentially) be created by your project. Are these full time, part time, permanent, casual and what FTE they correlate to? How will your project contribute to job creation locally and/or regionally?
- What is the estimated economic direct and indirect impact of your project? You may consider utilising an economist or asking for support from the Development Commission to help identify and estimate your project's economic impact.
- Consider what the impact of the project will be on productivity and specify the percentage improvement expected if relevant. Graphics and statistics help to understand the project's potential.
- If diversifying the industry, specify exactly which industry and what the current economic value of that industry is to the region and how this project will add to the Gross Regional Product.
- If new skills/ capabilities are being developed, describe how will these address any regional gaps and create efficiencies or increased production.
- Mention any potential investment which will be attracted into the region because of your project. You may mention a potential partner and the total amount of the investment.
- Lastly, if your application is successful, the final acquittal report must report against your proposed outcomes and the evidence that they have been achieved.

**Can you make a minimum of 50% matching cash contribution to the project?**
*Not-for-profit and Aboriginal Owned Organisations may be considered on a case-by-case basis.*
*\*Please, note that other State Government funding will not be considered as part of the 50% co-contribution towards the project.*

All other things being equal, preference will be given to projects that demonstrate that a grant will lever cash from other sources.

- How confident are you of your costings? Provide preferred quotes to substantiate your budget.
- Ensure your budget balances and does not include ineligible items.
- Cash refers to physical payments to be made by the applicant body to third parties and does not include in-kind.
- Provide written evidence of contributions from other organisations / parties that are secured or being sought. If funds have been requested but not yet approved please provide details regarding when a decision is expected.
- There is always more funding applied for than available, therefore, it is critical that your project can demonstrate value for money. Value for money is not just about what will be produced but also about attracting additional investment, leveraging partnerships that extend beyond the project and other benefits that would not occur without the project.

2. **Will your project create local or regional partnerships and collaboration, including seek for co-investment?**

- Are there any local or regional partnership required for your project? If yes, are these of a financial or non-financial nature?
- Do you have letters of support to the project from these partners, which provide confirmation of the partner's commitment and/or contribution? These documents must be:
    - o current to this funding round;
    - o relevant to the specific project for which funding is sought; and
    - o from organisations or individuals that are genuine partners, stakeholders and/or supporters of this project.
- What other partners could be involved to improve the outcomes of your project?

### 3. How will your project contribute to deliver local content outcomes?

What does the project mean for the local community and/or region in relation to job creation and economic activity?

Explain how your project will:

- Build the capability of local suppliers and create an opportunity for regional businesses to supply items/services for the project.
- Increase regional employment and regional business participation through subcontractors, suppliers, apprenticeships, and traineeships.
- Support, promote and raise awareness of emerging or new industries in the region.
- Benefit to the regional economy through any other identifiable means.

### 4. Is your project aligned with the MWDC regional priorities?

How does this project contribute towards any of the MWDC regional priorities detailed below?

- **Economic participation for Aboriginal people** – supporting Aboriginal people in their endeavours to participate in the Mid West economy.
- **Critical economic infrastructure** – ensure that the Mid West region has the economic infrastructure required to facilitate industry growth and diversification.
- **Industry growth and diversification** – development of new and existing industries in the Mid West region.
- **Enhance liveability** – focus on job creation, workforce development and housing construction.

### 5. How will your project benfit the wider economic development in the Mid West?

- Is your project addressing a gap that will enable a wider industry development opportunity?
- How will others in the industry have access to the benefits. Outline how the Intellectual Property may be shared or how an innovation may be applied to a cluster of businesses. Will there be any conditions around access to the information?
- Will this project enable other ancillary business opportunities to be developed?
- Is this a new industry or product line that will create local consumption flow on effects?
- Will new regional jobs be developed contributing to the overall economy?

**7. Do you have evidence of your capacity to undertake and complete the project (past grant experience, project management and governance structure, experience of key personnel, project risk identification and mitigation)?**

You may have a very attractive project and an excellent business case, but you must demonstrate the capacity to effectively deliver it, otherwise your application may not be successful.

Applicants must demonstrate that they are ready and able to deliver the project within a timeframe no longer than 24 months.

This means that planning and activities are well aligned to minimize the risk profile of the project.

Planning, depth and quality of project documentation is a clear indication of the effort and diligence that has gone into the project and can remove much of the project uncertainty from the assessment process and thereby improve project viability.

To demonstrate the ability to deliver the project, applicants should describe the following:

- Access to people with the right skills and experience.
- Significant project planning has already occurred, and the project can commence.
- A detailed and realistic project management plan is in place.
- All appropriate planning, construction, zoning, land ownership, environmental and/or native title approvals are in place or will be in place. Provide evidence of this in your application.
- Past projects, of a similar scope and scale, that were successfully delivered.
- All funding sources, including provisions for contingencies, etc.
- Financial resources and experience to maintain and operate the project on completion.
- A full risk assessment and mitigation plans are in place.
- Previous grant funds received and respective acquittal or on-going activities or plans for completion. Remember that your track record in managing grants may influence the outcome of your application.
- Detail exactly who will have responsibility in your organisation for managing the project and ensuring deliverables are met.
- Detail how the finances will be managed (i.e., all project related funds administered out of a dedicated bank account).
- If a business partnership detail how decisions will be made within the governance structure.

8. **How do you expect the project to meet ongoing operating and maintenance costs following the conclusion of the grant funding (if applicable)?**

- Legacy is highly valued (i.e., long-lasting and tangible outcomes, sustainable over the longer term).
- Ability to demonstrate how your organisation will maintain and sustain ongoing costs related to your project is important.
- Consider attaching a forecast operating / maintenance budget to demonstrate ongoing viability if applicable.

9. **Can you demonstrate financial capacity and sustainability of your business? Make sure to include in your application two years of audited financial statements.**

- Please ensure you attach the audited statements for the business / organisation and partners applying for the funding otherwise your application may be disqualified.
- If you do not have audited statements, you will be required to provide recent bank account statements (i.e., last 6 months).
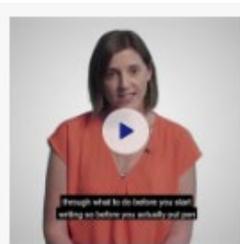  *NB: Audited financial statements are not required for Local Government Authorities*

# ONLINE TRAINING VIDEOS

**If you need further assistance, refer to the online training videos available at:**

https://www.peel.wa.gov.au/regional-economic-development-red-grants-scheme/red-grant-writing-video/
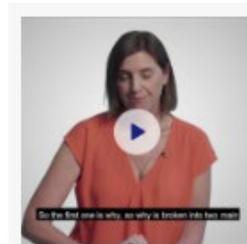
Video 1 – Introduction and about RED Grants

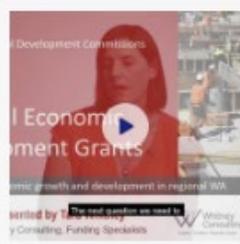Video 2 – Before you start your application

Video 3 – Grant writing overview

Video 4 – Key project question: Why?

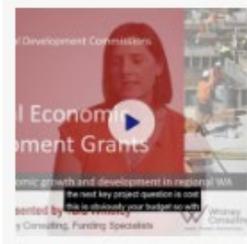Video 5 – Key project question: What?

Video 6 – Key project question: How?

Video 7 – Key project question: When?

Video 8 – Key project question: Viability

Video 9 – Key project question: Cost

Video 10 – Quantifying expected outcomes

Video 11 – Budget and market viability

Video 12 – Application summary

# FOR MORE INFORMATION

The project officers at Mid West Development Commission are happy to assist you with any queries relating to the grants. For the best chance of success, we encourage potential applicants to contact us early so that we can help you navigate the application process. You may contact:

**Jose Silva | Acting Grants Manager**
E [jose.silva@mwdc.wa.gov.au](mailto:jose.silva@mwdc.wa.gov.au)
P 9956 8578

**Kylie Paine | Grants Officer**
E [kylie.paine@mwdc.wa.gov.au](mailto:kylie.paine@mwdc.wa.gov.au)
P 9956 8593

**Tony Emmott | Local Content Adviser**
E [tony.emmott@mwdc.wa.gov.au](mailto:tony.emmott@mwdc.wa.gov.au)
P 9956 8589

Please note for feedback on draft applications you must provide the information to the Commission at least three weeks prior to the advertised closing date.

Below is a list of potential local service providers to assist you in developing projects concepts, business cases and support you through the grant writing process.
Disclaimer: The list of potential local service providers has been produced for convenience only. DPIRD and MWDC make no guarantee or accept any liability for services produced. Applicants should choose providers solely based on their own investigation. The list is not exhaustive.

| Name | Organisation | Email | Phone number | Position / expertise |
|------|-------------|-------|-------------|---------------------|
| Mike Purslow | RSM Business Local | businesslocal@rsm.com.au | 1800 249 562 | Business Advisor |
| Priscilla Clayton | Priscilla Clayton Consulting | priscilla@claytonconsultingwa.com.au | 0437 135 155 | Grant writing/business consulting |
| Tara Whitney | Whitney Consulting | tara@whitneyconsulting.com.au | 0422 228 162 | Grant writing/business consulting |

For more information visit the [Mid West Development Commission website](#).