COM 10.2012

RDA – Regional Development Australia Fund

File: *13.3.25*
Responsible Officer: *Andrew Jackson – Director of Community and Cultural Services*
Report prepared by: *Tracey Wilson – Media / Grants Officer*

1 PURPOSE OF REPORT

The purpose of this report is to obtain guidance from Council regarding proposed projects for the Regional Development Australia (RDA) – Regional Development Australia Fund (RDAF), Rounds 3 – Supporting Small Towns and Round 4 – Supporting Regional Infrastructure Projects.

2 INTRODUCTION/BACKGROUND

Round Three Overview

The Regional Development Australia Fund (RDAF) is a national infrastructure program which is supporting Australia's regions and enhancing their wellbeing and economic development. The program is administered by the Department of Regional Australia, Local Government, Arts and Sport (the department). The program builds on the strengths and addresses the priorities of Australia's diverse regions.

Round Three, which opened on Friday, 26 October 2012, supports small towns and projects. Fifty million dollars has been allocated, with grants of between $50,000 and $500,000 available to eligible applicants.

Strong preference will be given to projects that have partnership contributions. Preference will also be given to projects where these partner contributions include cash. In-kind contributions will be accepted as partner contributions.

Eligible applicants must submit an Expression of Interest (EOI) for their project to the department by 5.00 pm local time on **Thursday, 6 December 2012**. Once received, the department will forward all EOIs to the relevant RDA committee. Following review of EOIs, each of the 55 RDA committees will select the five highest priority and viable projects in their region to proceed to full application.

Full applications for the selected projects must be submitted by 5.00 pm local time on Wednesday, 27 March 2013. The department will assess applications to ensure compliance with the eligibility criteria, and to determine value-for-money and the risk associated with the project. The RDAF Advisory Panel will consider eligible applications and make recommendations to the Minister for Regional Australia, Regional Development and Local Government, and Minister for the Arts, the Hon Simon Crean MP, on the most meritorious projects. The Minister will make decisions on projects to be funded, taking into account advice from the RDAF Advisory Panel.

Round Four Overview

The Regional Development Australia Fund (RDAF) is a national infrastructure program which is supporting Australia's regions and enhancing their wellbeing and economic development. The program is administered by the Department of Regional Australia, Local Government, Arts and Sport (the Department). The program builds on the strengths and addresses the priorities of Australia's diverse regions.

Round Four opened on Friday, 26 October 2012. $175 million has been allocated, with grants of between $500,000 and $15 million available to eligible applicants.

Strong preference will be given to projects that have partnership contributions. Preference will also be given to projects where these partner contributions include cash. In-kind contributions will be accepted as partner contributions.

Eligible applicants must submit an Expression of Interest (EOI) for their project to the Department by 5.00pm local time on **Thursday, 6 December 2012**. Once received, the Department will forward all EOIs to the relevant RDA committees. Following review of EOIs, each of the 55 RDA committees will select up to the three of the highest priority and viable projects in their regions to proceed to full application.

Full applications for the selected projects must be submitted by 5.00pm local time on Thursday, 11 April 2013. The Department will assess applications to ensure compliance with the eligibility criteria, and determine value-for-money and the risk associated with the project. The RDAF Advisory Panel will consider eligible applications and make recommendations to the Minister for Regional Australia, Regional Development and Local Government, and Minister for the Arts, the Hon Simon Crean MP, on the most meritorious projects. The Minister will make decisions on the projects to be funded, taking account of the advice from the Advisory Panel.

The following ventures have been presented as possible RDAF projects.

Location	Project
Monto	Cania Shed
Mt Perry	Mingo Crossing Caravan Park Sewerage Treatment Plant (STP)
Biggenden	Paradise Dam Sewerage Treatment Plant (STP)
Eidsvold	RMWABLC Extensions
Monto	Monto Streetscaping Project
Mundubbera	Archer Park Lighting

Additional Documentation available on InfoXpert:

Monto – Cania Shed
- Revised Quotation – Doc ID 290268

Monto- Streetscaping information can be found at Workspace/Community & Cultural/Administration/Funding/RDA:
- RDAF101455[1].pdf
- NBRC signed letter 120511.pdf
- PARTNERSHIP Letter of support Monto Future & Growth Alliance.doc
- PARTNERSHIP MTAG Letter of support Streetscape project.doc
- Letters of Support.pdf
- RDA Letter of Support.pdf
- 5 year cash flow projection.xlsx
- Timeline.xlsx
- RDAF - AttachmentA Projects (NBRC).xls
- RDAF - AttachmentB Expenditure (NBRC).xls
- RDAF - AttachmentC Contributions (NBRC - Council).xls
- RDAF - AttachmentC Contributions (NBRC - MFAl).xls
- RDAF - AttachmentD Approvals (NBRC).xls
- RDAF - Risk Matrix (NBRC).docx
- Purchasing Policy.pdf
- 2008-09 Annual Report.pdf
- 2009-2010 NBRC Annual Report.pdf
- Monto Tourism Action Plan.pdf
- NBRC Economic Development Plan.pdf
- North Burnett Tourism Strategy Final Draft.pdf
- Progress Monto Volume 1 August 2006.pdf

Paradise Dam - STP
- Tourist Development Plan – Doc ID 218455

RMWABLC – Extensions
- Master Plan – Doc ID 10098
- Revised Extension Plan – Doc ID 290845

3 CORPORATE/OPERATIONAL PLAN

In accordance with Operational Plan:

- Outcome 1 – Community Infrastructure, Section 1.4 Infrastructure Funding

- Outcome 3 – Organisational Capability, Section 3.7 Sourcing External Funds

4 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

Nil

5 STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS

Nil

6 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Location	Project	Funding Required	Misc
Monto	Cania Shed	$ 620,000	Local Gov't Subsidy Program stipulates construction to be completed June '13 – Due to conflicting timeframes RDA funding will be unsuitable
Mt Perry	Mingo Crossing Caravan Park Sewerage Treatment Plant (STP)	$250,000	Note: This is for STP only & does not include ablutions block. May be deemed civil projects and ineligible.
Biggenden	Paradise Dam Sewerage Treatment Plant (STP)	$250,000	Note: This is for STP only & does not include ablutions block. May be deemed civil projects and ineligible.
Eidsvold	RMWABLC Extensions	$ 300,000	
Monto	Monto Streetscaping Project - Lister Street - Newton Street East - Newton Street Central	 $ 860,360 $1,245.010 $1,229,310	
Mundubbera	Archer Park Lighting	TBA	

Strong preference will be given to projects that have partnership contributions. Preference will also be given to projects where these partner contributions include cash. In-kind contributions will be accepted as partner contributions.

7 RISK MANAGEMENT

Nil

8 CONSULTATION

Nil

9 OPTIONS FOR COUNCIL TO CONSIDER

Consider this report and accept, reject or amend recommendations.

10 OFFICER'S COMMENTS/CONCLUSION

Nil

11 ATTACHMENTS

Doc ID 290166 – RDA Email
Doc ID 290171 – RDA RDAF Press Release
Doc ID 290185 – RDA RDAF Round 3 - Guidelines
Doc ID 290189 – RDA RDAF Round 3 - Frequently Asked Questions
Doc ID 290190 – RDA RDAF Round 3 – Expression of Interest Form
Doc ID 290191 – RDA RDAF Round 4 – Guidelines
Doc ID 290192 – RDA RDAF Round 4 - Frequently Asked Questions
Doc ID 290193 – RDA RDAF Round 4 – Expression of Interest Form

RECOMMENDATION

1) That Director of Community and Cultural Services, A Jackson progress an Expression Of Interest for the (INSERT NAME OF PROJECT) as the preferred project to be put forward for the Regional Development Australia – Regional Development Australia Fund, Round 3 – Supporting Small Towns. Further, that the Expression Of Interest for this project be forwarded to Regional Development Australia via email at rdaf@regional.gov.au prior to 5.00pm Thursday, 6 December 2012.

2) That Council declines to submit an Expression Of Interest for the Regional Development Australia – Regional Development Australia Fund, Round 4 – Supporting Regional Infrastructure Project.

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www.rdawidebayburnett.org.au

RDA Fund rounds 3 and 4 open with broader scope for community projects

Grants between $50,000 and $500,000 are now available for community projects in small towns in round three of the Regional Development Australia Fund (RDAF) which is now open.

Minister for Regional Australia, the Hon Simon Crean said the Federal Government had improved RDAF in response to community feedback to make it easier to apply and broaden the projects which could be funded. "Round three will directly address feedback from communities by targeting $50 million for projects in towns with a population of 30,000 or less."

Min Crean said round four would be rolled out at the same time and provide $175 million through grants of between $500,000 and $15 million to deliver priority regional infrastructure in partnership with funding from state and local governments, and the private sector.

"We will aim to allocate at least $40 million to arts and culture projects in rounds three and four – the amount provided to the sector in rounds one and two."

Min Crean said RDAF would continue to drive a cultural change in regional funding by focusing on priorities of persistence and projects that stacked up, partnership and leverage, and regional reach.

"Regional communities understand the benefits of joining the dots and building strong investment partnerships with the three levels of government, and in some cases, the private sector. The regions are determining 'what' is needed and the Federal Government is providing the 'how'."

Regional Development Australia Wide Bay Burnett Executive Officer, Paul Massingham encouraged community groups and Local Councils to put forward projects that have broad community support and are able to clearly articulate linkages to the recently completed Wide Bay Burnett Regional Roadmap 2012-31."

Application information: The new guidelines are now available on the RDA website (www.rda.gov.au).

Applicants can submit one Expression of Interest (EOI) for round three and one for round four – for different projects.

The EOI process closes on 6 December 2012. For further details of the remaining rounds, revised guidelines and EOI forms, visit: www.regional.gov.au/regional/programs/rdaf.aspx.

Mr Crean said details of round five would be announced soon, delivering the remaining three rounds of the Regional Development Australia Fund (RDAF) under the Federal Government's Minerals Resource Rent Tax.

For further information contact Paul Massingham, Executive Officer RDA WBB on 0417 332 242.

Australian Government

Department of Regional Australia, Local Government, Arts and Sport

GUIDELINES

Regional Development Australia Fund

Round Three

Supporting Small Towns

October 2012

Minister's Foreword

The $1 billion Regional Development Australia Fund (RDAF) is helping Australia's regions to grow, and to become strong and vibrant. It is supporting dynamic communities and enhancing liveability across the country. The RDAF is part of the Government's larger $4.3 billion package for regional infrastructure, including the Regional Infrastructure Fund.

Rounds One and Two of the RDAF have delivered significant benefits to regional communities. We have provided $350 million to support 81 projects with a total value of $1.2 billion. New and upgraded infrastructure is making a significant contribution to Australia's regions. Upgrades to transport and tourism infrastructure is assisting local economies to better respond to growth and to diversify. New and upgraded arts and performance facilities are bringing more of the arts to regional and remote areas. Sports infrastructure is enabling young people in regional communities to become active and to compete on quality facilities.

But more than this, the RDAF is driving cultural change and demonstrating that when communities identify priorities, build partnerships and leverage funding, the Commonwealth Government will come on board. There are four important messages for potential applicants from Rounds One and Two:

- Proponents and projects should leverage funds, not just from government, but also from the private sector, business and community groups. These projects are a partnership, and I am looking for contributions from across the region
- Proponents should be persistent—it pays off. If the project stacks up, I encourage councils and not-for-profit organisations to persist. 23 projects that were not funded in Round One received a grant in Round Two. These organisations took the feedback from my Department on board, strengthened their applications, and made a compelling case for funding
- Proponents should think strategically and innovatively. Projects should be creative and innovative—offer new ways to address old problems or adopt and adapt new technologies. I want projects to showcase the innovative thinking of our regions, and

- Regional impact is important. Projects should reach beyond town or local government area, and offer real benefits to a number of communities. In this way, projects will have a real impact in regional Australia.

The Government has announced a large strategic package to support the immediate and critical needs of regional Australia. This funding is supported by the proceeds of the Minerals Resource Rent Tax. Round Three of RDAF is a key element of this package and will provide $50 million to support small towns across rural and regional Australia. Grants of between $50,000 and $500,000 are available for projects in towns with a population of 30,000 or less in rural, remote, regional and peri-urban areas.

The Government has also opened Round Four of the RDAF, which will provide $175 million in grants to infrastructure projects in regional Australia. A maximum grant of $15 million will be provided. Applicants can submit Expressions of Interest (EOI) to Round Three and Round Four, although the EOI must be for different projects. Details of Round Four are available from separate Guidelines on my Department's website.

Round Five will support strategic projects in the regions of Australia. Details of Round Five will be available from my Department's website following its launch.

Funding from Round Three will be provided to the highest priorities of smaller towns and municipalities, and seek to improve liveability and the sense of community. Regional Development Australia committees will again play a key role, identifying up to five projects to proceed to full application. These projects will meet the needs of local communities and address priorities of local councils by aligning with local government strategic or community plans, or other published priorities.

Funding for arts and culture will continue to be a priority for this Government. Funding for these projects from Rounds Three and Four will aim to be at least equal to the $40 million provided under Rounds One and Two.

I have reviewed Round Two of the RDAF to ensure the program is meeting the needs of communities in regional Australia, and I have made some further refinements in response to your feedback. I am confident that these changes will enhance a program which is already delivering real benefits for regional communities.

Regional Australia is important to our national prosperity and our social fabric. I look forward to our continued partnership to grow and strengthen both our regions and their communities.

Simon Crean

Minister for Regional Australia, Regional Development and Local Government
Minister for the Arts

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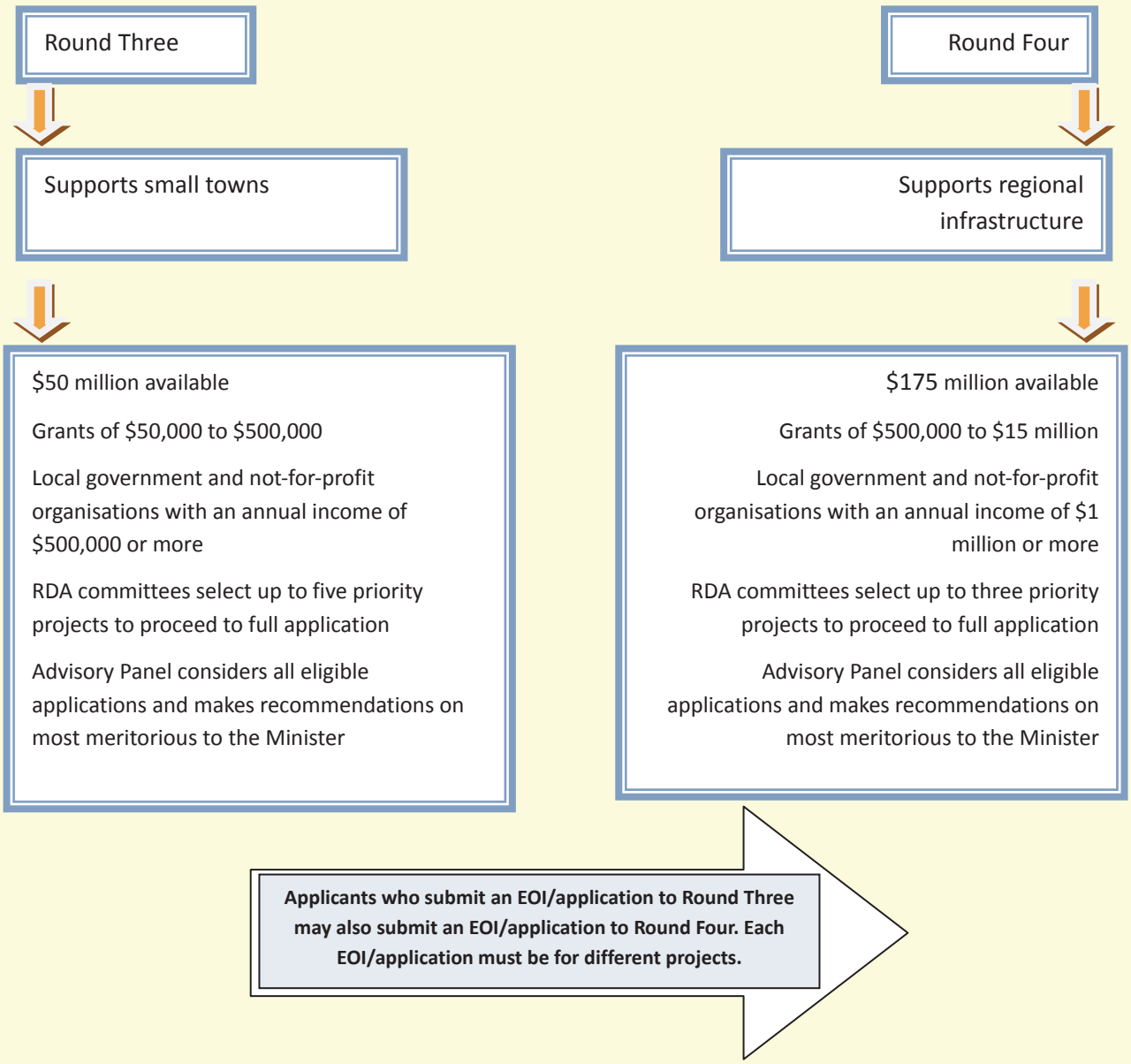
Overview of Rounds



Program overview

The Regional Development Australia Fund (RDAF) is a national infrastructure program which is supporting Australia's regions and enhancing their wellbeing and economic development. The program is administered by the Department of Regional Australia, Local Government, Arts and Sport (the department). The program builds on the strengths and addresses the priorities of Australia's diverse regions.

Round Three, which opened on Friday, 26 October 2012, supports small towns and projects. Fifty million dollars has been allocated, with grants of between $50,000 and $500,000 available to eligible applicants.

Strong preference will be given to projects that have partnership contributions. Preference will also be given to projects where these partner contributions include cash. In-kind contributions will be accepted as partner contributions.

Eligible applicants must submit an Expression of Interest (EOI) for their project to the department by 5.00pm local time on Thursday, 6 December 2012. Once received, the department will forward all EOIs to the relevant RDA committee. Following review of EOIs, each of the 55 RDA committees will select the five highest priority and viable projects in their region to proceed to full application.

Full applications for the selected projects must be submitted by 5.00pm local time on Wednesday, 27 March 2013. The department will assess applications to ensure compliance with the eligibility criteria, and to determine value-for-money and the risk associated with the project. The RDAF Advisory Panel will consider eligible applications and make recommendations to the Minister for Regional Australia, Regional Development and Local Government, and Minister for the Arts, the Hon Simon Crean MP, on the most meritorious projects. The Minister will make decisions on projects to be funded, taking into account advice from the RDAF Advisory Panel.

What's new for applicants?

- Rounds Three and Four have been launched concurrently and form a comprehensive package to address the diverse priorities of the regions. Round Three provides grants for projects in small towns. Round Four provides grants for strategic infrastructure projects. Each Round has its own set of guidelines, which can be found at www.regional.gov.au.
- Applicants who submit one application for Round Three may also submit an EOI for Round Four for a different project.
- EOIs for Round Three close at 5.00pm local time on Thursday, 6 December 2012.

Round Three

- Projects seeking funding from Round Three must be located in a town with a population of 30,000 or less.
- Smaller projects will be supported, with grants of between $50,000 and $500,000 available.
- Strong preference will be given to projects that have partner contributions. Preference will also be given to projects where these partner contributions include cash. In-kind contributions will be accepted as partner contributions. Partner contributions must be ready to flow from the time that the Funding Agreement is signed.
- The income threshold for not-for-profit organisations has been reduced to $500,000, averaged over the two most recent consecutive years. Not-for-profit organisations with an annual income of less than $500,000 may still participate in the program as a member of a consortium led by an eligible applicant.
- While projects may fall into one or more categories, proponents should nominate the primary category for their project—economic; community; arts and culture; or sport and recreation.
- The number of documents to be provided with applications has been reduced. Failure to provide some of these documents will not render an application as ineligible, however it can diminish the project's chance of success as it will impact on the assessment of risk, viability and capacity to deliver the project. It will also impact on the Department's analysis of the case against the selection criteria, which informs the discussions and recommendations of the RDAF Advisory Panel.
- The number of ineligible activities has been reduced.

- Four selection criteria are in place, and applications must make a case against at least 3 of these criteria (depending on the nature of the project). Applicants must address one or both of Criterion 1 or Criterion 2, depending on the nature and impact of their project. Applicants must also address Criterion 3. Projects which are considered to be the core business of local, state or territory governments should address Criterion 4.
- The request for a commencement date for projects has been removed, however projects must commence within 12 months of signing the Funding Agreement. Projects must be completed by 31 December 2016.
- RDA committees are encouraged to select a diverse range of projects from towns across their region.

Eligibility and selection criteria

To be eligible to apply for RDAF funding, potential applicants must meet a number of requirements. Potential applicants should carefully consider the following.

Expressions of Interest

- Is your project located in a town with a population of 30,000 people or less? Do you have data to confirm this?
- Does your project address one of the priorities set out in your local government's strategic or community plan or meet its other published priorities?
- Can you comply with all mandatory eligibility criteria, provide the required documents and make a strong case against the selection criteria?

Full applications

- Is your project one of the five priority projects selected by your RDA committee?
- Are you a local government organisation or a not-for-profit organisation? If you are a not-for-profit organisation, do you have an annual income of $500,000 or more, averaged over two years? Do you have documents to confirm this?
- Is your project investment ready, that is can you commence construction within 12 months of signing a Funding Agreement? Will your project be completed by 31 December 2016?
- Is your project predominantly infrastructure in nature? Does it support the regional economy, the community, arts and culture, or sport and recreation?
- Are you requesting $500,000 or less?
- Does your project have community support?
- Can you implement your project and ensure that it is sustainable and viable in the longer term?
- Do you have the following required documents to support your application?
  - ✓ Letters to confirm the provision of all partnership funding from the funding provider
  - ✓ Letters of support and evidence of community consultation
  - ✓ Audited financial statements for the most recent two consecutive years
  - ✓ Evidence to demonstrate that you have delivered projects of a similar size or scope delivered on time and on budget, and that you can sustain the project for at least five years, and

- ✓ Supporting documentation that incorporates the scope and outputs of the project, sets out how the project will be delivered and identifies any risks (including how they will be managed).

- Can you present a strong, well supported case against some or all of the following selection criteria?
  - ✓ The extent to which the project will support the local economy
  - ✓ The extent to which the project will benefit the local community
  - ✓ The extent to which the applicant leverages additional funding, including from other funding sources, and/or
  - ✓ The need for funding (for certain projects—local government only).
- Are you willing to enter into a Funding Agreement with the department?

These Guidelines provide details on Round Three of the RDAF.

RDAF supports projects that:

- *invest in regional priorities*
- *support local economies*
- *facilitate strong and dynamic communities, and*
- *leverage partnership funding.*

Projects should be creative and innovative.

1 Introduction

These Guidelines outline the objectives and outcomes for Round Three of the Regional Development Australia Fund (RDAF); the application and assessment process, including eligibility requirements; roles and responsibilities of the administering parties and funding recipients; and funding arrangements.

1.1 Program objectives and outcomes

The objective of the RDAF is to support the economies and communities of Australia's regions by providing funding for projects that meet community priorities and needs. Outcomes of the program are:

- Investment in the regional priorities identified by local communities through RDA Regional Plans
- Sustainable regional economic development, economic diversification, and increases to the economic output of local and regional economies
- Strong, dynamic and progressive regional communities which support social inclusion and "Closing the Gap on Indigenous Disadvantage" and are underpinned by quality recreational, arts, cultural and social facilities, and
- Australian, state and local government, private sector and community partnerships to support investment in regional communities.

Projects should have a strong focus on regional benefits, with preference given to projects and/or benefits that span towns, municipalities and local government areas. Projects should also foster creative and innovative solutions to the needs and issues of local communities.

Applicants should not use the outcomes of previous rounds of RDAF as an indicator of activities or projects that will be supported. This is particularly true for Round Three, given its focus on small towns.

Projects will be assessed on their merits according to criteria set out in these Guidelines.

Projects are to meet the community's priorities and deliver strong benefits to the town.

Each project will be assessed on its individual and relative merits, including the extent to which it delivers benefits to the town and neighbouring areas, addresses community needs and supports local government priorities, as expressed in a strategic or community plan or other published document.

RDAF is a competitive grants program and RDA committees cannot expect that all priority projects within their area will be funded. Those projects that demonstrate how they address a community's highest priority issues; have the broad support of the town or municipality; deliver strong benefits to the town and, preferably, neighbouring areas; leverage some investment from other partners; and provide excellent value-for-money are most likely to be considered for funding. The case for the project, and particularly the benefits that will accrue to communities, should be supported by evidence of demand, cost effectiveness and community support.

1.2 Round Three

$50 million has been allocated for Round Three.

Fifty million dollars has been provided for Round Three. Grants will be provided for a single year or over a number of years. Multi-year grants must end before or during the 2016-17 financial year, with projects to be completed by 31 December 2016. Round Three of the RDAF

- opens on Friday, 26 October 2012
- Expressions of Interest (EOI)
  - close at 5.00pm local time on Thursday, 6 December 2012
  - are emailed to the department at rdaf@regional.gov.au
  - are forwarded by the department to the relevant RDA committee.
- full applications for selected projects must be received by 5.00pm local time on Wednesday, 27 March 2013.

A two stage application process is in place:

- *EOIs close on Thursday, 6 December 2012.*
- *Full applications close on Wednesday, 27 March 2013.*

Late EOIs will not be accepted.

Applicants can ask questions relating to the EOI, application and assessment process by emailing rdaf@regional.gov.au. Questions should be clear and concise, and identify that part of the process they are seeking advice on, for example the EOI lodgement process or aspects of the full application.

See the Frequently Asked Questions for more information.

Proponents can submit one application to Round Three and one application to Round Four.

All questions that are directly relevant to Round Three or the broader RDAF program will be added to a Frequently Asked Questions document and placed on the department's website at www.regional.gov.au. This document will be regularly updated.

Separate guidance is provided to RDA committees on their roles and responsibilities.

2 Eligibility Requirements

2.1 Applications to Round Three and Round Four

Different closing dates apply to each round.

Applicants may submit one application to Round Three and one application to Round Four. Applications must be for different projects, and meet the criteria associated with each round.

Rounds Three and Four of the program open on Friday, 26 October 2012, with full applications for Round Three closing on Wednesday, 27 March 2013. Full applications for Round Four close on Thursday, 11 April 2013.

2.2 Eligible organisations

Organisations which can apply for RDAF are:

- *local governments, and*
- *incorporated not-for-profit organisations with an annual income of at least $500,000.*

The following organisations are eligible to apply for funding from Round Three:

- local government bodies excluding Regional Organisations of Councils (refer to the *Glossary of Terms* and section 2.3), and
- incorporated not-for-profit organisations with an annual income of $500,000 or more, averaged over the two most recent years—audited financial statements will be required.

Not-for-profit organisations with an annual income of less than $500,000 may still participate in the program as a member of a consortium led by an eligible applicant.

Eligible organisations can submit an application in their own right, and may also participate in a consortium led by an eligible applicant.

Eligible organisations may submit an application in their own right or as the lead member of a consortium. An eligible organisation may also be a member of another consortium led by another eligible organisation.

Given that Norfolk Island is not covered by an RDA committee, the Norfolk Island Government may submit one EOI and application to each of Rounds Three and Four. The EOI and application will be submitted directly to the department, and will progress through the assessment process. Definitions for a local government body, consortium and an incorporated not-for-profit organisation are provided in the *Glossary of Terms*.

Organisations that cannot submit an application for RDAF are:

- *for profit companies*
- *not-for-profit organisations with an annual income of less than $500,000*
- *local, state, territory or government business enterprises*
- *Regional Organisations of Councils*
- *universities and technical colleges, and*
- *Regional Development Australia committees.*

Projects must be located in a town with a population of 30,000 people or less. Independent evidence should confirm population size.

2.3 Ineligible organisations

The following organisations are not eligible to apply for funding from Round Three of the RDAF in their own right or as a lead member of a consortium:

- For-profit companies.
- Not-for-profit organisations with an annual income of less than $500,000.
- Regional Organisations of Councils (ROCs), notwithstanding their establishment by legislation in some states and territories. RDAF supports local communities, and local councils and RDA committees are best placed to identify community priorities. ROCs can play an important brokering role, identifying cross-region projects and bringing parties together to support and fund the project. Individual members of ROCs may be eligible in their own right and all members of a ROC can form a consortium led by an eligible organisation.
- Commercial arms of local or state government bodies, for example organisations that deliver services to communities that would normally be expected of a council and/or operate on a commercial basis. The services that are delivered support the day-to-day operation of the community, and are not directly related to the strategic or emerging needs of regions.
- Universities and technical colleges.

These organisations may participate in any round in a consortium which is led by an eligible applicant. It is expected that consortia will be supported by appropriate legal and governance arrangements.

RDA committees are not eligible to apply in any circumstances.

3 What can be funded?

3.1 Eligible towns

The RDAF is about supporting regional Australia. Round Three is targeted at small towns, which have their own unique characteristics, priorities and needs. Small towns are located in rural, remote, regional and peri-urban areas and must have a population 30,000 people or less. Applicants should demonstrate that their town (including peri-urban areas) meets this requirement through the provision of population data from either the Australian Bureau of Statistics, state or territory government, a university or other independent body.

To be eligible, projects must be:

- *completed by no later than 31 December 2016*
- *for capital infrastructure*
- *for one cohesive project, and*
- *for infrastructure related to or supporting the economy; the community; arts and culture; or sport and recreation.*

3.2 Eligible projects

Projects must be:

- 'Investment ready', with construction to be completed no later than 31 December 2016. To be investment ready, it is expected that all planning, zoning, environmental and/or native title approvals are in place or are close to being finalised, and that the project will commence construction within 12 months of signing the Funding Agreement. Where these approvals are not in place at the time of the EOI or application, it is expected that approvals will be in place prior to execution of the Funding Agreement.
- Capital in nature, such as new infrastructure and upgrades to existing infrastructure. Possible projects might include, but are not limited to, community or child care centres, sporting facilities, showground and event complexes, community support, training, resource or education centres, theatres and museums, cinema upgrades to support the transfer to digital technology, and the restoration of historic buildings or artefacts.
- Cohesive, and not involve two or more different projects artificially drawn together to create the impression of one project under a common name. Elements of projects will be eligible for funding, noting that funding for one element does not guarantee funding in subsequent rounds of the RDAF.
- For infrastructure which addresses a priority in a local government's strategic or community plan or meet other published priorities, and relates to or supports:
    - the economy: the project supports the local economy, economic growth or enhanced productivity, for example saleyards, convention centres, infrastructure to support local business and encourage economic diversity, infrastructure to conserve water or to protect the environment or coast, projects which facilitate downstream processing or value-added activities, and enhancement and/or expansion of tourism facilities
    - the community: the project provides infrastructure to support liveability and social inclusion, for example community centres, streetscapes, showgrounds and arenas, youth centres, training and leadership centres, foreshore redevelopments and support facilities
    - arts and culture: the project provides infrastructure to support regional art and cultural activities, for example community centres, town halls, theatre and performance centres, libraries, cultural centres, art galleries, museums and upgrades of facilities to support adaption to and adoption of new technology, and

- sport and recreation: the project provides infrastructure to support local and regional sport, for example upgrades to stadiums, ovals and playing facilities, lighting to facilitate evening events, walking trails, grandstands and player facilities.

Projects can meet more than one of these objectives, however applicants must nominate the category where the primary benefit occurs.

Funding will not be provided for:

- *soft infrastructure*
- *plant and equipment which is not part of the project*
- *administrative overheads*
- *commercial projects; or*
- *activities funded by NDRRA.*

3.3 Ineligible projects

Funding will not be provided for:

- soft infrastructure, such as computer software or hardware; or the payment of salaries for service delivery staff, research staff and/or contractors
- the purchase of plant and equipment that is not an integral part of the funded capital project
- administrative overhead items, including office equipment and vehicles; mobile capital equipment such as trucks and earthmoving equipment; or the provision of services and support activities
- commercial projects or components of projects that can be either on-sold or otherwise granted to a commercial or business organisation, and
- activities that are eligible to be funded under the National Disaster Relief and Recovery Arrangements.

3.4 Grant size and partner contributions

Grants of between $50,000 and $500,000 are available.

Grants of between $50,000 and $500,000 (GST exclusive) will be available for eligible projects.

Preference will be given to projects that have partnership funding, including cash.

Preference will be given to projects that have partnership contributions. Preference will also be given to projects where these partner contributions include cash (see Selection Criterion 3). Partner contributions may be from one or a combination of a local government, state or territory government, not-for-profit organisation and the private sector.

In-kind contributions are also accepted.

In-kind contributions will be accepted as partnership contributions. Land is considered to be an in-kind contribution.

Partner funding must be ready to flow from the time that the Funding Agreement between the applicant and Australia Government is signed. Applicants should provide evidence confirming contributions to the project, such as an authorised letter from each contributing partner confirming the commitment (both cash and in-kind) and noting any conditions that may apply. An RDAF grant can be one component of a larger Australian Government funding package.

A two-stage application process is in place.

Expressions of Interest request basic information about the project and proponent.

Only one EOI can only be submitted for consideration by one RDA committee for one project.

Multiple EOIs will not be accepted.

RDA committees select up to five projects from the EOIs to proceed to full application.

4 Applying for RDAF

4.1 Expressions of Interest

An Expression of Interest form must be lodged by an eligible applicant for an eligible project. The EOI form is available from the department's website at www.regional.gov.au and requests basic information about the applicant, the project and benefits that will accrue to the local economy and community. The applicant is also asked to describe partnership funding and whether this funding is confirmed or being requested.

As only five EOIs from each RDA region will proceed to full application, it is critical that applicants present a strong, well argued and competitive case against the selection criteria.

The EOI must be completed, signed by an authorised person and lodged by 5.00pm local time on Thursday, 6 December 2012. EOIs are lodged with the department via email at rdaf@regional.gov.au. The department will acknowledge receipt in writing within two working days, and will forward the EOI to relevant RDA committee for consideration (see section 7.1).

Applicants may only lodge one EOI for this Round. Applicants cannot lodge multiple EOIs, either to one RDA committee for several projects or to several RDA committees for the same or different projects. Where more than one EOI is submitted by an applicant for this Round, the first EOI which is lodged will be considered by the RDA committee. First lodgement will be determined according to the time of submission to the department. If a single email is provided which includes multiple EOIs, the first EOI attached to the email will be accepted. Remaining EOIs will not be provided to or considered by RDA committees.

EOIs cannot be amended or updated after the closing date. EOIs may, however, be amended and updated prior to the closing date via email to the department.

Applicants must confirm, in their EOIs, that they can submit a complete application, if invited to proceed to full application, including providing all required documents and presenting a strong case against the selection criteria. Applicants should carefully consider this requirement. A number of proponents selected by RDA committees in Round Two failed to lodge an application, which disadvantaged their region.

Applications must be for a project selected by an RDA committee.

Applications must be submitted via the on-line form.

Applications must address the eligibility and selection criteria, and should provide all required documents.

Applicants should be clear and succinct in their description of the project; benefits of the project; and how the project meets the selection criteria.

When preparing an application, proponents should think about the .....

RDA committees will advise the department of the up to five EOIs which they have selected from their region to be invited to submit a full application. RDA committees may nominate less than five EOIs, where appropriate. Details of timing and process are at Section 12 and Attachment A.

4.2 Applications

The department will invite those applicants nominated by the RDA committee to submit a full application, which must be lodged by Wednesday, 27 March 2013 (5:00pm local time).

Applicants must submit a completed on-line application form and all attachments via the department's Grants Management System (GMS) portal. New applicants are advised to register early for access to the GMS portal. Applicants must address both the eligibility and selection criteria in their application, and are strongly advised to provide all required documents. Applicants are advised to be clear and succinct in their descriptions of the project and the benefits that will accrue to the region. Only complete applications will be accepted and assessed.

Late applications will not be accepted unless the department considers there are exceptional circumstances which are beyond the applicant's control. The department's decision will be final. Applicants may withdraw an application at any time, with written advice of the withdrawal to be provided to the department (via email to rdaf@regional.gov.au). Further detail on the application process is at section 7.2. A process flowchart outlining the assessment process is at Attachment A.

4.3 Helpful hints

When preparing an EOI and application, applicants are encouraged to tell their story—make the case for their project and why it is needed by the town or community. Applicants should present a case for their project and grant funding in responding to the selection criteria. In developing their story, applicants should think about:

- Who will benefit from the project? Describe the members of the community or town who will gain most, in the short and long term, and how the project will support the community. Outline how many people will use the facility in a given time and how this differs from or builds on current facilities. Include details of usage from both the town and from surrounding towns and municipalities. Use figures and data to demonstrate who and how many people will benefit.

- *Who*
- *What*
- *How*
- *Why, and*
- *When*

of their project.

- What is the project? What are the benefits that will flow from it? Describe the project in clear and simple language. Discuss the benefits of the project, including to the town, target users and broader region.
- How many jobs will be created? Describe the short and long-term impact on employment. Employment may be created during construction, ongoing operation and in supporting businesses.
- Why funding is needed? Discuss why the RDAF grant is needed, and how it will complement other funding contributions or council initiatives. Describe what the RDAF grant will be used for and if it funds part of a larger project.
- When will the project be completed and ready for use?

Hypothetical case study

A local council wants to upgrade and extend its community centre. Two new rooms will be constructed, a new kitchen will be installed, and new entry ramps will be installed. The roof will be replaced, as the existing roof leaks. The cost of the project is $740,000, with $300,000 being requested from RDAF. Council is contributing $440,000 in cash.

Who: Local community groups will benefit from the project, with up to an additional 300 people expected to use the facility on a weekly basis. The two new rooms will allow Council and community groups to work with more members of the community, including by conducting transition to work training courses, parenting courses for new parents and families in crisis, skills development courses, and language courses for new immigrants. The town's playgroup will increase the number of playgroup sessions each week from two to four, catering to pent-up demand and ensuring that all parents and children in the region can engage in social activity and learning. The local scouts and guides organisations will use the facility, running two additional evening sessions for local children. The Rotary and Lions clubs will hold their meetings at the facility, giving them a permanent home. Rotary will conduct two computer and technology courses for the elderly each week, providing stimulation, learning and social engagement for retirees. The Police Citizens Club has committed to running four blue-light discos each year, providing a safe and supervised social activity for the youth of the region. The new ramp will ensure that parents with prams, families with toddlers, the elderly and the disabled can access the facility. The location of the Community Centre next to a major bus stop provides ease of access for those members of the community who use public transport. Replacement of the roof ensures that all of the organised activities and courses will take place as planned, and provides certainty to users.

What: The project involves the construction of two new rooms and installation of a new kitchen. These new facilities will be attached to the current single-room Community Centre, providing a larger integrated facility that will meet a range of community needs. The project will create the largest Community Centre in the region, and will attract participants from the broader area.

How: Three full-time jobs will be created during construction. Two full-time equivalent jobs will be created on an ongoing basis. These jobs will be created via the management of the facility, including taking and managing bookings, cleaning (which will be contracted out to a local company), landscaping and maintenance (which will be contracted out to a local company) and catering for events and functions (which will be contracted out to local businesses). Local businesses will be supported during construction through the purchase of supplies and equipment. Council estimates that the short term impact of the project on the town is $1.3 million and $900,000 on an annual ongoing basis.

Why: Council currently pays for the upkeep of the existing Community Centre, and is investing in a large community park and Skate Park within 100 metres of the Community Centre. The community park, Skate Park and Community Centre are complementary, particularly in supporting families and young people, and Council is seeking to create an integrated set of facilities to support community activities and gatherings. Council does not have the financial capacity to invest in three significant pieces of community infrastructure at the same time. Delaying the completion of the Community Centre will break the nexus between the park, Skate Park and Community Centre.

When: The extensions to the Community Centre will be completed by 30 March 2013. Upgrades to the neighbouring community park will be completed and ready for use by 25 March 2013. The Skate Park will be completed and ready for use by 25 March 2013.

A *Guide to Preparing a Full Application for Funding – Lessons from Rounds One and Two* is available on the department's website at www.regional.gov.au. *Procedures for Completing a Full Application for RDAF Round Three* will also available on the department's website.

Applicants should seek independent advice on taxation treatment of the grant prior to submitting an application.

Applicants must meet the mandatory eligibility criteria:

- *the applicant must be an eligible organisation*
- *the application must be for an eligible project in an eligible town*
- *the project and application must have been selected by the RDA committee, and*
- *the project must be sustainable and viable.*

5 Eligibility and selection criteria

All full applications for RDAF funding must meet a number of mandatory criteria, provide a number of documents and present a case against the selection criteria. The case presented by applicants against the selection criteria should be strong, supported by evidence, and provide a clear understanding of both the project and how it meets the criteria.

5.1 Eligibility criteria

To be eligible, applications must satisfy all of the listed eligibility criteria.

- ***Eligibility Criterion 1: the applicant must be an eligible organisation***

Eligible organisations are described in section 2.

- ***Eligibility Criterion 2: the application must be for an eligible project in an eligible town***

Eligible towns and eligible projects are described in section 3. The project seeking funding must be:

- for an eligible project
- investment ready and completed by no later than 31 December 2016
- capital in nature, and
- for infrastructure related to or supporting the economy, the community, the arts and culture, or sport and recreation.

- ***Eligibility Criterion 3: the project and applicant must have been nominated by the RDA committee***

Applications which are not one of the RDA committee's five priority projects will be ineligible. Project details in the EOI and application form must be the same, as EOIs were selected on a competitive basis.

The guiding principle is that the project in the full application must not differ in any material way from the project, as described in the EOI, selected by the RDA committee. As such, and given the timing between the submission of the EOI and the application form, reasonable changes to scope, location, value of the project and value of partnership funding will be accepted.

- ***Eligibility Criterion 4: the project must be viable and sustainable***

Applications must provide evidence to demonstrate that the completed asset will be maintained in a viable state for at least five years. Evidence may include an Asset Management and Operations Plan or other operational documents. Authorisation of the application, which includes a declaration that the asset will be retained and maintained for at least five years, by the Executive Officer of the applying organisation will also be accepted as evidence.

Applicants are expected to provide a number of documents.

Documents should be commensurate with the size and scope of the project.

Failure to provide documents will not impact on eligibility.

However, it will, impact on the assessment of risk, viability and value-for-money.

Expected documents are:

- *evidence of community support*

5.2 Expected documents

A number of documents should be provided by applicants to demonstrate their capability and capacity to implement and maintain the project. The size and detail of the documents should be commensurate with the size and scope of the project, for example the detail of supporting documents for a $100,000 grant and $200,000 project will be significantly less than for a $500,000 grant and $1 million project. Documents should be provided individually.

Failure to provide these documents will not impact on the eligibility of the applicant. However, it will strongly impact on the department's capacity to assess the project, including value-for-money, viability and risk. Outcomes of the department's assessment are provided to the Advisory Panel and informs the Panel's decisions on the most meritorious projects. As such, applicants are strongly advised to provide all expected documents.

Expected documents are:

- *Evidence of community support:* this demonstrates consultation with and support for the project, and could include letters from local and regional representatives; Commonwealth and state / territory members of parliament; councils; community groups; chambers of commerce; and philanthropic or community organisations. Community consultation plans or strategies and details of the outcomes of the consultations should also be provided. All letters of support should be attached to the full application, however those provided direct to the Minister or Department before the closing date for applications will also be accepted.

- *evidence of partnership funding*
- *financial statements for the most recent two consecutive years*
- *evidence of experience in delivering a project of similar size and scope*
- *evidence that the applicant will maintain the asset for at least five years, and*
- *supporting plans and documents.*

- *Evidence of partner contributions:* the applicant should confirm, and provide details of, partnership funding from external sources. If funding is to be provided by a state or territory government program, a letter of intention, media statement, public announcement or other document should be provided. Evidence of partner contributions is not required from the applicant for their own contribution. In this case, the signed declaration in the application form will be taken as confirmation of partnership funding.
- *Audited financial statements for the most recent two consecutive years:* this demonstrates viability of the applicant. Statements should, preferably, be for 2011–12 and 2010–11. To ensure flexibility and recognising different accounting periods, statements for 2009–10 will also be accepted, should the 2011–12 statements not be available.
- *Evidence that the applicant has experience in delivering projects which are similar in size or scope:* this confirms that the applicant has the capability and capacity to deliver the project. Evidence should include documentation to demonstrate that previous projects have been delivered on time and on budget.
- *Evidence that the applicant will maintain the Asset for at least five years:* this confirms the capacity and capability of the applicant to maintain the project.
- *Supporting Plans and Documents*: these documents will outline the benefits of the project to the town (and neighboring areas, if appropriate) and confirm the applicant's ability to deliver the project. They should include a detailed description of the project, and outline the rationale for the project, outcomes and arrangements to review progress against outcomes.

These documents should include a Project Plan (or similar document), which demonstrates the applicant's capacity to deliver the project on time and budget. The Plan should outline the start and end dates of the project, as well as dates for major deliverables from commencement to completion.

The Project Plan (or similar document) must also demonstrate that construction of the component being funded will be completed before or on 31 December 2016, and include details of planning approvals, timelines, costings and budget, and resource allocations. The Plan should outline the risks associated with the project and, where possible, include a risk register or strategy to manage identified risks. To assist applicants in providing only that information which is needed in the assessment process, further guidance on expected documents is at Attachment B.

Applicants must also present a strong and competitive case against the selection criteria.

Applicants must address Selection Criterion 1 or 2, or both depending on their project:

- *the extent to which the project will provide community benefit*

and/or

5.3 Selection criteria

Applications that meet the eligibility criteria and are one of the RDA committee's five prioritised projects will be assessed on a competitive basis. Not all applicants will be required to complete all of the selection criteria:

- Applicants must address Criterion 1 or Criterion 2, and are encouraged to address both where a case against each can be made. It is accepted that projects seeking funding under this Round may deliver a stronger benefit to the community, and that the case for Criterion 1 may be stronger than for Criterion 2.
- Applicants must address Criterion 3.
- Applicants seeking funding for certain types of projects must address Criterion 4.

Each of the selection criterion is of equal weight. In responding to the selection criteria, applicants should note that the RDAF Advisory Panel may also consider factors at section 6.1 when making its recommendations to the Minister.

- ***Selection Criterion 1: the extent to which the project will provide community benefit***

Applicants should detail the number of people that will utilise the approved project, the contribution that the project will make to community amenities and social capital, and the level of local support. Where relevant, reference should be made to "Closing the Gap on Indigenous Disadvantage". A key element of the response to this criterion should be the extent to which the project enhances social inclusion in the region. Benefits from the project should be in both the short and medium term.

The case for the project against this criterion should identify how the project will address community needs and the benefits that will accrue to the local community. These benefits could be expressed as improved services resulting from enhanced facilities or the adoption of new technologies.

Preference will be given to projects which enhance the public good, and are not for individual or commercial benefit. Projects that work with a range of community groups or complement existing or planned facilities will be highly regarded, such as:

- the location of a sports facility next to a high school to support an integrated approach to education and sport, or

- the location of a youth centre next to a local training or education facility to support the introduction of young people to the workforce.

Benefits to the community should be described and quantified, and supported by existing or available evidence.

the extent to which the project will support regional economic growth.

Selection Criterion 2: the extent to which the project will support the local economy

This criterion will assess the short and longer-term impacts of the project on the town's economy. Impacts can be direct, such as by creating new transport routes that reduce transport costs, or indirect, including through innovation or productivity gains. It is desirable that benefits also accrue to neighbouring areas and communities.

Benefits could be generated by, for example, increased tourism, increased trade for local businesses, investment attraction, diversification of the industry base or reduced costs to councils from efficiency gains. Benefits to the economy should be described and quantified, and supported by existing or available evidence.

Proponents must provide details of partnership funding, including in-kind contributions.

Strong leverage of funding contributions is encouraged.

Selection Criterion 3: the extent to which the applicant leverages additional funding, including from a variety of sources

Preference will be given to projects which include partnership funding. Partnership contributions ensure that benefits of the RDAF funding are maximised and that value-for-money is enhanced. This criterion will assess the leverage that will accrue from partnership funding, including cash and in-kind contributions.

Priority will be given to applications that provide partnership funding of more than 50% of the total project value, with a significant cash component. Priority will also be given to partnership funding which includes a contribution from other parties, such as state or territory governments, not-for-profit organisations, philanthropic organisations or the private sector.

To ensure equity in treatment, the ratio of leveraged funding will be calculated on contributions to that part of the project which is to be funded by RDAF. It is noted that, in some cases, RDAF funding will contribute to the whole project, rather than a component.

Applicants seeking funding for projects which are the normal responsibility of state, territory or local government must also make a case for RDAF funding.

- ***Selection Criterion 4: the extent to which the applicant is unable to otherwise fund the project (for projects which are normally the responsibility of local government or state and territory governments only)***

A number of proposed projects may be considered to be the normal responsibility of local governments, including upgrades to or refurbishment of sewerage systems, water pipes and stormwater drains; the construction of public amenity blocks or minor upgrades to a town centre. Local, state and territory governments are responsible for local roads and access drives, roads in remote and regional centres, and bridges. Funding is available from the Commonwealth for these purposes through a number of mechanisms, including the Financial Assistance Grants.

However, it is also accepted that local governments, particularly in small municipalities or remote areas or with low rates base, may require additional support for some of their normal activities including, for example, significant upgrades to such infrastructure, the introduction of new innovative systems and technologies, enhancing facilities to adopt or adapt to new technologies, the installation or upgrade of water infrastructure, or the construction of new public-use facilities. RDAF funding will be available for projects which are the normal responsibility of local, state or territory governments where a strong case for additional funding support is made. This case should:

- outline the reasons why additional support is needed
- demonstrate that the infrastructure can be maintained
- describe the innovative nature of the project, including the adoption or adaption of new technologies, and
- outline the benefits to local economies and local communities, for example how the project will connect communities and towns, will enhance community safety, or address the impact of the seasonal change.

A number of external bodies will contribute to the assessment process.

6 Role of external organisations

6.1 The Regional Development Australia Fund Advisory Panel

The Advisory Panel will consider the individual and relative merits of eligible applications and provide independent advice to the Minister on projects which are recommended for funding. The Advisory Panel is guided by its Operating Arrangements. The Operating Arrangements and details of members of the Advisory Panel are available on www.regional.gov.au.

The Advisory Panel will consider the individual and relative merits of projects.

The Advisory Panel will consider information presented by the applicant, the department's analysis of the case presented against the selection criteria, a risk assessment, the department's advice on whether the project is an efficient and effective use of public resources, advice from other Government agencies, and any other material which it may deem relevant. The Panel will frame its discussions around:

The Panel will recommend the most meritorious projects to the Minister.

- the outcomes that will be achieved and positive benefits for the community and economy
- the viability of the applicant and project
- the sustainability of the project, and
- value-for-money.

The Panel will allocate one of three classifications to projects.

The Advisory Panel will prioritise and make recommendations to the Minister on projects to be funded. It will categorise all eligible projects as either:

- 'Recommended for Funding'
- 'Suitable for Funding', or
- 'Not Recommended for Funding'.

For two of these classifications, the Panel will rank projects in order of merit.

All proposals that are rated as 'Recommended for Funding' and 'Suitable for Funding' will be ranked by the Advisory Panel in order of merit. More than one application may be assigned to a ranking. For example, three projects may be ranked as equal first in the 'Suitable for Funding' group. In making its recommendations, the Advisory Panel may:

- identify additional project risks that should be addressed before funding is provided
- recommend a different level of funding to that requested for the project, and
- vary the scope of the project that it recommends to the Minister to be funded.

The Panel will consider a number of factors, including socio-economic status of the town, and the distribution of funding in Rounds One and Two.

The Panel may choose to consider the distribution of funding of projects rated as 'Recommended for Funding' or 'Suitable for Funding' in its recommendations to the Minister, including by:

- the socio-economic status of the town, municipality and Local Government Area
- demonstrated need for funding
- population and Gross Domestic Product of each state and territory

- the distribution of projects funded in Rounds One and Two, including by region and state and territory
- allocation of funding for arts and cultural projects. Grants from Rounds Three and Four for arts and culture will aim to be at least equal to the $40 million provided in Rounds One and Two
- regions in transition, and
- the Australian Government's commitment to support recovery and reconstruction of disaster affected areas in regional Australia.

Attachment D provides details of the Advisory Panel's assessment process.

6.2 Regional Development Australia committees

Regional Development Australia committees will review EOIs from within their region, and select up to five projects to proceed to full application.

Regional Development Australia committees will review EOIs for projects in their region, and select up to five priority projects to proceed to full application. Attachment C provides details of the RDA committee's assessment process.

Pending discussions with the NSW Government on evolving governance arrangements regarding Greater Western Sydney, RDA Sydney will be able to consider EOIs from the greater western Sydney region and to nominate up to five EOIs to progress to full application. RDA Sydney will still nominate up to five EOIs from metropolitan Sydney. Greater Western Sydney includes the following councils:

- Auburn Council, City of Bankstown, City of Blacktown, City of Blue Mountains, City of Fairfield, City of Hawkesbury, City of Holroyd, City of Liverpool, City of Parramatta, City of Penrith, the Hills Shire, Camden Council, City of Campbelltown and Wollondilly Shire.

6.2 Advice from other governments and Commonwealth agencies

Advice from other state, territory and local governments may be requested as part of the assessment process.

To ensure that comprehensive information is available to the Advisory Panel and Department, advice on eligible projects will be requested from other Commonwealth agencies, and state and territory governments. Advice may also be requested from Regional Organisations of Councils, Regional Development Commissions and Regional Development Trusts, where appropriate.

Advice will be requested on, but not limited to, the history of the applicant in delivering projects; the extent of community support; confirmation of funding contributions; viability of the proponent and project; leveraging from other initiatives; competitive neutrality and impact on the region. Governments may also be asked to provide confirmation of their support for the project, comment on RDA priorities and list their own priorities, with supporting reasons for each.

In assessing EOIs, Regional Development Australia committees are encouraged to select a diverse range of infrastructure projects.

Committees are also encouraged to select one project from a not-for-profit organisation.

RDA committees will base their assessment of EOIs and selection of priority projects on 4 key elements.

The department will assess the eligibility of projects.

The case against the selection criteria, outcomes of a viability and risk assessment, will be provided to the Advisory Panel.

7 Assessment

7.1 Assessment of Expression of Interest

RDA committees will assess EOIs for projects in their region and advise the department of the up to five priority projects to proceed to full application.

The overriding principle is that RDA committees select the five most viable projects that meet identified community priorities. However, committees are to make every effort to include at least one project from a not-for-profit organisation in their list of priority projects. RDA committees are encouraged to select a diverse range of projects. It is accepted that, in some cases, EOIs from not-for-profit organisations may not be as strong as those from local government. This should be taken into account in the Committee's decisions.

To ensure that a diverse range of infrastructure is selected, and recognising the broader needs of the region, the five projects will be selected from the following categories, with one project preferably coming from each category:

- economic
- community
- arts and culture, and
- sport and recreation.

The RDA committee will base its assessment of EOIs on:

- local government priorities, as expressed in a strategic or community plan or other published document
- capacity of the project to address needs in the town and neighbouring towns
- level of community support, and
- capacity to commence the project within 12 months of signing the Funding Agreement and complete the project by 31 December 2016.

7.2 Assessment of full applications

The department will determine the eligibility of projects according to the eligibility criteria set out in section 5. In addition, the department will confirm that each submitted application is one of the five selected by the RDA committee and is broadly consistent with the project selected through the EOI process. Applications which are submitted and have not been selected as one of the five priorities by the RDA committee will be deemed as ineligible.

The department's analysis will determine the viability of the proponent and identify risks.

The Minister may require additional conditions and strategies to address risk or other matters which are identified during assessment.

The department's analysis will also determine value-for-money.

Applications will be classified as

- *Ineligible*
- *Not recommended for funding*
- *Suitable for funding, or*
- *Recommended for funding.*

The department will complete an analysis of all submitted applications against the selection criteria, assess viability and conduct risk assessments. This assessment material will be provided to the Regional Development Australia Fund Advisory Panel (the Advisory Panel) for its information and to inform its discussions.

The Advisory Panel will make recommendations to the Minister on the most meritorious projects. The Minister will consider the advice provided by the Advisory Panel and make decisions on projects to be funded, taking into account whether each project constitutes an efficient, effective, economical and ethical use of public money, as required by Commonwealth legislation. The Minister may also require additional conditions and management strategies as a condition of funding, based on the assessment and risk analysis.

7.3 Independent viability assessments

The department will undertake a risk analysis of each application and, based on the outcomes, additional checks may be undertaken or independent advice requested via an Independent Viability Assessment (IVA). An IVA will be conducted by an appropriate external consultant engaged by the department and the findings will be included in the project analysis. All information provided in an application may be considered during an IVA process conducted on that application.

7.4 Value-for-money

Funding recipients must promote the use of resources in an efficient, effective, economical and ethical manner and projects must be undertaken in an accountable and transparent manner. Project documentation should enable the proper identification, assessment and comparison of associated costs, benefits and risks.

Information provided in the application form and attached documents will be used to assess value-for-money. Generally, value-for-money requires that the project can be delivered at a reasonable whole-of-life cost and would generally involve open procurement processes or mechanisms to ensure competitive delivery of projects. Project costs must compare favourably with available benchmarks for the activities being undertaken.

7.5 Outcomes of assessment

At the conclusion of the assessment of full applications for Round Three, each application will be classified as:

- Ineligible
- Not Recommended for Funding
- Suitable for Funding, or
- Recommended for Funding.

Written advice will be provided to all applicants.

7.6 Advice to applicants

Advice on the outcome of full applications will be provided to all applicants when the Minister announces details of successful applications. Applicants will receive a letter confirming the outcome of their application. The department will provide feedback to applicants on request.

Projects approved for funding will be listed on the department's website at www.regional.gov.au.

Feedback will be provided on request.

8 Probity

The Australian Government is committed to ensuring that the process for providing funding under programs is fair and in accordance with published guidelines, as may be varied by the Australian Government from time to time.

Independent probity advice may be requested, as required, to support the implementation of the Guidelines, including the EOI and assessment process. Amendments to the Guidelines will be published on the department's website.

Independent probity advice will be requested, as appropriate.

8.1 Conflict of interest

Where an applicant identifies an existing or potential conflict of interest, the applicant must declare the actual, apparent or potential conflict of interest and inform the Australian Government immediately. A conflict of interest may exist if the applicant, or any of its personnel:

Conflict of Interest procedures are in place.

- has a relationship, whether professional, commercial or personal, with a party who is able to influence the EOI, application or assessment process, including RDA committees
- has a relationship with, or an interest in, an organisation which is likely to interfere with or restrict the applicant in carrying out the proposed activities fairly and independently, or
- has a relationship, whether professional, commercial or personal, with a member of the Advisory Panel.

Conflicts of interest between potential applicants and RDA committees need to be declared and managed in accordance with RDA committee procedures.

Further information is available on the department's website at www.regional.gov.au. Procedures for managing conflicts of interest in the Advisory Panel are included in its Operating Arrangements (available on the department's website at www.regional.gov.au).

9 Contracts, funding and other obligations

Proponents receiving a RDAF grant will be required to enter into a Funding Agreement with the Australian Government.

The Funding Agreement is a legally enforceable document.

Approved projects will be subject to the following arrangements:

- before any funding can be paid, the applicant will enter into contractual arrangements with the Australian Government set out in a Funding Agreement that specifies the terms and conditions under which the funding is provided
- applicants must not make financial commitments for funded activities until the Funding Agreement has been executed
- requests for additional funding from the Australian Government will not be considered, and
- requests to change the scope of the project or to partnership arrangements that do not involve the provision of additional funding by the Australian Government will be considered as long as the revised project continues to meet the objectives and outcomes of the RDAF.

Successful applicants should enter into a Funding Agreement within 6 months of the project funding being announced by the Minister. The offer of funding may be withdrawn if the applicant cannot meet the timeframe, has not obtained agreement from the department to obtain an extension to this timeframe, or if there are significant reasons why the project cannot commence.

The Funding Agreement will describe:

- the purpose for which the Australian Government funding must be used
- any requirements or conditions that must be met prior to the release of funds, and
- milestones and project outcomes that must be achieved prior to the release of payments.

Attachment E provides further detail on the contractual arrangements and the negotiation process. Building work funded by the Australian Government is subject to all relevant state or territory occupational, health and safety laws.

The department will regularly monitor the progress of projects, and any delays in commencement of milestones will be dealt with according to the procedures set out in the Funding Agreement.

10 Confidential Information

Information in the EOI or application may be provided to external parties.

All information provided in an EOI or an application may be distributed to other parties to assist in assessment of the proposal and may be distributed and/or publicised as part of material on the program or the project. Applicants must identify any information contained within their project application which they consider should be treated as confidential and provide reasons for the request. The Australian Government reserves the right to accept or refuse a request to treat information as confidential.

A request made under the *Freedom of Information Act 1982* for access to an application marked 'confidential' will be determined in accordance with that Act.

11 Complaints process

Details of the department's complaints process is on its website

Complaints about the RDAF application and assessment process should be directed to:

RDAF Complaints
Corporate Services
Department of Regional Australia, Local Government Arts and Sport
GPO Box 803
CANBERRA ACT 2601

Details of the complaints process are available from the department's website at www.regional.gov.au.

12 Key dates

Milestone	Anticipated Dates
RDAF Round Three announced	Tuesday, 23 October 2012
RDAF Round Three Guidelines published	Friday, 26 October 2012
Expressions of Interest for Round Three open	Friday, 26 October 2012
Expressions of Interest close	Thursday, 6 December 2012
RDA committee decisions on Expressions of Interest	Monday, 11 February 2013
Notification of outcomes of Expressions of Interest	Wednesday, 13 February 2013
Full applications for Round Three open	Wednesday, 13 February 2013
Full applications for Round Three close	Wednesday, 27 March 2013
Minister announces projects to be funded from Round Three	From Friday, 7June 2013
Funding Agreements negotiated and executed	Within 6 months of announcement

Glossary of terms

Australian Business Number (ABN)

The ABN is the single business identifier that allows businesses to meet their regulatory obligations and access information and assistance through a single entry point to government.

Regional Development Australia committees

Regional Development Australia committees are operating around Australia. The RDA committees will play a key role in identifying local projects, confirming alignment of projects with their Regional Plans and endorsing applications and prioritising applications submitted from their region. RDA committees can play a facilitation role by bringing stakeholders, local governments and other organisations together to identify suitable projects and sources of funding consistent with their regional plans.

Consortium

An association of two or more individuals, companies, organisations or governments in any combination with the objective of participating in a common activity or pooling their resources to achieve a common goal. A consortium is often formed to undertake a venture that would be beyond the resources of a single individual or company. A consortium must be supported by appropriate legal arrangements.

The department

Australian Government Department of Regional Australia, Local Government, Arts and Sport.

EDST

Eastern Daylight Saving Time

Infrastructure

The facilities, services, and installations needed to support a functioning community.

In-kind contributions

In-kind contributions may be contributions of land, equipment, supplies, or other tangible resources, as distinguished from a monetary grant.

Investment Ready

Projects which are “investment ready” must be ready to proceed are expected to commence construction within 12 months of signing a Funding Agreement. It is expected that all planning, zoning, environmental and/or native title approvals will be in place or pending.

Local Government

A *local governing body* is defined by the *Local Government (Financial Assistance) Act 1995* (Cwlth) as either:

a) a local governing body established by or under a law of a State, other than a body whose sole or principal function is to provide a particular service, such as the supply of electricity or water, or

b) a body declared by the Minister, on the advice of the relevant State Minister, by notice published in the *Gazette*, to be a local governing body for the purposes of this Act.

Please note that 'State' in the *Local Government (Financial Assistance) Act 1995* (Cwlth) includes the Australian Capital Territory and the Northern Territory.

For the purposes of RDAF, the following organisations will be considered local governing bodies:

- Five Indigenous local governing bodies in South Australia (Anangu Pitjantjatjara, Maralinga, Gerard, Nepabunna and Yalata)
- The Outback Communities Authority, formerly the Outback Areas Community Development Trust, in South Australia
- The Trust Account in the Northern Territory
- The Silverton and Tibooburra villages in New South Wales
- Cocos (Keeling) Islands Shire Council
- The Shire of Christmas Island
- Norfolk Island, and
- Lord Howe Island governed by New South Wales.

Incorporated non-profit or not-for-profit organisations

An incorporated organisation is non-profit or not-for-profit whose activities are not carried on for the profit or gain of its individual members. The constitution or governing documents of the organisation should prohibit distribution of profits or gains to individual members.

Outcomes

The long term benefits that a project brings to a community, i.e. the result, impact or consequence of the project. For example, outcomes could include an increase in employment, increase in education opportunities or increase in community capacity. Projects should have a positive outcome.

Partner contribution (or partnership funding)

A financial contribution to the project made by an individual or organisation (partner contributor) from a specific program or funding source. Contributions of tangible resources, such as land, should be included as contributions of in-kind support.

Project

A project is the entire endeavour undertaken to create a unique product, service, or result under the RDAF.

Social Capital

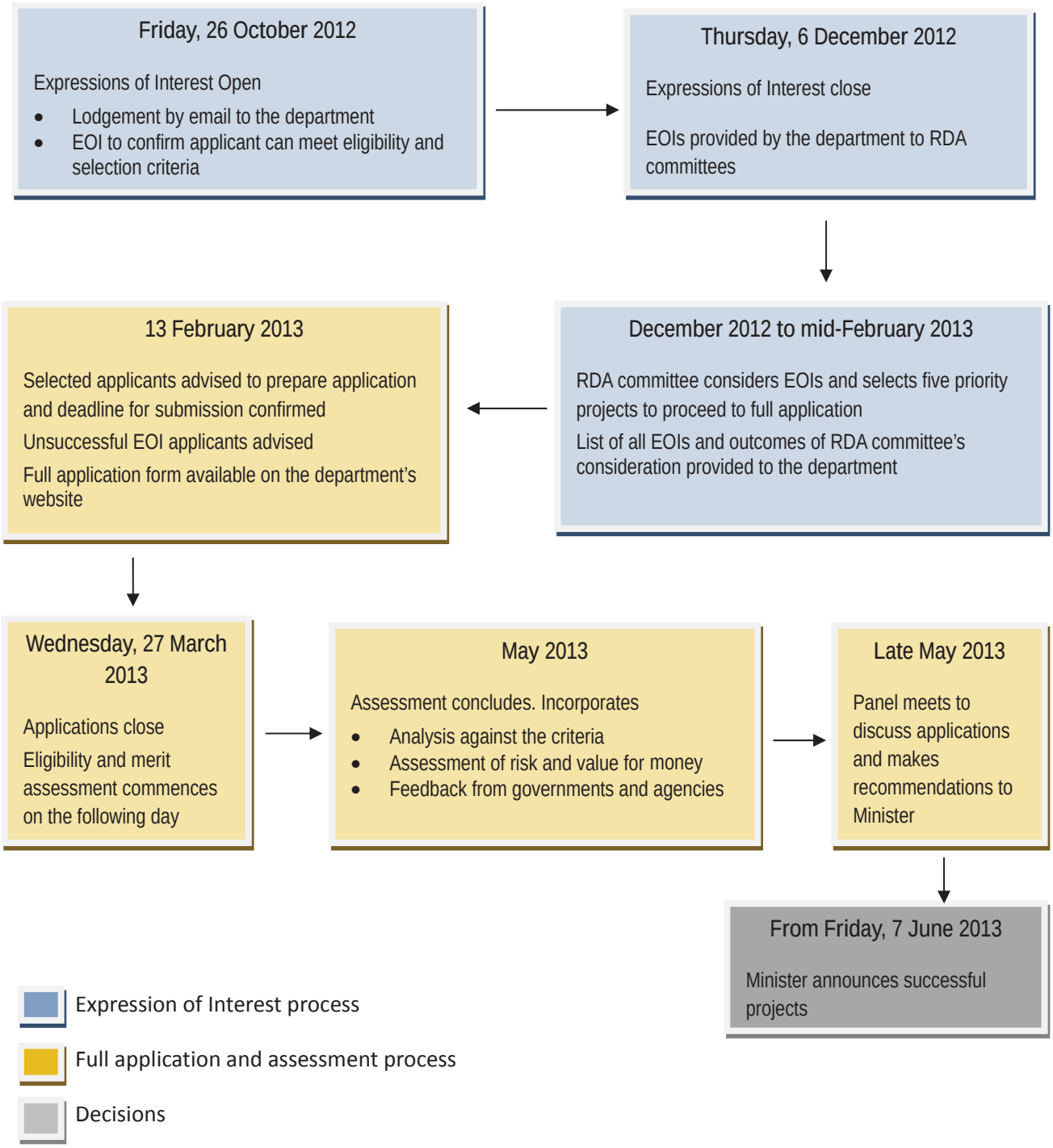
Projects which build the social cohesion of a community, support or enhance social inclusion, build or strengthen social networks or address issues which are specific to minority groups. The outcome is more integrated communities.

Sustainability

The continuation of the project outcomes beyond the period of funding.

Attachment A

Grant Process Flowchart
Round Three



Attachment B

Guidance on Preparing Supporting Plans and Documents

It is expected that the detail, size and content of the supporting documents will be commensurate with the size and scope of the project. Information relating to larger projects is expected to be more detailed relative to information for smaller and/or more simple projects. The key principle in preparing documents is to demonstrate a capacity and capability to deliver the project on time and on budget.

Supporting documents, especially plans, should be practical documents that will be used for implementation and/or management of the project. These documents should not be prepared just for the RDAF application. Consideration should be given, where possible, to using existing or planned documents to support the application.

The Supporting Plans and Documents should include:

1. Details of the Project

- Overview of the project and the benefits that will accrue, including a detailed description of the project, reasons for initiating the project, outcomes and a methodology to review progress against outcomes.
- Description of the physical aspects of the infrastructure to be delivered: Provide details of inclusions and exclusions.

2. Details of Asset Management and Operation

- Demonstrate that the outcomes of the project will be retained in original condition for a five year period.
- Outline the operational needs of the project into the future, a strategy to manage the project and arrangements to maintain the ongoing viability of the completed project.
- Details of ownership arrangements for the facility including leasing and or rental arrangements.
- Five year financial projections post project delivery should be provided, including cost associated with operating and maintaining the infrastructure, projections of any revenue that may be generated, and arrangements to manage revenue shortfalls relative to expenditure.

3. Details of Project Management

- List the start and end dates of the project and, where relevant, the component being funded by RDAF. List milestones to be used to measure progress, and arrangements to monitor progress and compliance.
- Describe the organisational structure, particularly as it relates to the project. The number of staff to be engaged on the project, and roles and responsibilities of key staff members should be defined. Arrangements to procure resources should also be described.
- Outline the budget for the project, both for individual phases and overall. These budgets will contain statements of income, expense and projected balances by scheduled project milestones.
- *A*pprovals which are in place and still to be obtained, as well as a strategy and timeline to finalise all outstanding approvals.
- List the risks associated with the project and mitigating strategies:
  - risks should be from commencement of the project, including construction and management in the medium term
  - an outline of the organisation's approach to managing risk should be outlined, and
  - where possible and for each risk the following should be provided: nature of the identified risk, the likelihood of occurrence, treatment and mitigation strategies, residual risk and staffing arrangements to manage and monitor the risk.

Attachment C

Process for Prioritising EOIs

For use by Regional Development Australia Committees

This attachment provides an overview of the process to be used by RDA committees in prioritising EOIs.

Step 1

Each member of the RDA committee is provided with a copy of each eligible EOI in their region. Members will consider each EOI and apply a score of out of ten (10) to each. In applying the score of ten (10), the member should take the following into account:

- local government priorities, as expressed in a strategic or community plan or other published document
- capacity of the project to address needs in the town and neighbouring towns
- level of community support, and
- capacity to commence the project within 12 months of signing the Funding Agreement and complete the project by 31 December 2016.

The higher the score, the more the project meets these criteria and delivers stronger benefits to the region.

Step 2

The scores assigned by each committee member will be tallied to give a total score for the EOI.

Sample	Sample Committee Member	Sample Score out of 10
EOI 1		
	Committee Member #1	7
	Committee Member #2	8
	Committee Member #3	4
	Committee Member #4	7
	Committee Member #5	8
	TOTAL SCORE FOR PROJECT	34
EOI 2		
	Committee Member #1	3
	Committee Member #2	5
	Committee Member #3	5
	Committee Member #4	6
	Committee Member #5	3
	TOTAL SCORE FOR PROJECT	22
EOI 3		
	Committee Member #1	6
	Committee Member #2	6
	Committee Member #3	7
	Committee Member #4	6
	Committee Member #5	8
	TOTAL SCORE FOR PROJECT	33

Where a committee member has a conflict of interest and does not review or assign a score to an EOI, an average of the other member's scores will be applied.

EOI 3		
	Committee Member #1	6
	Committee Member #2	6
	Committee Member #3	7
	Committee Member #4 Conflicted	6.75 (average)
	Committee Member #5	8
	TOTAL SCORE FOR PROJECT	33.75

Step 3

The EOI with the highest score will be allocated a priority of one (the highest). The EOI with the second highest score will be allocated a priority of two (the second highest), and so on until all EOI are allocated a priority.

EOI Number	Priority	Score
EOI 1	One	34
EOI 3	Two	33
EOI 2	Three	22

Committee members will review and discuss the prioritised EOIs to ensure that it reflects a consolidated view. The first five priority projects will proceed to full application.

The RDA will advise the department of the outcome of their deliberations, including the rationale for their decisions. The department will notify successful and unsuccessful applicants of their status and post the information to the department's website.

Successful applicants (proponents of the five viable priority projects) will be invited by the department to submit a full application. Unsuccessful applicants will be invited to seek feedback from the RDA committee.

Attachment D

Process for Prioritising RDAF Applications

Regional Development Australia Fund Advisory Panel

In considering all applications at all steps of the process, including debate and discussion, the Panel will have regard to the member's expertise, experience and knowledge; material presented by the applicant; the Independent Viability Assessment; and the department's analysis of the applicant's case against the selection criteria. The Panel will review applications against the four selection criteria set out in section 6.

Decisions taken by the Panel, including rationale, will be recorded and endorsed by the Chair.

Step 1—Review all eligible applications

Identify applications which are 'Not Recommended for Funding'.

Step 2—Identify indicative pool of suitable applications

Review applications not excluded via Step 1 to determine if they are 'Recommended for Funding' or 'Suitable for Funding'.

Step 3—Identify and rank applications that are 'Recommended for funding' or 'Suitable for funding'

Each Panel member will rank these applications in order of relative merit and a consolidated list representing the views of all Panel members prepared.

Step 4—Review applications that are 'Recommended for funding'

Applications which are 'Recommended for Funding' will be reviewed, with regard to:

- population by state
- the GDP of each state and territory
- the distribution of projects funded in Round One and Two, including by region and state and territory
- the socio-economic status of Local Government Areas and RDA regions, and
- the Australian Government's commitment to support recovery and reconstruction of disaster affected areas in regional Australia.

- Final rankings will be agreed.

Step 5. Prepare advice to the Minister

Attachment E

Details of the Contractual Arrangements between the Australian Government and proponent

Funding agreement

Successful applicants should enter into a Funding Agreement within 6 months of the project funding being announced by the Minister. The offer of funding may be withdrawn if the applicant cannot meet the timeframe, has not obtained agreement from the department to obtain an extension to this timeframe, or if there are significant reasons why the project cannot commence.

The Funding Agreement is a legally enforceable document that clearly defines the obligations of both parties. The Agreement will describe the purpose for which the Australian Government funding must be used. It will provide a description of how, when and where the project will be delivered, and will set out any requirements or conditions that must be met prior to the release of funds. The Agreement will also set out milestones and project outcomes that must be achieved prior to the release of payments.

The Funding Agreement aims to:

- protect the Government's interests and ensure the effective and efficient use of public money
- set out arrangements covering treatments of any cost savings
- ensure the achievement of the agreed outputs of the project, and
- ensure appropriate recognition of Australian Government funds.

If there are any conditions or risk treatments identified by the department or the RDAF Advisory Panel which need to be satisfied, evidence must be provided to, and accepted by, the department that these conditions have been met, prior to grant payments being made. Conditions and risk treatments will be managed through milestones specified in the Funding Agreement. Action may be taken to terminate Funding Agreements where its requirements are not met.

A template of the RDAF Funding Agreement is available on the department's website at www.regional.gov.au

Branding and recognition

Organisations must ensure that all advertisements, promotional activities, such as pamphlets, other publicity or fundraising events, and any other public relations matters are consistent with the branding requirements and arrangements to acknowledge Commonwealth funding set out in Funding Agreement. As a minimum, all publicly available material on the project should include the words '*Funded by the Australian Government under the Regional Development Australia Fund*'.

Successful applicants must notify the department at least 45 business days in advance of any upcoming promotional activity, such as launches, sod-turning events, openings, graduations and visits

or public statements. The Minister must be invited to all such activities. The Minister has the option of accepting, declining or nominating a representative to attend on his behalf. The representative may be another Minister, a Parliamentary Secretary, a RDA Chair and/or a local member supporting the Minister. Departmental staff may also attend.

It is not appropriate for organisations to invite a representative, such as a local Member of Parliament, to attend such a launch or function without prior agreement from the Minister's Office. Such permission must be sought through the department.

Payment arrangements

Payments will be made on the achievement of agreed milestones. Before payments can be made, funding recipients will be required to provide:

- evidence of meeting the milestone through provision of a progress report, photographs and other documentation as requested
- evidence of meeting the obligations of the Funding Agreement
- evidence that all previous payments made by the department under the RDAF for the project have been expended or committed, and
- a tax invoice, which meets the requirements of the Australian Taxation Office, for the amount of the payment.

Payments will only be made after the department is satisfied that milestones and the associated obligations specified in the Funding Agreement have been met.

Managing the project

Once the Agreement is executed, the applicant will be required to actively manage the project. The project's progress against the Agreement will be monitored by the applicant, which will provide progress reports to the department.

The department will monitor progress against the Agreement by assessment of progress reports and by conducting site visits as necessary. Based on project size, complexity and the amount of funding being provided, the department may require an applicant to establish a Project Governance Board with regular meetings and reports. The department may be an observer at these meetings.

Reporting

Applicants must provide regular reports on their progress against the achievement of agreed milestones. Depending on the size and/or complexity of the projects, reporting will be quarterly or half yearly.

Whether reports are to be made quarterly or half yearly will be determined as part of the Funding Agreement negotiations and will be directly linked to the agreed milestones and risk assessments. Acquittal of expenditure will also be a key element of these reports.

Where progress payments are linked to the achievement of particular activities, these payments will only be made after the relevant progress report is accepted and the requirements for payment stated in the Agreement have been met, including expenditure or commitment of the previous payment.

Additionally, if funding has been approved subject to meeting certain conditions, evidence that the conditions have been met must be presented to, and accepted by the department.

Acquittals

Applicants are required to provide the department with financial acquittals, and audited statements upon project completion, that demonstrate that they have spent the Australian Government funding on the purposes specified in the Agreement. For large projects, audited statements may also be required as part of milestone reports.

Applicants should familiarise themselves with the Agreement to ensure they are able to comply with the acquittal requirements.

When the Project has been completed, applicants must submit to the department a:

- 'Completion Report', to demonstrate that they have achieved all the agreed milestones; and
- financial acquittal and audited statement by an independent auditor, of all expenditure of Australian Government funding and other funding sources, as set out in the Funding Agreement.

Once this report has been accepted by the department, the final grant payment will be made.

Evaluation

To enable evaluation of the benefits of Government funding, each applicant is required to identify the project's key outputs and the manner in which they will be measured (Performance Measures). These outputs and Performance Measures will be included in the Agreement. The Project Completion Report will document what was achieved with the funding provided for the project by the Australian Government. Utilising this information, the department will determine how the funding contributed to the objectives and outcomes of the program.

Australian Government

Department of Regional Australia, Local Government, Arts and Sport

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Regional Development Australia Fund

Round Three

Supporting Small Towns

October 2012

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Record of Updates to the Frequently Asked Questions

This 'Frequently Asked Questions' document is a living document, and will be updated regularly to reflect new questions or issues. The following table provides an indication to the reader of when this document was last updated and the nature of the changes.

Prior to submitting and EOI or full application review this document to ensure that the information you have based your submission on considers the full range of Frequently Asked Questions.

Date updated	Pages updated	Description of update

1. Expressions of interest

1.1. What is the Expression of Interest process for Round Three?

- The Expression of Interest (EOI) process was introduced in Round Two of RDAF. It is a key element of Rounds Three and Four.
- EOIs are intended to simplify the application process, reduce the administrative burden on applicants, and provide early certainty to proponents.
- The EOI is a simple form which seeks key details about the project and applicant. EOIs must be emailed directly to the department (rdaf@regional.gov.au). The department will record the details of the EOI and forward EOIs to the relevant Regional Development Australia (RDA) committee.
- RDA committees will consider all of the EOIs submitted from across their region and select five viable priority projects to proceed to full application.
- The EOI form is available on the department's website www.regional.gov.au.
- Details of RDA committees can be found at www.rda.gov.au.

1.2. Why is the EOI process necessary?

- The EOI process provides for direct community input into the selection of priority projects. It allows communities to identify priorities and needs, and for the selection of projects that meet those priorities and needs.
- Projects are required to address priorities set out in the local government's strategic plan or community plan, or meet other published priorities.
- The EOI process will minimise compliance costs for potential applicants, and provide early certainty about whether the project is to proceed to the next stage of the application process.

1.3. Are the EOI forms for Rounds Three and Four the same?

- No, the EOI forms are different, given that Rounds Three and Four have different eligibility requirements and selection criteria.
- It is important that applicants complete the correct EOI form. Only completed EOIs will be accepted.
- EOI forms can be found at www.regional.gov.au.

1.4. Can I submit EOIs for Round Three and Four?

- Yes. You may submit one EOI to Round Three and one EOI to Round Four. However, each EOI must be for a different project.

- The EOI must be submitted on the correct form for the correct round and must meet the requirements of the round. For example, the EOI for Round Three must seek less than $500,000 and the project must be located in a town of 30,000 people or less.
- You may also participate in a consortium to deliver another project. However, the EOI must be submitted by an eligible applicant, which has not submitted an EOI in its own right.

1.5. Can I submit more than one EOI?

- You cannot submit more than one EOI to a single round. You may submit one EOI to Round Three and one EOI to Round Four.
- Where more than one EOI is submitted to a single round, the first EOI received by the department will be accepted (section 4.1 of the Guidelines).

1.6. Do I have to be an eligible applicant to lodge an EOI?

- Yes, only eligible applicants may submit an EOI for an eligible project.
- Applicants must, in the EOI form, certify that they have read the Guidelines for Round Three of RDAF, meet the eligibility criteria, and can submit a full application and supporting documents if selected to proceed to full application.
- The EOI form must be completed in full and submitted to the department by 5:00 pm local time on Thursday, 6 December 2012.

1.7. Can I submit attachments with my EOI?

- No. Fully completed EOIs must be submitted, and must not include attachments.
- Should attachments be provided, they will not be forwarded to RDA committees nor considered by RDA committees. This ensures that all proponents of EOIs are treated fairly and equitably, and that EOIs are assessed on their merits based on a consistent set of information.

1.8. Can I submit more than one EOI for Round Three?

- No, only one EOI can be lodged by an applicant for a single project to Round Three.
- Proponents cannot lodge an EOI for the same or different projects to a number of RDA committees.
- If more than one EOI is submitted for Round Three, the first EOI received by the department will be accepted.
- For more detail, see Section 4.1 of the Guidelines.

1.9. Is there an on-line process to submit EOIs?

- The EOI form for Round Three is located on the department's website at www.regional.gov.au. The form should be downloaded, completed and emailed to the department at rdaf@regional.gov.au.
- If you do not receive an acknowledgement of receipt of your EOI within two days of submission, you should immediately contact the department to confirm that it has been received. Please contact the department on 1800 005 494.
- The department will forward the EOI to the RDA committee nominated by the applicant.
- EOIs emailed directly to the RDA committee will not be considered.

1.10. Can I withdraw my EOI?

- Yes, EOIs can be withdrawn at any time by the applicant's authorised person (identified at Question 7 in the EOI form).
- Written advice of withdrawal must be provided to the department at rdaf@regional.gov.au.

1.11. If I make a mistake in my EOI can I send the department a replacement?

- EOIs can be amended or substituted up to the closing date for EOIs.
  - ✓ The closing date for EOIs is Thursday, 6 December 2012.
- Where EOIs are amended, the initial EOI must be withdrawn and a replacement EOI provided. This should be done in writing via email, with emails sent to rdaf@regional.gov.au and clearly setting out the name of the proponent, project, date of submission to the department and reasons for withdrawal.
- Replacement or revised EOIs must be emailed to the department before the closing date.

1.12. When will I hear about the outcome of my EOI?

- The department will advise applicants of the outcome of the EOI in writing by 5:00 pm local time on Wednesday, 13 February 2013.
- A full list of EOIs and projects proceeding to full application will be listed on the department's website at 5.00 pm on Wednesday, 13 February 2013.
- RDA committees may also publish information about its EOI process, and the outcomes of the EOI on their websites.

2. Projects

2.1. Does my project need to align with the RDA Regional Plan or Roadmap?

- No. Projects seeking funding in Round Three must address local government priorities, as expressed in a strategic plan or community plan, or other published document.
  - ✓ Reference to and details of the plan must be provided in the EOI.
- The EOI requests details on the priority being met and document setting out the priority.

2.2. My project falls into more than one of the infrastructure categories set out in the Guidelines. How do I pick the right category?

- Projects must fall into one of the four nominated categories:
  - ✓ the economy
  - ✓ the community
  - ✓ arts and culture, or
  - ✓ sport and recreation.
- Projects can fall into more than one of these categories. In this case, proponents should pick the category where the primary benefit occurs. For example:
  - ✓ A new sports centre can support the regional economy and deliver significant health benefits to the community. The primary category is sport and recreation.
  - ✓ A new community centre may host performances and concerts, and will also benefit the local economy during construction and in its ongoing operation. The primary category is community.
- This question assists in the assessment of the EOI and selection of projects to proceed to full application. There is no right or wrong answer.

2.3. I am seeking funding for the replacement of sewerage pipes? Is this an eligible project?

- Projects which would normally be undertaken by a local council are not excluded from RDAF. However, proponents must make a case for these projects in Selection Criterion Four. This case should include a description of the project and the need for additional funding.

2.4. What does 'investment ready' mean?

- A project must commence within 12 months of signing a Funding Agreement and the project must be completed by 31 December 2016.
- Funding Agreements are to be negotiated within six months of the Minister's announcement on the outcome of Round Three.

2.5. My project is based in a capital city. Is it eligible for Round Three?

- No. Round Three supports small projects located in small towns.
  - ✓ A small town must have a population of 30,000 or less.

2.6. There is a bridge outside my town that is in poor condition. It is a bottleneck to economic development. Is restoration of the bridge an eligible project?

- Funding will be available for a large range of projects. Projects must meet the eligibility criteria set out in the Guidelines.
- Projects which are the normal responsibility of state, territory or local governments should address Selection Criteria 4, and make a case for funding from RDAF.

2.7. Can I apply under Round Three for funding to repair a roof on a retirement village owned by a not-for-profit organisation?

- Yes. Funding can be used for upgrades to existing infrastructure.

3. Applicants

3.1. If my organisation received funding under Round One or Round Two, can I still apply for funding?

- Yes. If you are an eligible applicant and have an eligible project, you can submit an EOI under Round Three. You may also submit an EOI for Round Four, as long as the EOI is for a different project.
- If selected to proceed to full application, the RDAF Advisory Panel will consider the individual and relative merits of eligible applications and provide independent advice to the Minister on projects which are recommended for funding.

3.2. I am a not-for-profit organisation. Can I submit an EOI?

- Yes, not-for-profit organisations are eligible applicants for Round Three.
- Eligible not-for-profit organisations must have a minimum annual income of $500,000, averaged over the most recent two financial years.
- Applicants must have audited financial statements to confirm that they meet this eligibility criterion. These statements will be required as part of the full application.
- Not-for-profit organisations with an annual income of less than $500,000 may still participate in Round Three as a member of a consortium.

3.3. Why do not-for-profit organisations need to have an annual income of more than $500,000 averaged over two financial years?

- The annual income threshold ensures that not-for-profit organisations have the capability and capacity to deliver the project. It also ensures that they have the capacity to sustain the project in the medium term, without further Government assistance.

3.4. I am a not-for-profit organisation, and we have branches located across Australia. Are we eligible to apply for Round Three in our own right or should our head body submit one application on behalf of all of our branches?

- A branch of a not-for-profit organisation can apply for Round Three funding in its own right if it meets the eligibility criteria.
  - ✓ The organisation must be incorporated, operate independently, have an Australian Business Number and meet the income threshold (an annual income of more than $500,000 averaged over two financial years).
- Not-for-profit organisations which do not meet these requirements can participate in Round Three as a member of a consortium which is led by an eligible applicant.

3.5. How is income defined for a not-for-profit organisation?

- Income is the organisation's total income or revenue. It is generally accepted in Australian accounting practice to be regular revenue identified on a profit and loss statement.
  - ✓ Income would include all usual forms of revenue, such as merchandise sales, consulting fees, lease payments for rented property, annual operating grants, consulting fees, other general fees and interest earned.
- Extraordinary items of revenue, such as asset sales, one-off share returns, write downs, asset revaluations and one-off grants, may also be included for the purposes of RDAF.

3.6. What does cash include?

- For accounting purposes, cash includes money in hand, petty cash, bank account balance, customer checks, and marketable securities. It may also include the unutilized portion of an overdraft facility or line of credit.

4. ELIGIBLE TOWNS

4.1. What do you mean by a town of 30,000 or less?

- For Round Three of RDAF, a town refers to an urban centre with a population of 30,000 or less. It cannot include the suburb of a major regional centre. Towns which have a population of more than 30,000 include, for example:
  - ✓ NSW: Coffs Harbour, Port Macquarie and Tamworth.
  - ✓ Victoria: Glenelg, Ballarat and Mildura.
  - ✓ Queensland: Toowoomba, Rockhampton and Cairns.
  - ✓ South Australia: Riverland and the, Barossa.
  - ✓ Western Australia: Mandurah and Geraldton.
  - ✓ Tasmania: Launceston.
  - ✓ Northern Territory: Alice Springs.
- If the project is located on the outskirts of a capital city, it may be eligible. Projects must be located in peri-urban areas, or outer suburbs of a larger metropolitan centre, where that group of suburbs has a population of 30,000 or less. Proponents in peri-urban areas must make a case for their inclusion in the scope of Round Three.

4.2. Why is Round Three limited to towns with a population of 30,000 or less?

- Feedback on Round Two suggested that small councils, particularly those with a low rate base, had a lesser capacity to compete with larger, well-resourced councils.
- Stakeholders also argued that projects should be able to compete against 'like' projects, that is projects of a similar size and scale.

4.3. I am not sure if my town has a population of 30,000 or less. Each of the references I have looked at quotes a different population?

- The applicant has responsibility for demonstrating that their project is located in a town with a population of 30,000 or less. Evidence to confirm population must be provided with the full application to confirm the population of the town meets the requirements of the Guidelines.
- A good source of data is the Australian Bureau of Statistics 2011 Census data, which is available at http://www.abs.gov.au/census.
- Population statistics quoted should be current, and preferably not older than 2009.

4.4. Our project is located in an area, but not in a town as such. Is it an eligible project for Round Three?

- If the project is outside a town its eligibility will be determined by the LGA population where the project is located and or the nearest town population.

5. Partnership funding

5.1. Can I apply for funding for a project if I don't have partnership funding?

- Yes. Partnership funding is preferred (but not mandatory).
- Priority will be given to applications that provide partnership funding, in cash, of more than the required 50 per cent of the requested grant. In-kind contributions, including land, will also be accepted.
- Priority will also be given to partnership funding which includes a contribution from other parties, such as state or territory governments, not-for-profit organisations, philanthropic organisations or the private sector.
- Applicants must provide evidence with their application to demonstrate that partnership funding has been secured.

5.2. Do I need to have my cash contribution up-front?

- Yes, partnership funding and co-contributions should be able to flow from the time that the Funding Agreement is signed.

5.3. Does land count as an in-kind contribution?

- Yes, land is considered to be an in-kind contribution. There is no limit (maximum or minimum) on in-kind contributions.

5.4. Will more partnership funding strengthen my application?

- Projects are assessed on individual and relative merits.
- The Guidelines state that preference will be given to contributions that maximize leverage.
- More partnership funding demonstrates greater commitment and support of partners.

6. Role of Regional Development Australia Committees

6.1. What is a Regional Development Australia committee?

- RDA committees bring together all levels of government to support the growth and development of regional Australia.
- There are 55 committees across Australia, which build partnerships between governments, regional development organisations, local businesses, community groups and key regional stakeholders. They provide strategic and targeted responses to social, economic and environmental issues affecting regional Australia.

- Committees are appointed by the Australian Government in conjunction with state and territory governments. Committees are made up of representatives of local government, and leaders from the community and business.

6.2. What is the role of RDA committees in the EOI process?

- RDA committees will review and assess each EOI and select up to five viable priority projects to proceed to full application.
- RDA committees will provide feedback to those applicants that do not proceed to full application.
- RDA committees will also assess EOIs for Round Four and select three priority projects to proceed to full application.

6.3. What will RDA committees take into account when analysing EOIs?

- RDA committees have a strong understanding of their region, and local needs and issues.
- Committees will base their assessment of EOIs on:
  - ✓ local government priorities, as expressed in a strategic community plan or other published document
  - ✓ capacity of the project to address needs in the town and neighbouring towns
  - ✓ level of community support, and
  - ✓ capacity to commence the project within 12 months of signing the Funding Agreement and complete the project by 31 December 2016.
- RDA committees will not assess the eligibility of EOIs.

6.4. How will RDA committees handle conflicts of interest?

- RDA committees must adhere to robust governance requirements, including conflict of interest and Probity protocols.
- Prior to reviewing EOIs, RDA committee members and staff will agree to conflict of interest requirements. They will also commit to observing stringent confidentiality and conflict of interest protocols.
- Committee members who have a conflict of interest will not review or vote on the EOI which is the subject of the conflict.

6.5. Are the RDA committees the sole decision makers on EOIs?

- Yes. RDA committees are responsible for reviewing each EOI and determining the five viable priority projects to proceed to full application.
- The Guidelines for Round Three outline the process to be used by RDA committees in prioritising applications (section 6.2, section 7.1 and Attachment C of the Guidelines).
- RDA committees must provide feedback to those applicants who submitted an EOI on reasons why the project was not selected.

6.6. Why are only five EOIs proceeding to full application in Round Three, and not all EOIs?

- The EOI process is intended to reduce the compliance costs for applicants, and to provide early certainty about whether their project is proceeding to the next stage of the program.
- RDA committees use their local knowledge to select projects that meet the highest community priorities.
- The EOI process ensures that communities participate in the identification of priorities and selection of projects, either directly or indirectly through members of the RDA committee.

6.7. Can I present my case to the RDA committee?

- No. Round Three of RDAF is a competitive merit-based grants program. To ensure equity and fairness, proposed projects will only be assessed on the information included in the EOI.
- Given that EOIs play a strong role in the consideration of RDA committees, proponents are advised to present the strongest case for their project in the EOI.

6.8. Can RDA committee members or RDA staff help prepare my EOI when Round Three has opened?

- No. As RDA committees are decision-makers in a competitive Government grants program, they are bound by strict requirements about fairness, equity of treatment and transparency in decision-making.
- Once Round Three opens, RDA committee members and their staff are not able to assist potential applicants to prepare their EOI.
- RDA committees can, however, conduct information sessions which are open to all potential applicants. Such sessions must be available to all members of the community, the same information must be delivered in a consistent manner and questions and responses asked at the sessions must be placed on the RDA committee's website.

6.9. I have had dealings with my RDA committee in the lead up to the opening of Round Three. Is this a Conflict of Interest?

- No. RDA committees should be talking with local communities about the opportunities offered by RDAF.
- Committees can also play a facilitation role, identifying potential projects and bringing potential proponents together.

7. Role of the department

7.1. What is the department's role in the EOI process?

- The department is not involved in the assessment of EOIs nor in decisions on EOIs which will proceed to full application. These assessments and decisions are taken by RDA committees.
- Applicants will email their EOI to the department, which will then be forwarded by the department to the nominated RDA (EOIs should be sent to rdaf@regional.gov.au).
- The department will publish a full list of EOIs and outcomes of the RDA committee's assessment on its website on Wednesday, 13 February 2013.
  - ✓ The department will also invite the applicants of the up to five priority projects in each RDA region to submit a full application for Round Three.

7.2. I have questions about the program and EOI process. Who can I talk too?

- To ensure the highest standard of probity, the department requires that questions be written (email) and sent to rdaf@regional.gov.au, and that answers be provided in writing.
- This ensures that consistent advice is provided to all applicants and does not advantage any single applicant and is auditable. It also ensures that all key questions can be added to this document, and made available to all other potential proponents.
- Questions to the rdaf@regional.gov.au inbox should be clear and concise, and identify the part of the process you are seeking advice on.

7.3. I am not sure if my project fits under the Round Three Guidelines. If I email a description of the project to the RDAF email address, can they advise me if my project is likely to be funded?

- No, unfortunately the department cannot provide advice to proponents about eligibility, either of their project or their organisation, during the EOI and application period.
- The department is required to ensure that all potential proponents are treated in a fair and equitable manner, and that no unfair advantage is given to any one proponent.

8. Decisions on Expressions of Interest

8.1. Is the outcome of the EOI appealable?

- No, the decision of the RDA committee is final.

8.2. Will I get feedback if my EOI is not invited to proceed to full application?

- Yes, the RDA committee will provide feedback to all proponents of EOIs.

9. Full applications

9.1. What do I do if I am invited to proceed to a full application?

- Following receipt of advice from the department that your project has been selected to proceed to full application for Round Three, you should review the Guidelines for Round Three and
  - ✓ if you haven't already done so, register your organisation on the department's Grants Management System portal,
  - ✓ assemble all of the supporting documents, and
  - ✓ complete the application webform in the department's Grants Management System portal.
- Full applications are due to be submitted to the department by 5:00pm local time on Wednesday, 27 March 2013. Late applications will not be accepted.
- A Frequently Asked Questions document on the full application process will be available prior to the announcement of the projects selected to proceed to full application.

9.2. Can I make material changes to the scope of my project between the EOI and submitting the full application?

- The project described in the EOI and application form must be materially the same, given that EOIs were selected on a competitive basis.
- However, given the timing between the submission of the EOI and the application form, reasonable changes to the scope, location, value of the project and value of the partnership funding will be accepted.
- The guiding principle is that projects in the full application must not differ in any material way from the project selected by the RDA committee.

Regional Development Australia Fund - Round Three
Supporting Small Towns

Expression of Interest Form

Advice to Applicants

1. Expressions of Interest (EOIs) for Round Three of the Regional Development Australia Fund (RDAF) opened on Friday, 26 October 2012. EOIs must be lodged by 5:00pm local time on Thursday, 6 December 2012.

2. Potential applicants are advised to carefully review the Guidelines for Round Three (the Guidelines) prior to completing this EOI form. Applicants must assess their eligibility against the Guidelines, and confirm their eligibility in the declaration section of this EOI form. Applicants must be certain that they can submit an eligible application prior to submitting an EOI.
   - ✓ RDA committees do not assess eligibility of EOIs against the eligibility criteria set out in the Guidelines.
   - ✓ The Department will assess the eligibility of the full application.

3. Eligible applicants are permitted to submit one EOI for one project in Round Three. Multiple EOIs will not be accepted. Where more than one EOI is lodged with the Department, only the first EOI will be accepted.
   - ✓ Eligible applicants can submit an EOI to both Round Three and Round Four for different projects. Proponents must be sure that they can meet the different eligibility and selection criteria for each round.

4. The EOI form cannot be changed or altered in any way. The EOI form must be completed in its entirety. Attachments will not be accepted. Responses to questions should be short and succinct.
   - ✓ Responses to each question in Part E are limited to 350 words. Text over this limit will not be considered by RDA committees.
   - ✓ Only fully completed EOIs will be accepted and must be signed by an authorised person. Incomplete EOIs and late EOIs will not be considered.
   - ✓ EOIs received by the Department prior to the closing date can be withdrawn and replaced with an updated EOI for the same project or an EOI for a different project. Advice on the withdrawal of an EOI must be provided in writing to the Department (rdaf@regional.gov.au).
   - ✓ EOIs may be withdrawn following the closing date via email to the Department (rdaf@regional.gov.au).

5. Completed EOIs must be emailed to rdaf@regional.gov.au by 5.00pm local time on Thursday, 6 December 2012. EOIs must not be emailed direct to the RDA committee.
   - ✓ All EOIs received by the Department will be acknowledged via email within two working days. If you do not receive an acknowledgement from the Department, please call 1800 005 494 as a priority to confirm that your EOI has been received.

6. The Department will notify all proponents of the outcome of their EOI on Wednesday, 13 February 2013. Details of the full application process will be published on the Department's website www.regional.gov.au.

PART A. DETAILS OF APPLICANT

1.	**Name of Applicant** *If you are a not-for-profit organisation please provide your registered business name as listed at www.abr.business.gov.au*	
2.	**Type of Applicant** *Please tick the correct box or delete the line which is not relevant*	☐ Local Government ☐ Not-for-profit organisation
3.	**Annual Income of a Not-for-Profit Organisation** *Not-for-profit organisations must have an annual income of at least $500,000 averaged over the two most recent financial years*	Annual Income $..... (year 1) Annual Income $..... (year 2)
4.	**Australian Business Number** *Must be for the applicant named is question 1*	
5.	**Physical Address of Applicant**	
6.	**Postal Address of Applicant**	
7.	**Authorised Person from Applicant Organisation** *This is the person with authority to submit the EOI, such as the Chief Executive Officer or General Manager*	Name: Title: Phone: Email :
8.	**Contact Details of Person with Responsibility for the Project** *This is the person who will have day-to-day responsibility for delivering the project, such as the Chief Engineer or Project Manager*	Name: Title: Phone: Email:

PART B. DETAILS OF PROJECT

9.	**Project Name**	
10.	**Description of the Project** *Describe the infrastructure that will be funded from RDAF funding. (100 word limit)*	
11.	**Is the activity for which RDAF funding is sought part of a larger project?** *If yes, please describe the larger project and the relationship between the activity for which RDAF funding is requested and the larger project. (100 word limit)*	No / Yes
12.	**Category of Infrastructure** *Select the one category which best describes your project*	☐ Economic ☐ Community ☐ Arts and Culture ☐ Sport and Recreation
13.	**Is the project dependent on the completion of any other activities?** *If yes, please describe the activities which are to be completed and the estimated time frames*	No / Yes
14.	**What local government priority or priorities does your project address? Please list the documents which describe these priorities.**	Priorities: Source documents:

15.	**When will the project commence and be completed?** **When will the activity for which RDAF funding is sought commence and be completed?**		Commencement Date	Completion Date
		Project		
		Activity		

PART C. LOCATION OF PROJECT

16.	**Project Location** *What is the physical address of the project? If the project is located in more than one location, list all locations*	
17.	**Confirmation that the project is located in a town with a population of 30,000 people or less.** *Please list evidence to demonstrate population size*	
18.	**Name of the RDA committee which has responsibility for the region where the project is primarily located.** *Only one RDA committee can be nominated*	
19.	**Local Government Area in which project is located**	

PART D. DETAILS OF FUNDING

20.	**Value of RDAF grant being requested** *Must be between $50,000 and $500,000. Must be GST exclusive*	$
21.	**Total cost of the project** **Total cost of the activity to be supported by RDAF** *Must be GST exclusive*	$ $

22.	**Value of your organisation's contribution to the project** *Maps to Selection Criterion 3*	Cash $		In-kind $
23.	**Value of cash contributions from partners** *List whether each contribution is confirmed, or requested but not confirmed in the Status of Contribution column. Maps to Selection Criterion 3*	Name of Contributor	Value of Cash Contribution	Status of Contribution
			$	
24.	**Value of in-kind contributions from partners** *List whether each contribution is confirmed, or requested but not confirmed in the Status of Contribution column. Maps to Selection Criterion 3*	Name of Contributor	Value of In-kind Contribution	Status of Contribution
			$	

PART E. MATTERS TO BE CONSIDERED BY RDA COMMITTEES WHEN SELECTING PROJECTS TO PROCEED TO FULL APPLICATION

25.	**How is the project aligned to local government priorities as expressed in a strategic or community plan or other published document?** *Response should be no more than 350 words*
	Response:
26.	**How does the project address needs in the town and neighbouring towns? Describe the benefits of the project for local communities? (Maps to Selection Criterion 1)** *Response should be no more than 350 words*
	Response:

27.	**Describe the community support for the project, including the extent of support and nature of supporting organisations.** *Response should be no more than 350 words*
	Response:
28.	**Confirm that project (or element being funded by RDAF) will be completed by 31 December 2016. Please refer to approvals that have to be obtained, including the status of those approvals, and project delivery arrangements.** *Response should be no more than 350 words*
	Response:
29.	**How will the project contribute to or support the local economy? (Maps to Selection Criterion 2)** *Response should be no more than 350 words*
	Response:

30.	**If you are seeking funding for a project which is the normal responsibility of local, state or territory governments, please describe why RDAF funding is needed. (Maps to Selection Criterion 4)** *Response should be no more than 350 words*
	Response:

PART F. DECLARATION OF ELIGIBILITY

I, [*insert name*] , confirm that my organisation has reviewed the Guidelines for Round Three of the Regional Development Australia Fund.

I confirm that my organisation can meet all eligibility and selection criteria as detailed in the Guidelines for Round Three. If selected to proceed to full application, I confirm that my organisation can provide a completed application, including supporting documents, by 5.00pm local time on Wednesday, 27 March 2013.

I confirm that:

- My project is located in a small town which has a population of less than 30,000.
- I represent a local government organisation or an eligible Not-For-Profit organisation.
- My project is 'investment ready' and, if it receives funding from Round Three, my organisation will commence construction within 12 months of signing the Funding Agreement with the Commonwealth.
- The component of the project for which RDAF funding from Round Three is requested will be completed by 31 December 2016.
- My project is predominantly infrastructure in nature.
- My organisation is requesting between $50,000 and $500,000 (GST exclusive).
- My project has community support which can be evidenced by supporting documentation.
- My organisation can implement the project and can sustain it in the longer term.
- My organisation has, or will have at the time of applying, the following required documents to support our application:

- ✓ letters to confirm the provision of partnership funding from the funding providers;
- ✓ letters of support and evidence of community consultation;
- ✓ audited financial statements for the most recent two consecutive financial years;
- ✓ evidence to demonstrate that we have delivered projects of a similar size or scope on time and on budget;
- ✓ evidence to confirm that my organisation can sustain the project for at least five years; and
- ✓ supporting documentation that includes details of the scope and outputs of the project, sets out how the project will be delivered and identifies any risks.

- My organisation can present a strong, well supported case against the selection criteria:
  - ✓ the extent to which the project will support the local economy; AND/OR
  - ✓ the extent to which the project will benefit the local community; AND/OR
  - ✓ the extent to which the applicant leverages additional funding from a variety of sources; AND
  - ✓ the extent to which the applicant is unable to otherwise fund the project (for projects which are normally the responsibility of local government or state and territory governments only).
- My organisation is willing to enter into a Funding Agreement with the Department.

I am a person authorised to make this declaration on behalf of my organisation.

I confirm that all of the information provided in this Expression of Interest form is true, correct and accurate.

Name	**Position**
Signature	**Date**

Australian Government

Department of Regional Australia, Local Government, Arts and Sport

GUIDELINES

Regional Development Australia Fund

Round Four

Supporting Regional Infrastructure Projects

October 2012

Minister's Foreword

The $1 billion Regional Development Australia Fund (RDAF) is helping Australia's regions to grow, and to become strong and vibrant. It is supporting dynamic communities and enhancing liveability across the country. The RDAF is part of the Government's larger $4.3 billion package for regional infrastructure, including the Regional Infrastructure Fund.

Rounds One and Two of the RDAF have delivered significant benefits to regional communities. We have provided $350 million to support 81 projects with a total value of $1.2 billion. New and upgraded infrastructure is making a significant contribution to Australia's regions. Upgrades to transport and tourism infrastructure is assisting local economies to better respond to growth and to diversify. New and upgraded arts and performance facilities are bringing more of the arts to regional and remote areas. Sports infrastructure is enabling young people in regional communities to become active and to compete on quality facilities.

But more than this, the RDAF is driving cultural change and demonstrating that when communities identify priorities, build partnerships and leverage funding, the Commonwealth Government will come on board. There are four important messages for potential applicants from Rounds One and Two:

- Proponents and projects should leverage funds, not just from government, but also from the private sector, business and community groups. These projects are a partnership, and I am looking for contributions from across the region
- Proponents should be persistent – it pays off. If the project stacks up, I encourage councils and not-for-profit organisations to persist. 23 projects which were not funded in Round One received a grant in Round Two. These organisations took the feedback from my Department on board, strengthened their applications, and made a compelling case for funding
- Proponents should think strategically and innovatively. Projects should be creative and innovative – offer new ways to address old problems or adopt and adapt new technologies. I want projects to showcase the innovative thinking of our regions, and

- Regional impact is important. Projects should reach beyond town or local government area, and offer real benefits to a number of communities. In this way, projects will have a real impact in regional Australia.

The Government has announced a large strategic package to support the immediate and critical needs of regional Australia. This funding is supported by the proceeds of the Minerals Resource Rent Tax. Round Four of RDAF is a key element of this package and provides $175 million in grants to strategic infrastructure projects in regional Australia, with the maximum grant being $15 million.

The Government has also opened Round Three of the RDAF, which supports our smaller communities and is directly targeted at towns with a population of 30,000 or less in rural, remote, regional and peri-urban areas. Fifty million dollars is available, with the maximum grant being $500,000. Applicants can submit an application to both Round Three and Round Four, although the applications must be for different projects. Guidelines for Round Three are available from my Department's website.

Round Five will support strategic projects in the regions of Australia. Details of Round Five will be available from my Department's website following its launch.

Funding from Round Four will be provided to the highest priorities of communities, and seek to improve liveability and the sense of community. Regional Development Australia committees will again play a key role, identifying projects to proceed to full application. These projects will be selected because they best meet the needs of the regions, address priorities in the committee's Regional Plans, and deliver real benefits to regional Australians.

Funding for arts and culture will continue to be a priority for this Government. Funding for these projects from Rounds Three and Four will aim to be at least equal to the $40 million provided under Rounds One and Two.

I have reviewed Round Two of the RDAF to ensure the program is meeting the needs of regional communities, and I have made some further refinements in response to your feedback. I am confident that these changes will further enhance a program which is already delivering real benefits for regional communities.

Regional Australia is important to our national prosperity and our social fabric. I look forward to our continued partnership to grow and strengthen both our regions and their communities.

Simon Crean

Minister for Regional Australia, Regional Development and Local Government
Minister for the Arts

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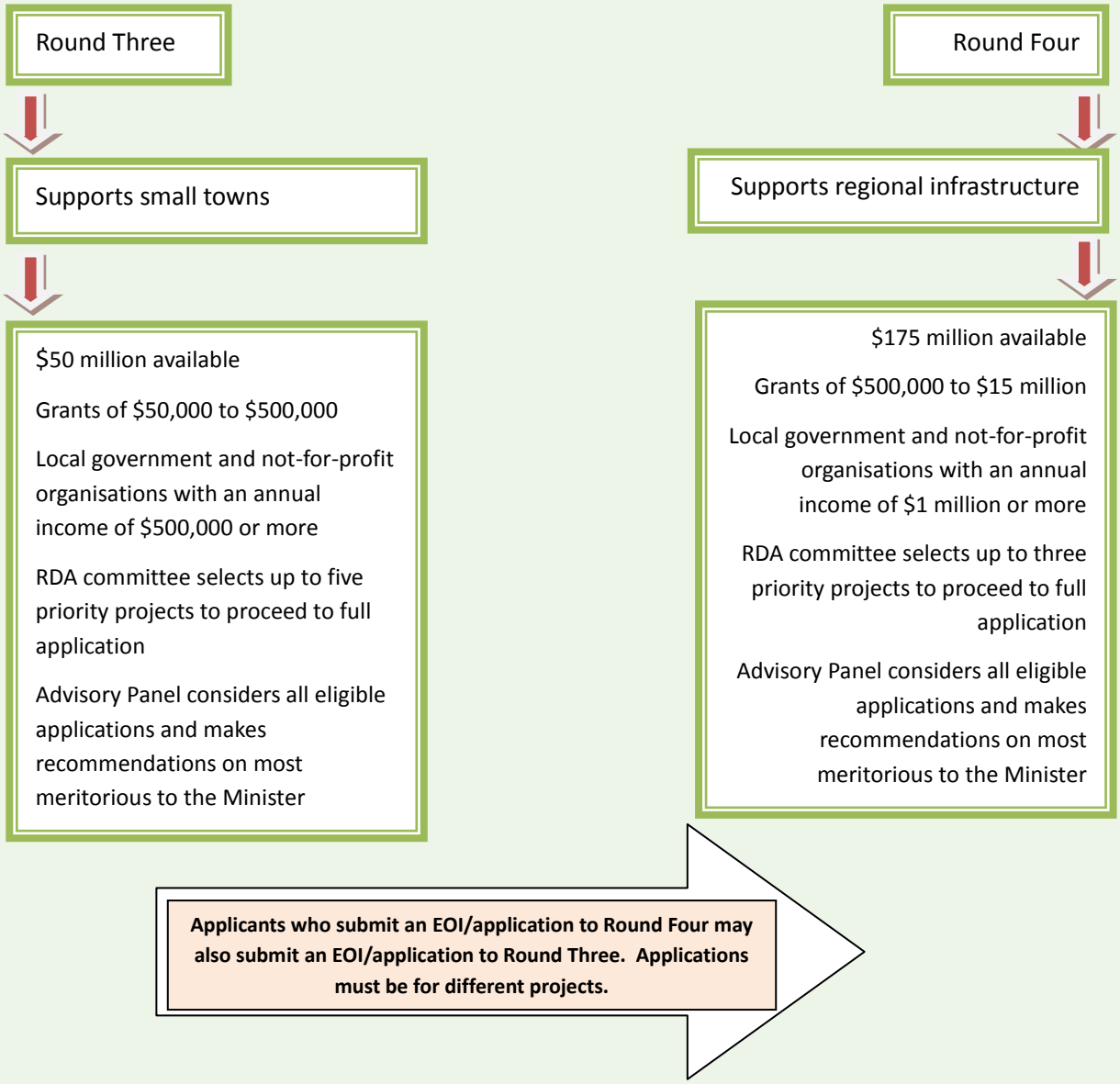

Program Overview

The Regional Development Australia Fund (RDAF) is a national infrastructure program which is supporting Australia's regions and enhancing their wellbeing and economic development. The program is administered by the Department of Regional Australia, Local Government, Arts and Sport (the Department). The program builds on the strengths and addresses the priorities of Australia's diverse regions.

Round Four opened on Friday, 26 October 2012. $175 million has been allocated, with grants of between $500,000 and $15 million available to eligible applicants.

Strong preference will be given to projects that have partnership contributions. Preference will also be given to projects where these partner contributions include cash. In-kind contributions will be accepted as partner contributions.

Eligible applicants must submit an Expression of Interest (EOI) for their project to the Department by 5.00pm local time on Thursday, 6 December 2012. Once received, the Department will forward all EOIs to the relevant RDA committees. Following review of EOIs, each of the 55 RDA committees will select up to the three of the highest priority and viable projects in their regions to proceed to full application.

Full applications for the selected projects must be submitted by 5.00pm local time on Thursday, 11 April 2013. The Department will assess applications to ensure compliance with the eligibility criteria, and determine value-for-money and the risk associated with the project. The RDAF Advisory Panel will consider eligible applications and make recommendations to the Minister for Regional Australia, Regional Development and Local Government, and Minister for the Arts, the Hon Simon Crean MP, on the most meritorious projects. The Minister will make decisions on the projects to be funded, taking account of the advice from the Advisory Panel.

What's New for Applicants?

- Rounds Three and Four have been launched concurrently and form a comprehensive package to address the diverse priorities of the regions. Round Four provides grants for strategic infrastructure projects. Round Three provides small grants for projects located in small towns. Each round has its own guidelines, which can be found at www.regional.gov.au
- Applicants who submit an EOI for Round Four may also submit an EOI for Round Three for a different project.
- Expressions of Interest for Round Four close at 5:00pm local time on Thursday, 6 December 2012.

Round Four

- The income threshold for not-for-profit organisations is reduced to $1 million income per annum, averaged over the most recent two financial years. Not-for-profit organisations with an annual income of less than $1 million may still participate in the program as a member of a consortium led by an eligible applicant.
- Strong preference will be given to projects that have partnership contributions. Preference will also be given to projects where these partner contributions include cash. In-kind contributions will be accepted as partner contributions. Partner contributions must be ready to flow from the time that the Funding Agreement is signed.
- While we understand that projects may fall into one or more categories, we ask proponents to nominate the primary category for their project - economic; community; arts and culture; or sport and recreation.
- The number of documents to be provided with applications has been reduced. Failure to provide some of these documents will not render an application as ineligible, however it can diminish the project's chance of success, as it will impact on the assessment of risk, viability and capacity to deliver the project. It will also impact on the Department's analysis of the case against the selection criteria, which informs the discussions and recommendations of the Advisory Panel.
- The number of ineligible activities has been reduced.
- An additional selection criterion has been introduced for projects which are considered to be the core business of local or state and territory governments. Where a project falls into this category, the proponent must address this additional criteria by making a case for RDAF support for the project.

- The request for a commencement date for projects has been removed, however projects must commence within 12 months of signing the Funding Agreement. Projects must be completed by 31 December 2016.
- RDA committees are encouraged to select a diverse range of projects from their region.

Eligibility and Selection Criteria

To be eligible to apply for RDAF funding, potential applicants must meet a number of requirements. Potential applicants should carefully consider the following:

Expressions of Interest

- Does your project address one of the priorities set out in the Regional Development Australia (RDA) committee's Regional Plan?
- Are you requesting between $500,000 and $15 million (inclusive) in RDAF funding?
- Can you comply with all mandatory eligibility criteria and make a strong case against the selection criteria?

Full Applications

- Is your project one of the three priority projects selected by your RDA committee?
- Are you a local government organisation or a not-for profit organisation? If you are a not-for-profit organisation, do you have an annual income of $1 million or more, averaged over two years and documents to confirm your not-for-profit status?
- Is your project investment ready, that is can commence within 12 months of signing the Funding Agreement? Will it be completed by no later than 31 December 2016?
- Is your project predominantly infrastructure in nature? Does it support the regional economy, the community, arts and culture, or sport and recreation?
- Can you implement your project and ensure that it is sustainable and viable in the longer term?
- Do you have the following required documents to support your application?
  - ✓ Letters to confirm the provision of any partnership funding from the funding provider
  - ✓ Letters of support and evidence of community consultation
  - ✓ Audited financial statements for the most recent two consecutive years
  - ✓ Evidence that projects which are similar in size or scope have been delivered on time and on budget by your organisation and that you can maintain and operate the project for at least five years
  - ✓ A Business Case incorporating the scope and outputs of the project
  - ✓ A Project Management Plan, and
  - ✓ A Risk Management Plan.
- Can you present a strong, well supported case against the following selection criteria?
  - ✓ The extent to which the project will contribute to and sustain broad regional economic growth, and
  - ✓ The extent to which the project will provide community benefit, and
  - ✓ The extent to which the applicant leverages additional funding, including from a variety of sources,
  - ✓ The need for funding (for certain projects - local government only).
- Are you willing to enter into a Funding Agreement with the Department?

1 Introduction

Guidelines provide details on Round Four of RDAF.

RDAF supports projects that:

- *invest in regional priorities*
- *support local economies*
- *facilitate strong and dynamic communities, and*
- *leverage partnership funding.*

Projects should be creative and innovative.

Projects will be assessed on their merits according to criteria set out in these Guidelines.

Only projects which meet the region's priorities and deliver strong benefits will be funded.

These Guidelines outline the objectives and outcomes for Round Four of the Regional Development Australia Fund (RDAF); the application and assessment process, including eligibility requirements; roles and responsibilities of the administering parties and funding recipients; and funding arrangements.

1.1 Program objectives and outcomes

The objective of the RDAF is to support the economies and communities of Australia's regions by providing funding for projects that meet community priorities and needs. Outcomes of the program are:

- Investment in the regional priorities identified by local communities through RDA Regional Plans
- Sustainable regional economic development, economic diversification, and increases to the economic output of local and regional economies
- Strong, dynamic and progressive regional communities which support social inclusion and "Closing the Gap on Indigenous Disadvantage" and are underpinned by quality sport, recreational, arts, cultural and social facilities, and
- Australian, state and local government, private sector and community partnerships to support investment in regional communities.

Projects should have a strong focus on regional benefits, with preference given to projects and/or benefits that span local government areas and/or RDA committee boundaries. Projects should also foster creative and innovative solutions to regional needs and issues.

Applicants should not use the outcomes of previous rounds of RDAF as an indicator of activities or projects that will be supported. Each project will be assessed on its individual and relative merits, including the extent to which it delivers benefits to the region, addresses community needs and supports priorities in Regional Plans.

RDAF is a competitive grants program and RDA committees cannot expect that all priority projects within their area will be funded. Those projects that demonstrate how they address a community's highest priority issues; have the broad support of the town or municipality; deliver strong benefits to the region and, preferably, neighbouring areas; leverage investment from other partners; and provide excellent value-for-money are most likely to be considered for funding. The case for the project, and particularly the benefits that will accrue to regions, must be supported by evidence of demand, cost effectiveness and community support.

1.2 Round Four

$175 million is available for grants of between $500,000 and $15 million.

The Australian Government is providing $175 million for Round Four. Grants will be provided for a single year or multiple years. Multi-year grants must end on or before the end of the 2016-17 financial year. Round Four of RDAF

- opens on Friday, 26 October 2012
- Expressions of Interest
  - close at 5.00pm local time on Thursday, 6 December 2012
  - are emailed to the Department at rdaf@regional.gov.au
  - are forwarded by the Department to the relevant RDA committee.
- Full applications for selected projects must be received by 5.00pm local time on Thursday, 11 April 2013.

A two stage application process is in place:

- *EOIs close on Thursday, 6 December 2012.*
- *Full applications close on Thursday, 11 April 2013.*

Late EOIs will not be accepted.

Applicants can ask questions relating to the EOI, application and assessment process by emailing rdaf@regional.gov.au. Questions should be clear and concise, and identify the part of the process you are seeking advice on, for example the EOI lodgement process or aspects of the full application. All questions that are directly relevant to Round Four of the RDAF and the broader program will be added to a Frequently Asked Questions document and placed on the Department's website at www.regional.gov.au. This document will be regularly updated.

More information is in the Frequently Asked Questions document.

Separate guidance is provided to RDA committees on their roles and responsibilities.

2 Eligibility Requirements

2.1 Applications to Round Three and Round Four

Proponents can submit one application to Round Three and one application to Round Four.

Applicants may submit one application to Round Three and one application to Round Four. Applications must be for different projects, and meet the criteria associated with each round.

Different closing dates apply to each round.

Rounds Three and Four of the program open on Friday, 26 October 2012, with full applications for Round Four closing on Thursday, 11 April 2013. Full applications for Round Three close on Wednesday, 27 March 2013.

2.2 Eligible organisations

The following organisations are eligible to apply for funding from Round Four:

Organisations which can apply for RDAF are:

- *local governments, and*
- *incorporated not-for-profit organisations with an annual income of at least $1 million.*

Organisations which cannot submit an application for RDAF are:

- *for profit companies*
- *not-for-profit organisations with an annual income of less than $1 million*
- *local, state, territory or government business enterprises*
- *Regional Organisations of Councils*

- local government bodies excluding Regional Organisations of Councils, and
- incorporated not-for-profit organisations with an average annual income of $1 million or more for the two most recent years - audited financial statements will be required.

Not-for-profit organisations with an annual income of less than $1 million may still participate in the program as a member of a consortium led by an eligible applicant. Eligible organisations may submit an application in their own right or as a lead member of a consortium. An eligible organisation may both submit an application in its own right and be a member of a consortium led by another eligible organisation.

Given that Norfolk Island is not covered by an RDA committee, the Norfolk Island Government may submit one EOI and application to each of Rounds Three and Four. The EOI and application will be submitted directly to the Department, and will progress through the assessment process.

Definitions for a local government body and an incorporated not-for-profit organisation are provided in the *Glossary of Terms*.

2.3 Ineligible organisations

The following organisations are not eligible to apply for funding from Round Four of the RDAF in their own right or as a lead member of a consortium:

- for profit companies
- not-for-profit organisations with an annual income of less than $1 million
- commercial arms of local or state government bodies, for example organisations that deliver services to communities that would normally be expected of a council and/or operate on a commercial basis. The services that are delivered support the day-to-day operation of the community, and are not directly related to the strategic or emerging needs of regions
- universities and technical colleges, and
- Regional Organisations of Councils (ROCs), notwithstanding their establishment by legislation in some states and territories. RDAF supports local communities, and local councils and RDA committees are best placed to identify community priorities. ROCs can play an important brokering role, identifying cross-region projects and bringing parties together to support and fund the project. Individual members of ROCs may be eligible in their own right and all members of a ROC can form a consortium led by an eligible organisation.

- *universities and technical colleges, and*
- *Regional Development Australia committees.*

Most of these organisations can participate in RDAF as a member of a consortium.

These organisations may participate in this round in a consortium which is led by an eligible applicant. It is expected that consortia will be supported by appropriate legal and governance arrangements.

RDA committees are not eligible to apply in any circumstances.

3 What can be funded?

3.1 Eligible projects

To be eligible, projects must be:

- *completed by no later than 31 December 2016*
- *for capital infrastructure*
- *for one cohesive project, and*
- *for infrastructure related to or supporting the economy; the community; arts and culture; or sport and recreation.*

Projects must be:

- 'investment ready', with construction to be completed no later than 31 December 2016. To be investment ready, all planning, zoning, environmental and/or native title approvals are in place or are in train and close to being finalised, and that the project will commence construction within 12 months of signing the Funding Agreement. Where these approvals are not in place at the time of the EOI or application, approvals must be in place prior to execution of the Funding Agreement
- capital in nature, such as new, or upgrades to existing, infrastructure
- cohesive, and not involve two or more different projects artificially drawn together to create the impression of one project under a common name. Elements of projects will be eligible for funding, noting that funding for one element does not guarantee funding for other elements in subsequent rounds of the RDAF, and
- for infrastructure related to or supporting:
  - the economy: the project supports an economy in transition or economic growth, for example convention centres, infrastructure to enhance productivity and economic diversity, infrastructure to conserve water or protect the environment or coast, projects which facilitate downstream processing or value-added activities, intermodal transport hubs to support faster and lower cost freight movement, airport expansions, facilities to support training, and enhancement and/or expansion of tourism facilities
  - the community: the project provides infrastructure to support liveability and social inclusion, for example childcare centres, community centres, streetscapes, showgrounds and arenas, youth centres, training and leadership centres, foreshore redevelopments and support facilities

- arts and culture: the project provides infrastructure to support regional art and cultural activities, for example community centres, town halls, theatre and performance centres, libraries, cultural centres, art galleries and museums, and
- sport and recreation: the project provides infrastructure to support local and regional sport, for example upgrades to stadiums, ovals and playing facilities, lighting to facilitate evening events, walking trails, grandstands and player facilities.

When describing their project in their application form, proponents must nominate one of these four categories to describe their project. Where a project falls into more than one category, applicants must nominate the category where the primary benefit occurs.

Funding will not be provided for:

- *soft infrastructure*
- *plant and equipment which is not part of the project*
- *administrative overheads*
- *commercial projects; or*
- *activities funded by NDRRA.*

3.2 Ineligible projects

Funding will not be provided for:

- soft infrastructure, such as computer software or hardware; or the payment of salaries for service delivery staff, research staff and/or contractors
- the purchase of plant and equipment that is not an integral part of the funded capital project
- administrative overhead items, including office equipment and vehicles; mobile capital equipment such as trucks and earthmoving equipment; or the provision of services and support activities
- commercial projects or components of projects that can be either on-sold or otherwise granted to a commercial or business organisation (the exception to this is where the project delivers a clear public benefit), and
- activities that are eligible to be funded under the National Disaster Relief and Recovery Arrangements.

Grants of between $500,000 and $15 million are available.

Preference will be given to projects that have partnership funding, including cash.

3.3 Grant size and partner contributions

Grants of between $500,000 and $15 million (GST exclusive) will be available for eligible projects. Preference will be given to projects that have partnership contributions. Preference will also be given to projects where these partner contributions include cash (see Selection Criterion 3). Partner contributions may be from one or a combination of a local government, state or territory government, not-for-profit organisation and the private sector.

In-kind contributions will be accepted as partnership contributions. Land is considered to be an in-kind contribution.

In-kind contributions will be accepted.

Partner funding must be ready to flow from the time that the Funding Agreement between the applicant and Australia Government is signed. Applicants should provide evidence confirming contributions to the project, such as an authorised letter from each contributing partner confirming the commitment (both cash and in-kind) and noting any conditions that may apply.

Australian Government funding can be provided for up to 50% of the total project cost.

An RDAF grant can be one component of a larger Australian Government funding package. Total Commonwealth Government funding cannot exceed 50 per cent of the total project cost.

4 Applying for RDAF

4.1 Expressions of Interest

A two stage application process is in place.

An Expression of Interest (EOI) form must be lodged by an eligible applicant for an eligible project. The EOI form is available from the Department's website at www.regional.gov.au The EOI form requests basic information about the applicant, the project and benefits that will accrue to the local economy and community. The applicant must also describe partnership funding and whether this funding is confirmed or being requested.

Expressions of Interest request basic information about the project and proponent.

As only three EOIs from each RDA region will proceed to full application, it is critical that applicants present a strong, well argued and competitive case against the selection criteria.

The EOI must be completed, signed by an authorised person and lodged by Thursday, 6 December 2012 (5.00pm local time). EOI's are lodged with the Department via email at rdaf@regional.gov.au. The Department will acknowledge receipt in writing within two working days, and will forward the EOI to the relevant RDA committee for consideration (see section 7.1).

Only one EOI can be submitted for a single project and for consideration by one RDA committee.

Applicants may only lodge one EOI for this Round. Applicants cannot lodge multiple EOIs, either to one RDA committee for several projects or to several RDA committees for the same or different projects.

Multiple EOIs will not be accepted.

Where more than one EOI is submitted by an applicant for this Round, the first EOI which is lodged will be considered by the RDA committee. First lodgement will be determined according to the time of submission to the Department. If a single email is provided which includes multiple EOIs, the first EOI attached to the email will be accepted. Remaining EOIs will not be provided to or considered by RDA committees.

EOIs cannot be amended or updated after the closing date. EOIs may, however, be amended and updated prior to the closing date via email to the Department.

RDA committees select up to three projects from the EOIs to proceed to full application.

Applicants must confirm, in their EOIs, that they can submit a complete application, if invited to proceed to full application, including providing all required documents and presenting a strong case against the selection criteria. Applicants should carefully consider this requirement. A number of proponents selected by RDA committees in Round Two failed to lodge an application, which disadvantaged their region.

RDA committees will advise the Department of three EOIs that they have selected from their region to be invited to submit a full application. RDA committees may nominate less than three EOIs, where it is appropriate.

4.2 Applications

Applications must be for a project selected by an RDA committee.

The Department will invite those applicants nominated by RDA committees to submit a full application, which must be lodged by Thursday, 11 April 2013 (5:00pm local time).

Projects located in a capital city must demonstrate how the project will benefit the broader region.

Applications will be accepted from all regions across Australia, however those projects located in all capital cities are expected to demonstrate how the proposed project will benefit the broader region, or other parts of regional Australia.

Projects located peri-urban areas of a capital city are exempt from this requirement.

Where a project is located within a capital city, applicants should provide written confirmation of the broader benefits of the project from either the RDA committee (or committees) in the region (or regions) that will benefit from the project, or the state or territory government. Projects located on the fringe or perimeter of a capital city and service a larger regional or rural area are exempt from this requirement, due to their immediate proximity to a rural area. Examples of peri-urban areas which would be exempt include Campbelltown in Sydney or Dandenong in Melbourne.

Applications must be submitted via the on-line form.

Applicants must submit a completed on-line application form and all attachments via the Department's Grants Management System (GMS) portal. New applicants are advised to register early for access to the GMS portal.

Applications must address the eligibility and selection criteria, and should provide all required documents.

Applicants must address both the eligibility and selection criteria in their application, and are strongly advised to provide all required documents. Applicants are advised to be clear and succinct in their descriptions of the project and the benefits that will accrue to the region. Only complete applications will be accepted and assessed.

Late applications will not be accepted, unless the Department considers there were exceptional circumstances beyond the applicant's control. The Department's decision will be final. Applicants may withdraw an application at any time, with written advice of the withdrawal to be provided to the Department (via email to rdaf@regional.gov.au).

Further detail on the application process is available at section 7.2.

A Process flowchart outlining the assessment process is at Attachment A. A *Guide to Preparing a Full Application for Funding – Lessons from Rounds One and Two* is available on the Department's website at www.regional.gov.au. *Procedures for Completing a Full Application for Round Four of RDAF* is also available on the Department's website.

Applicants should seek independent advice on taxation treatment of the grant prior to submitting an application.

Applicants should be clear and succinct in their description of the project, benefits of the project, and how the project meets the selection criteria.

5 Eligibility and Selection Criteria

All full applications for RDAF funding must meet a number of mandatory eligibility criteria, provide a number of required documents, and present a case against the selection criteria. The case presented by applicants against the selection criteria should be strong, supported by evidence, and provide a clear understanding of both the project and how it meets the criteria.

5.1 Eligibility criteria

Applicants must meet the mandatory eligibility criteria:

- *the applicant must be an eligible organisation*
- *the application must be for an eligible project*

Eligible applications must satisfy all of the listed eligibility criteria.

Eligibility Criterion 1: the applicant must be an eligible organisation

Eligible organisations are described in section 2.

Eligibility Criterion 2: the application must be for an eligible project

The project or part of the project seeking funding must be:

- investment ready and completed by no later than 31 December 2016
- capital in nature, and
- for infrastructure related to or supporting the economy, the community, the arts and culture, or sport and recreation.

- *the project and application must have been selected by the RDA committee, and*
- *the project must be sustainable and viable.*

Applicants are expected to provide a number of documents.

Expected documents should be commensurate with the size and scope of the project.

Failure to provide expected documents will not impact on eligibility.

However, it will, impact on the assessment of risk, viability and value-for-money.

- ***Eligibility Criterion 3: the project and applicant must have been nominated by the RDA committee***

Applications which are not one of the RDA committee's three priority projects will be ineligible. Projects in the EOI and application form must be the same, given that EOIs were selected on a competitive basis.

However, given the timing between the submission of the EOI and the application form, reasonable changes to scope, location, value of the project and value of partnership funding will be accepted. The guiding principle is that the project in the full application must not differ in any material way from the project, as described in the EOI, selected by the RDA committee.

- ***Eligibility Criterion 4: the project must be viable and sustainable***

Applications must provide evidence to demonstrate that the completed asset will be maintained in a viable state for at least five years.

Evidence may include an *Asset Management and Operations Plan* or other operational documents. Authorisation of the application, which includes a declaration that the asset will be retained and maintained for at least five years, by the Executive Officer of the organisation will also be accepted as evidence.

5.2 Expected documents

A number of documents should be provided by applicants to demonstrate their capability and capacity to implement and maintain the project. The size and detail of the documents should be commensurate with the size and scope of the project, for example the detail of documents for a $1 million grant and $2 million project will be significantly less than that for a $9 million grant and $20 million project. Expected documents should be provided individually.

Failure to provide the expected documents will not impact on the eligibility of the applicant. However, it will strongly impact on the Department's capacity to assess the project, including value-for-money, viability and risk. Outcomes of the Department's assessment are provided to the Advisory Panel and informs the Panel's decisions on the most meritorious projects. As such, applicants are strongly advised to provide all expected documents.

Expected documents are:

Expected documents are:

- evidence of community support
- evidence of partnership funding
- audited financial statements for the most recent two consecutive years
- evidence of experience in delivering a project of similar size and scope
- a business case
- evidence that the applicant will maintain the asset for at least five years
- a Risk Management Plan

- *Evidence of community support:* this demonstrates consultation with and support for the project, and could include letters from regional representatives; Commonwealth and state/territory members of parliament; regional councils; community groups; chambers of commerce; and philanthropic or community organisations. Community consultation plans or strategies and documentation on the outcomes of the consultations should also be provided. All letters of support should be attached to the full application, however those provided direct to the Minister or Department before the closing date will also be accepted.
- *Evidence of partner contributions:* the applicant should confirm, and provide details of, partner contributions from external sources. Confirmation should include letters or other documents from contributors. If funding is to be provided by a state or territory government program, a letter of intention, media statement or evidence of a public announcement should be provided. Evidence of partner contributions is not required from the applicant for their own contribution. In this case, the signed declaration in the application form will be taken as confirmation of the partnership funding.
- *Audited financial statements for the most recent two consecutive years:* this demonstrates viability of the applicant. Statements should, preferably, be for 2011-12 and 2010-11. To ensure flexibility and recognising different accounting periods, statements for 2009-10 will also be accepted should the 2011-12 statements not be available.
- *Evidence that the applicant has experience in delivering projects which are similar in size or scope:* this confirms that the applicant has the capability and capacity to deliver the project. Evidence should include documentation to demonstrate that projects have been delivered on time and on budget.
- *A business case:* this document, which demonstrates regional benefit and the applicant's capability to deliver the project, should include a detailed description of the project, rationale, cost/benefit analysis, outcomes and a methodology to review progress against outcomes.
- *Evidence that the applicant will maintain the Asset for at least 5 years:* this confirms the applicant's capacity and capability to maintain the project.
- *A Risk Management Plan:* this outlines all risks associated with the project, and includes a risk register and strategy for managing or mitigating identified risks.

- *A Project Management Plan:* this should outline the arrangements to implement the project, from commencement to completion. The Plan must demonstrate that construction of the component being funded will be completed by no later than 31 December 2016. It must include details of planning approvals, timelines, costings and budget, and resource allocations. This Plan will demonstrate the applicant's capacity to deliver the project on time and budget.

a Project Management Plan.

To assist applicants in providing only that information which is needed in the assessment process, further guidance on expected documents is at Attachment B.

5.3 Selection criteria

Applicants must also present a strong and competitive case against three selection criteria:

Applications that meet the eligibility criteria and are one of the RDA committee's three prioritised projects will be assessed on a competitive basis. To be competitive in the selection process, applicants must address each of the first three selection criteria. Certain types of infrastructure projects must also address Selection Criterion 4.

Each of the selection criterion is of equal weight. In responding to the selection criteria, applicants should note that the RDAF Advisory Panel may also consider factors at section 6.1 when making its recommendations to the Minister.

the extent to which the project will support regional economic growth

Selection Criterion 1: the extent to which the project will contribute to and sustain regional economic growth

This criterion will assess the long and short-term impacts of the project on the region's economy. Projects that sustain the regional economy or drive innovation and growth will be given priority. Benefits must accrue beyond a town or community and have a broad regional impact.

Benefit to the region can be demonstrated by, for example, a business case, a cost-benefit analysis, market research and feasibility studies. Qualitative and quantitative evidence to demonstrate how the project will address the criterion should be provided.

Projects could address emerging issues, particularly around structural adjustment. As such, the case developed for this criterion may outline how the project will sustain existing growth, mitigate the impacts of declining industry or compensate for declining agricultural outputs because of drought or flood or other environmental changes. The case against this criterion may also demonstrate the extent to which the project will contribute to new investment in the region or will diversify the region's industry base.

Adjustment in areas of transition, such as the Murray Darling Basin, Tasmania, the La Trobe or the Illawarra region, may also be addressed in this criterion. Applicants should refer to the Government's place-based approach, including how the project complements initiatives under this approach.

The case against this criterion should address productivity improvements, enhancements to regional outputs and/or the number of jobs that will be created in the region.

An articulation of the costs versus benefits, or a cost/benefit analysis, should be provided to demonstrate the positive impact of the project on the regional economy. Relevant and recent data may enhance an applicant's case.

- *the extent to which the project will provide community benefit, and*

Selection Criterion 2: the extent to which the project will provide community benefit

In assessing this criterion, consideration will be given to the number of people that will utilise the completed project, the contribution that the project will make to community amenities and social capital, and the level of local support. Where relevant, reference should be made to "Closing the Gap on Indigenous Advantage". A key element of the response to this criterion should be the extent to which the project enhances social inclusion in the region. Benefits from the project should be both short and long-term.

The case for the project against this criterion should identify how the project will address community needs and the benefits that will accrue to regional communities. For example, these benefits could be expressed in terms of transition from welfare to work. Building community via infrastructure to support the relocation of families to work in mining communities, rather than fly-in fly-out workers, may also be addressed in the case against this criteria.

Preference will be given to projects which enhance the public good, and are not for individual or commercial benefit. Projects that work with a range of community groups or complement existing or planned facilities will be highly regarded, such as:

- the location of a sporting hub next to a high school to support an integrated approach to education and sport, or
- the location of a youth centre next to a local training or education facility to support an integrated approach to the introduction of young people to the workforce.

Benefits to the community should be described and quantified with supporting evidence.

- ***Selection Criterion 3: the extent to which the applicant leverages additional funding, including from a variety of sources***

the extent to which the applicant leverages additional funding, including from a range of sources.

Preference will be given to projects which include partnership funding. Partnership contributions ensure that benefits of the RDAF funding are maximised and that value-for-money is enhanced. This criterion will assess the leverage that will accrue from partnership funding, including cash and in-kind contributions.

Priority will be given to applications that provide partnership funding, in cash, of more than the required 50% of the requested grant. Priority will also be given to partnership funding which includes a contribution from other parties, such as state or territory governments, not-for-profit organisations, philanthropic organisations or the private sector.

To ensure equity in treatment, the ratio of leveraged funding will be calculated on contributions to that part of the project which is to be funded by RDAF. It is noted that, in some cases, RDAF funding will contribute to the whole project, rather than a component.

Applicants seeking funding for projects which are the normal responsibility of state, territory or local government must also advise why RDAF funding is needed.

- ***Selection Criterion 4: the extent to which the applicant is unable to otherwise fund the project (for projects which are normally the responsibility of local government or State and Territory Governments only)***

A number of proposed projects may be considered to be the normal responsibility of local governments, including upgrades to or refurbishment of sewerage systems, water pipes and stormwater drains; the construction of public amenity blocks; minor upgrades to a town centre; or the construction or refurbishment of council offices. Local, state and territory governments are responsible for local roads and access drives, roads in remote and regional centres, and bridges. Funding is available from the Commonwealth for these purposes through a number of mechanisms, including the Financial Assistance Grants and dedicated roads funding programs.

However, it is also accepted that local governments may require additional support for some of their normal activities including, for example, significant upgrades to existing infrastructure; the introduction of new, innovative systems and technologies; enhancing facilities to adopt or adapt to new technologies, or the construction of new public-use facilities. RDAF funding will be available for activities which are normally the responsibility of local, state or territory governments where a strong case for additional funding support is made.

This case should outline the:

- reasons why additional support is needed, including why funding is not provided by other Commonwealth Government agencies or state and territory governments
- innovative nature of the activities, including the adoption or adaption of new technologies, and
- benefits to regional communities and the economy in the short and long-term.

A number of external bodies will contribute to the assessment process.

6 Role of External Organisations

6.1 The Regional Development Australia Fund Advisory Panel

The RDAF Advisory Panel will consider the individual and relative merits of eligible applications and provide independent advice to the Minister on projects which are recommended for funding. The Panel is guided by its Operating Arrangements. The Operating Arrangements and details of members of the Advisory Panel are available on www.regional.gov.au

The Advisory Panel will consider the individual and relative merits of projects.

The Advisory Panel will consider information presented by the applicant, the Department's analysis of the case presented against the selection criteria, a risk assessment, the Department's advice on whether the project is an efficient and effective use of public resources, advice from other Government agencies, and any other material which it may deem relevant. The Panel will frame its discussions around:

- the outcomes that will be achieved and positive benefits for the community and economy
- the viability of the applicant and project
- the sustainability of the project, and
- value-for-money.

The Panel will recommend the most meritorious projects to the Minister.

The Advisory Panel will prioritise and make recommendations to the Minister on projects to be funded. It will categorise all eligible projects as either:

The Panel will allocate one of three classifications to projects.

- 'Recommended for Funding'
- 'Suitable for Funding,' or
- 'Not Recommended for Funding'.

For two of these classifications, the Panel will rank projects in order of merit.

All proposals that are rated as 'Recommended for Funding' and 'Suitable for Funding' will be ranked by the Advisory Panel in order of merit. More than one application may be assigned to a ranking. For example, three projects may be ranked as equal first in the "Suitable for Funding" group. In making its recommendations, the Advisory Panel may:

- identify additional project risks that should be addressed
- recommend a different level of funding for a project, and
- vary the scope of the project recommended to the Minister to be funded.

The Panel may choose to consider the distribution of funding of projects rated 'Recommended for Funding' or 'Suitable for Funding' in its recommendations to the Minister, including by:

- population and GDP of each state and territory
- the distribution of projects funded in Round One and Two, including by region and state and territory
- allocation of funding for arts and cultural projects. Grants from Rounds Three and Four for arts and culture will aim to be at least equal to the $40 million provided in Rounds One and Two
- the socio-economic status of Local Government Areas and RDA regions
- economies in transition, and
- the Australian Government's commitment to support recovery and reconstruction of disaster affected areas in regional Australia.

Regional Development Australia committees will review EOIs from within their region, and select three projects to proceed to full application.

Attachment E provides details of the Advisory Panel's assessment process.

6.2 Regional Development Australia committees

Regional Development Australia committees will review EOIs for projects within their region, and select up to three priority projects to proceed to full application. Details of the assessment process are at Attachment D.

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Pending discussions with the NSW Government on evolving governance arrangements regarding Greater Western Sydney, RDA Sydney will be able to consider EOIs from the greater western Sydney region and to nominate up to three EOIs to progress to full application. RDA Sydney will still nominate up to three EOIs from metropolitan Sydney. Greater Western Sydney includes the following councils:

- Auburn Council, City of Bankstown, City of Blacktown, City of Blue Mountains, City of Fairfield, City of Hawkesbury, City of Holroyd, City of Liverpool, City of Parramatta, City of Penrith, the Hills Shire, Camden Council, City of Campbelltown and Wollondilly Shire.

6.3 Advice from other governments

Advice from other state, territory and local governments may be requested as part of the assessment process

To ensure that comprehensive information is available to the Advisory Panel and Department, advice on eligible projects will be requested from other Commonwealth agencies, and state and territory governments. Advice may also be requested from Regional Organisations of Councils, Regional Development Commissions and Regional Development Trusts, where appropriate.

Advice will be requested on, but not limited to, the history of the applicant in delivering projects, the extent of community support, confirmation of funding contributions, viability of the proponent and project, leveraging from other initiatives, competitive neutrality and impact on the region. State and territory governments may also be asked to provide confirmation of their support for the project, comment on RDA priorities and list their own priorities, with supporting reasons for each.

7 Assessment

7.1 Assessment of Expression of Interest

Regional Development Australia committees will review EOIs from within their region, and select three projects to proceed to full application.

RDA committees will assess EOIs for projects located in their region and advise the Department of the three priority projects to proceed to full application. The overriding principle is that RDA committees select the three most viable projects that meet identified community priorities.

However, committees are to make every effort to include at least one project from a not-for-profit organisation in their list of priority projects. It is accepted that, in some cases, EOIs from not-for-profit organisations may not be as strong as those from local government. This should be taken into account in the Committee's decisions.

Committees are encouraged to select only one project from each infrastructure type.

To ensure that a diverse range of infrastructure is funded, and recognising the broader needs of the region, RDA committees will select three projects from the following categories, with only one project to come from each category:

- economic
- community
- arts and culture, and
- sport and recreation.

Committees are also encouraged to select one project from a not-for-profit organisation.

The RDA committee will base its assessment of EOIs on:

- priorities in the Regional Plan
- capacity of the project to address needs in the region

RDA committees will base their assessment of EOIs and selection of priority projects on five key criteria.

- level of community support
- impact of the project on the region and neighbouring regions, with endorsed projects coming from across the region, rather than any one town, locality or Local Government Area, and
- capacity to commence the project within 12 months of signing the Funding Agreement and complete the project by no later 31 December 2016.

7.2 Assessment of full applications

The Department will assess the eligibility of projects.

The Department will determine the eligibility of projects according to the eligibility criteria set out in section five. In addition, the Department will confirm that each submitted application is one of the three selected by the RDA committee and is broadly consistent with the project selected through the EOI process. Applications which are submitted and have not been selected as one of the three priorities by the RDA committee will be deemed as ineligible.

The case against the selection criteria, outcomes of a viability and risk assessment, will be provided to the Advisory Panel.

The Department will complete an analysis of all submitted applications against the selection criteria, assess viability and conduct risk assessments. This material will be provided to the Regional Development Australia Fund Advisory for its information and to inform its discussions. Following consideration by the Advisory Panel, recommendations and advice will be provided to the Minister.

The Minister will consider the advice provided by the Advisory Panel and make decisions on projects to be funded, taking into account whether each project constitutes an efficient, effective, economical and ethical use of public money, as required by Commonwealth legislation. The Minister may also require additional conditions and management strategies as a condition of funding, based on the assessment and risk analysis.

7.3 Independent viability assessments

The Department's analysis will determine the viability of the proponent and identify risks.

The Department will undertake a risk analysis of each application and, based on the outcomes, additional checks may be undertaken or independent advice requested via an Independent Viability Assessment (IVA). An IVA will be conducted by an appropriate external consultant engaged by the Department and the findings will be included in the project analysis. All information provided in an application may be considered during an IVA conducted on that application.

7.4 Value-for-money

The Minister may require additional conditions and strategies to address risk or other matters which are identified during assessment.

Funding recipients must promote the use of resources in an efficient, effective, economical and ethical manner and projects must be undertaken in an accountable and transparent manner.

Project documentation should enable the proper identification, assessment and comparison of associated costs, benefits and risks.

Information provided in the application form and attached documents will be used to assess value-for-money. Generally, value-for-money requires that the project can be delivered at a reasonable whole-of-life cost and would generally involve open procurement processes or mechanisms to ensure competitive delivery of projects.

Project costs must compare favourably with available benchmarks for the activities being undertaken.

Applications will be classified as

- *ineligible*
- *not recommended for funding*
- *suitable for funding, or*
- *recommended for funding.*

7.5 Outcomes of assessment

At the conclusion of the assessment of full applications for Round Four, each application will be classified as:

- Ineligible
- Not recommended for Funding
- Suitable for Funding, or
- Recommended for Funding.

7.6 Advice to applicants

Written advice will be provided to all applicants.

Advice on the outcome of full applications will be provided to all applicants when the Minister announces details of successful applications. Applicants will receive a letter confirming the outcome of their application.

Feedback will be provided on request.

The Department will provide feedback to applicants on request.

Projects approved for funding will be listed on the Department's website at www.regional.gov.au.

8 Probity

Independent probity advice will be requested, as appropriate.

The Australian Government is committed to ensuring that the process for providing funding under programs is fair and in accordance with published guidelines, as may be varied by the Australian Government from time to time.

Independent probity advice may be requested, as required, to support the implementation of the Guidelines, including the EOI and assessment process. Amendments to the Guidelines will be published on the Department's website.

8.1 Conflict of interest

Conflict of Interest procedures are in place.

Where an applicant identifies an existing or potential conflict of interest, the applicant must declare the actual, apparent or potential conflict of interest and inform the Australian Government immediately. A conflict of interest may exist if the applicant, or any of its personnel:

- has a relationship, whether professional, commercial or personal, with a party who is able to influence the EOI, application or assessment process, including RDA committees
- has a relationship with, or an interest in, an organisation which is likely to interfere with or restrict the applicant in carrying out the proposed activities fairly and independently, or
- has a relationship, whether professional, commercial or personal, with a member of the Advisory Panel.

Conflicts of interest between potential applicants and RDA committees need to be declared and managed in accordance with RDA committee operating procedures. Further information is available on the Department's website at www.regional.gov.au. Procedures for managing conflicts of interest in the Advisory Panel are included in its Operating Arrangements (available on the Department's website at www.regional.gov.au).

9 Contracts, Funding and Other Obligations

Proponents receiving a RDAF grant will be required to enter into a Funding Agreement with the Australian Government.

The Funding Agreement is a legally enforceable document.

Approved projects will be subject to the following arrangements:

- before any funding can be paid, the applicant will enter into contractual arrangements with the Australian Government set out in a Funding Agreement that specifies the terms and conditions under which the funding is provided
- applicants must not make financial commitments for funded activities until the Funding Agreement has been executed
- requests for additional funding from the Australian Government will not be considered, and
- requests to change the scope of the project or to partnership arrangements that do not involve the provision of additional funding by the Australian Government will be considered as long as the revised project continues to meet the objectives and outcomes of the RDAF.

Successful applicants should enter into a funding Agreement within 6 months of the project funding being announced by the Minister. The offer of funding may be withdrawn if the applicant cannot meet the timeframe, has not obtained agreement from the Department to obtain an extension to this timeframe, or if there are significant reasons why the project cannot commence.

The Funding Agreement is a legally enforceable document that clearly defines the obligations of both parties. The Funding Agreement will describe:

- the purpose for which the Australian Government funding must be used
- any requirements or conditions that must be met prior to the release of funds, and
- milestones and project outcomes that must be achieved prior to the release of payments.

Building work funded by the Australian Government is subject to all relevant state or territory occupational, health and safety laws. Special arrangements apply to projects relating to building and construction, and these are set out in Attachment C.

Attachment F provides further detail on the contractual arrangements and the negotiation process.

The Department will regularly monitor the progress of projects, and any delays in commencement of milestones will be dealt with according to the procedures set out in the Funding Agreement.

Information in the EOI or application may be provided to external parties.

10 Confidential Information

All information provided in an EOI or an application may be distributed to other parties to assist in assessment of the proposal and may be distributed and/or publicised as part of material on the program or the project. Applicants must identify any information contained within their project application which they consider should be treated as confidential and provide reasons for the request. The Australian Government reserves the right to accept or refuse a request to treat information as confidential.

A request made under the *Freedom of Information Act 1982* for access to an application marked 'confidential' will be determined in accordance with that Act.

11 Complaints Process

Details of the Department's complaints process is on its website

Complaints about the RDAF application and assessment process should be directed to:

RDAF Complaints
Corporate Services
Department of Regional Australia, Local Government, Arts and Sport
GPO Box 803
CANBERRA ACT 2601

Details of the complaints process are available from the Department's website at www.regional.gov.au.

12 Key Dates

Milestone	Anticipated Dates
RDAF Round Four announced	Tuesday, 23 October 2012
RDAF Round Four Guidelines published	Friday, 26 October 2012
Expressions of Interest for Round Four open	Friday, 26 October 2012
Expressions of Interest close	Thursday, 6 December 2012 5.00pm local time
RDA committee decisions on Expressions of Interest	By Monday, 11 February 2013
Notification of outcomes of the Expression of Interest process by the Department	Wednesday, 13 February 2013
Full applications for Round Four open	Wednesday, 13 February 2013
Full applications for Round Four close	Thursday, 11April 2013 5.00pm local time
Minister announces projects to be funded from Round Four	From Friday, 12 July 2013
Funding Agreements negotiated and executed	Within 6 months of announcement

Glossary of Terms

Australian Business Number (ABN)

The ABN is the single business identifier that allows businesses to meet their regulatory obligations and access information and assistance through a single entry point to government.

Regional Development Australia committees

Regional Development Australia committees are operating around Australia. The RDA committees will play a key role in identifying local projects, confirming alignment of projects with their Regional Plans and endorsing applications and prioritising applications submitted from their region. RDA committees can play a facilitation role by bringing stakeholders, local governments and other organisations together to identify suitable projects and sources of funding consistent with their regional plans.

Consortium

An association of two or more individuals, companies, organisations or governments in any combination with the objective of participating in a common activity or pooling their resources to achieve a common goal. A consortium is often formed to undertake a venture that would be beyond the resources of a single individual or company. A consortium must be supported by appropriate legal arrangements.

The Department

Australian Government Department of Regional Australia, Local Government, Arts and Sport.

EDST

Eastern Daylight Saving Time

Infrastructure

The facilities, services, and installations needed to support a functioning community.

In-kind contributions

In-kind contributions may be contributions of land, equipment, supplies, or other tangible resources, as distinguished from a monetary grant.

Investment Ready

Projects which are "investment ready" must be ready to proceed are expected to commence construction within 12 months of signing a Funding Agreement. It is expected that all planning, zoning, environmental and/or native title approvals will be in place or pending.

Local Government

A *local governing body* is defined by the *Local Government (Financial Assistance) Act 1995* (Cwlth) as either:

a) a local governing body established by or under a law of a State, other than a body whose sole or principal function is to provide a particular service, such as the supply of electricity or water, or

b) a body declared by the Minister, on the advice of the relevant State Minister, by notice published in the *Gazette*, to be a local governing body for the purposes of this Act.

Please note that 'State' in the *Local Government (Financial Assistance) Act 1995* (Cwlth) includes the Australian Capital Territory and the Northern Territory.

For the purposes of RDAF, the following organisations will be considered local governing bodies:

- Five Indigenous local governing bodies in South Australia (Anangu Pitjantjatjara, Maralinga, Gerard, Nepabunna and Yalata)
- The Outback Communities Authority, formerly the Outback Areas Community Development Trust, in South Australia
- The Trust Account in the Northern Territory
- The Silverton and Tibooburra villages in New South Wales
- Cocos (Keeling) Islands Shire Council
- The Shire of Christmas Island
- Norfolk Island, and
- Lord Howe Island governed by New South Wales.

Incorporated non-profit or not-for-profit organisations

An incorporated organisation is non-profit or not-for-profit whose activities are not carried on for the profit or gain of its individual members. The constitution or governing documents of the organisation should prohibit distribution of profits or gains to individual members.

Outcomes

The long term benefits that a project brings to a community, i.e. the result, impact or consequence of the project. For example, outcomes could include an increase in employment, increase in education opportunities or increase in community capacity. Projects should have a positive outcome.

Partner contribution (or partnership funding)

A financial contribution to the project made by an individual or organisation (partner contributor) from a specific program or funding source. Contributions of tangible resources, such as land, should be included as contributions of in-kind support.

Project

A project is the entire endeavour undertaken to create a unique product, service, or result under the RDAF.

Social Capital

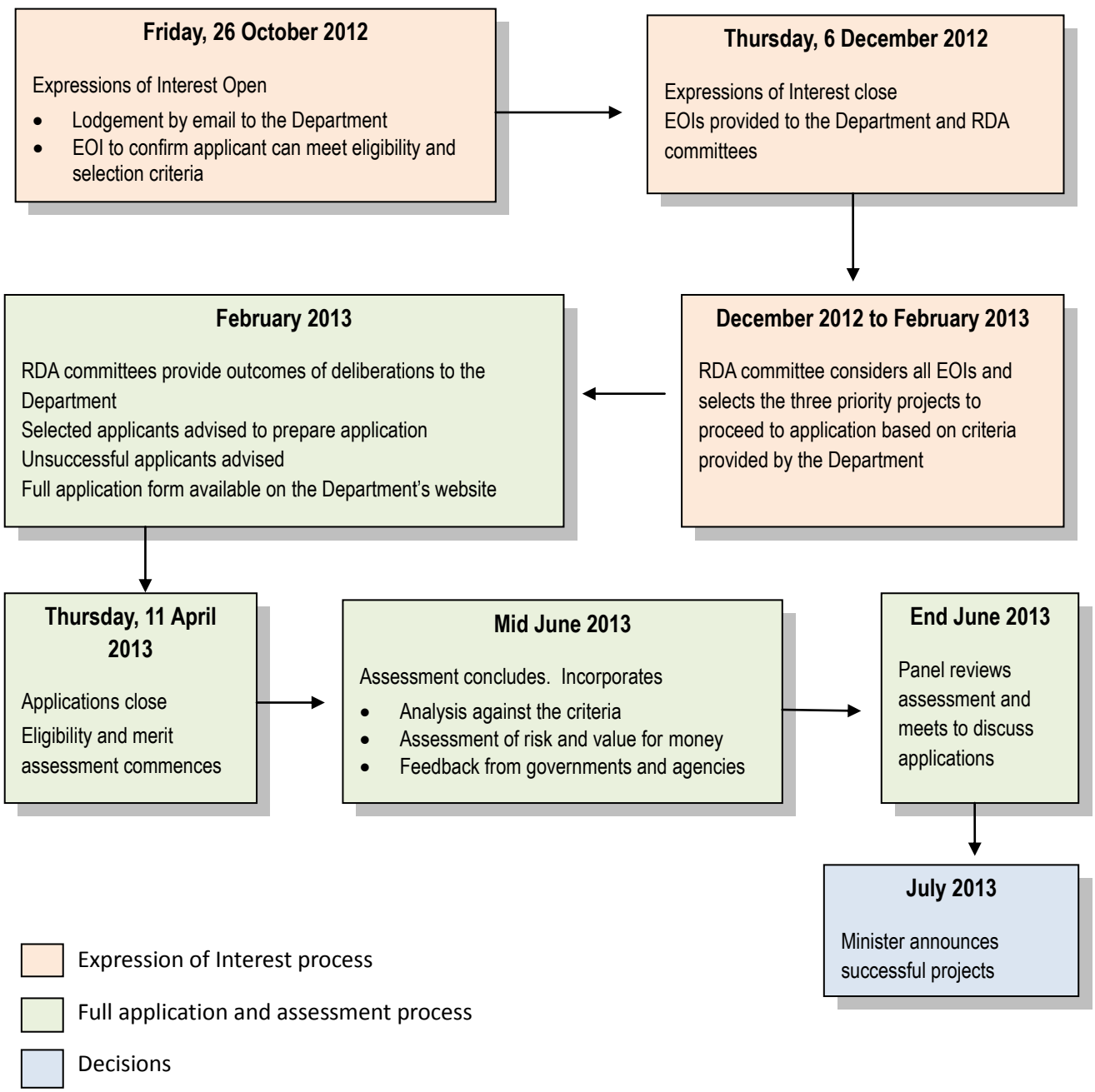
Projects which build the social cohesion of a community, support or enhance social inclusion, build or strengthen social networks or address issues which are specific to minority groups. The outcome is more integrated communities.

Sustainability

The continuation of the project outcomes beyond the period of funding.

Attachment A

Grant Process Flowchart – Round Four



Attachment B

Guidance on Preparing Required Documents

It is expected that the detail, size and content of these documents will be commensurate with the size and scope of the project. Documentation relating to larger projects and/or more complex projects is expected to be more detailed and provide extensive information to demonstrate capacity and capability. Documentation in relation to smaller projects will be less detailed.

Supporting documents, especially plans, should be practical documents that will be used for implementation and/or management of the project. These documents should not be prepared just for the RDAF application. Consideration should be given, where possible, to using existing or planned documents to support the application.

1. Business Case

The Business Case should provide an overview of the project and the benefits that will accrue. The Business Case should include a detailed description of the project; reasons for initiating the project; outcomes; and a methodology to review progress against outcomes. It will also detail the physical aspects of the project, including inclusions and exclusions (for example because they are already in place or will be provided by a third party), and include a cost/benefit analysis.

The Business Case sets the framework for the delivery of the project.

2. Asset Management and Operations Plan

The Asset Management and Operations Plan should demonstrate that the outcomes of the project will be retained in original condition for a five year period. It should also outline the operational needs of the project into the future, a strategy to manage the project and arrangements to maintain the ongoing viability of the completed project.

The Plan should include details of ownership arrangements for the facility including leasing and or rental arrangements. Five year financial projections post project delivery should be provided, including[1]:

- cost associated with operating and maintaining the infrastructure
- projections of any revenue that may be generated and the percentage to be applied to ongoing maintenance and management of the infrastructure, and
- arrangements to manage revenue shortfalls relative to expenditure.

[1] For capital assets with no revenue stream, and which will become part of the ongoing capital asset management activity of the applicant or a consortium member, the ownership, budget responsibilities and operational responsibilities for this must be identified and projected expenditure detailed.

3. Project Management Plan

Applications must include a Project Plan, which addresses the implementation of the project, from commencement to completion. It should define how, when and by whom project activities will be completed. The Project Plan should include:

- *Project Objectives*: the outputs of the project, the infrastructure to be delivered and the benefits to be realized.
- *Project Scope*: what is included in and excluded from the project, identify geographical location and coverage, identify business units involved in implementation, note project prerequisites and assumptions, and specify the criteria that demonstrate completion of the project.
- *Governance and Organisational Structures*: the organisational structure, particularly as it relates to the project. Roles and responsibilities of key staff members should be defined.
- *An Operational approach for the Execution of the Project*: timelines, milestones and key activities.
- *Resourcing*: the staffing and physical resources required, and how these will be applied to the project.
- *Resource Management*: the staffing, contractor and resources required to complete the project. Arrangements to procure resources should be described.
- *Project Quality*: the strategy to ensure the quality of the construction and delivery of the project.
- *Project Communication Strategy*: the formal and informal communication strategies to engage with stakeholders and other interested parties.
- *Financial Management*: detailed budgets for the project, both for individual phases and overall. These budgets will contain statements of income, expense and projected balances by scheduled project milestones.
- *Approvals*: approvals which are in place and still to be obtained, as well as a strategy and timeline to finalise all outstanding approvals.
- *Compliance*: the processes to ensure that the activities undertaken comply with all requirements, and arrangements to monitor compliance.
- *Audit and performance reporting*: arrangements and time frames for internal reviews and audits.

The Project Management Plan informs the delivery of the project.

4. Risk Management Plan

Applications must include a Risk Management Plan, which is essential to demonstrating that all key risks have been identified, assessed and appropriate mitigation or management strategies put in place. The Plan should address project risks from commencement of the project, including construction and management in the medium term.

The Risk Management Plan should be compliant with the risk management principles and practices laid out in the Australian standard, ISO 31000. It should include the organisation's approach to identifying and managing risk. This may be a risk management policy which applies across the organisation.

The Plan must address risks which are particular to the project, including for each identified risk:

- the nature of the identified risk
- the likelihood of occurrence
- treatment and mitigation strategies
- residual risk, and
- staffing arrangements to manage and monitor the risk.

Attachment C

National Code of Practice for the Construction Industry and the Australian Government Implementation Guidelines for the National Code of Practice for the Construction Industry

Building work funded by the Australian Government is subject to all relevant state or territory health and safety laws. Special arrangements apply to projects relating to building and construction. In particular, applicants must ensure that all contractors engaged to work on that part of the project funded by the RDAF have OH&S accreditation where:

- the value of the Australian Government contribution (including the amount of any Contingency Payment) to the project is at least $5 million and represents at least 50 per cent of the total construction project value, or
- the Australian Government contribution (including the amount of any Contingency Payment) to a project is $10 million or more, irrespective of the proportion of Australian Government funding.

Code of Practice

The National Code of Practice for the Construction Industry (the Code) and the Australian Government Implementation Guidelines for the National Code of Practice for the Construction Industry, revised March 2012 and reissued May 2012 (the Guidelines for the Code), set out the responsibilities of the parties involved in building and construction projects funded by the Australian Government. The principles expressed in the Code promote best practice workplace relations and standards of honesty and integrity in the construction industry. The Guidelines for the Code were developed to assist the interpretation and implementation of the Code.

The Code and Guidelines for the Code apply, subject to the specified threshold requirements in the Guidelines for the Code, to all directly and indirectly funded building and construction activities undertaken by Australian Government agencies and funding applicants.

Applicants of project funding specifically relating to building and construction activity, as defined in the Code and subject to any threshold requirement in the Guidelines for the Code, must comply with the Code and Guidelines for the Code. Funding applicants will also be obliged, among other things, to ensure that all contractors, subcontractors, suppliers, consultants and employers who perform work in relation to a project funded under the Program comply with the Code and Guidelines for the Code.

For copies of the Code and the Guidelines for the Code, applicants should refer to: http://www.deewr.gov.au/workplacerelations/policies/buildingandconstruction/pages/nationalcodeandguidelines.aspx

Australian Government Building and Construction OHS Accreditation Scheme

The Australian Government is committed to improving occupational health and safety (OHS) outcomes in the building and construction industry. From 1 October 2007, only persons who are accredited under the Australian Government Building and Construction OHS Accreditation Scheme are able to contract for building work that is **indirectly** funded by the Australian Government where:

- the value of the Australian Government contribution (including the amount of any Contingency Payment) to the project is at least $5 million and represents at least 50 per cent of the total construction project value, or
- the Australian Government contribution (including the amount of any Contingency Payment) to a project is $10 million or more, irrespective of the proportion of Australian Government funding.

The Scheme is established by the *Building and Construction Industry Improvement Act 2005* and specified in the Building and Construction Industry Improvement (Accreditation Scheme) Regulations 2005.

Building work is considered **indirectly** funded where it is funded by the Australian Government or an Australian Government authority through grants and other programmes. This includes building projects where the Australian Government provides money through a funding agreement or grants to a person, for example, a state or territory government who then may contract with persons who will undertake the building work or persons who will arrange for the building work to be carried out.

Indirectly funded building work also includes building projects that the person, who receives Australian Government funding, facilitates by agreement (for example pre-commitment lease, Build Own Operate and Build Own Operate Transfer arrangements).

If a project meets the above threshold amounts, the requirement that accredited builders carry out the building work only applies to contracts for building work that are valued at $3 million or more as defined in the Building and Construction Industry Improvement (Accreditation Scheme) Regulations 2005.

Further information on applying the Australian Government Building and Construction OHS Accreditation Scheme is available from the Office of the Federal Safety Commissioner at www.fsc.gov.au.

The Australian Government reserves the right to set other conditions especially where there may be a need to mitigate risks identified within the project.

Attachment D

Process for Prioritising RDAF EOIs
For use by Regional Development Australia Committees

This attachment provides an overview of the process to be used by RDA committees in prioritising EOIs.

Step 1.

Each member of the RDA committee is provided with a copy of each eligible EOI in their region. Members will consider each EOI and apply a score out of ten (10) to each. In applying the score of ten (10), the member should take the following into account:

- Priorities in the Regional Plan
- Capacity of the project to address needs in the region
- Level of community support
- Impact of the project on the region and neighbouring regions, with endorsed projects coming from across the region, rather than any one town, locality or Local Government Area, and
- Capacity to commence the project within 12 months of signing the Funding Agreement and complete the project by no later 31 December 2016.

The higher the score, the more the project meets these criteria and delivers stronger benefits to the region.

Step 2.

The scores assigned by each committee member will be tallied to give a total score for the EOI.

Sample	Sample Committee Member	Sample Score out of 10
EOI 1		
	Committee Member #1	7
	Committee Member #2	8
	Committee Member #3	4
	Committee Member #4	7
	Committee Member #5	8
	TOTAL SCORE FOR PROJECT	34

EOI 2		
	Committee Member #1	3
	Committee Member #2	5
	Committee Member #3	5
	Committee Member #4	6
	Committee Member #5	3
	TOTAL SCORE FOR PROJECT	22
EOI 3		
	Committee Member #1	6
	Committee Member #2	6
	Committee Member #3	7
	Committee Member #4	6
	Committee Member #5	8
	TOTAL SCORE FOR PROJECT	33

Where a committee member has a conflict of interest and does not review or assign a score to an EOI, an average of the other member's scores will be applied.

EOI 3		
	Committee Member #1	6
	Committee Member #2	6
	Committee Member #3	7
	Committee Member #4 Conflicted	6.75 (average)
	Committee Member #5	8
	TOTAL SCORE FOR PROJECT	33.75

Step 3.

The EOI with the highest score will be allocated a priority of one (the highest). The EOI with the second highest score will be allocated a priority of two (the second highest), and so on until all EOIs are allocated a priority.

EOI Number	Priority	Score
EOI 1	One	34
EOI 3	Two	33
EOI 2	Three	22

Committee members will review and discuss the prioritised EOIs to ensure that it reflects a consolidated view. The first three priority projects will proceed to full application.

The RDA will advise the Department of the outcome of their deliberations, including the rationale for their decisions. The Department will notify successful and unsuccessful applicants of their status and then post the information to the Department's website.

Successful applicants (proponents of the three viable priority projects) will be invited by the Department to submit a full application. Unsuccessful applicants will be invited to seek feedback from the RDA committee.

Attachment E

Process for Prioritising RDAF Applications
Regional Development Australia Fund Advisory Panel

In considering all applications at all steps of the process, including debate and discussion, the Panel will have regard to the member's expertise, experience and knowledge; material presented by the applicant; the Independent Viability Assessment; and the Department's analysis of the applicant's case against the selection criteria. The Panel will review applications against the four selection criteria set out in section 5.

Decisions taken by the Panel, including rationale, will be recorded and endorsed by the Chair.

Step 1. Review All Eligible Applications

- Identify applications which are 'Not Recommended for Funding'.

Step 2. Identify Indicative Pool of Suitable Applications

- Review applications not excluded via Step 1 to determine if they are 'Recommended for Funding' or 'Suitable for Funding'.

Step 3. Identify and Rank Applications which are 'Recommended for Funding' or 'Suitable for Funding'

- Each Panel member will rank these applications in order of relative merit and a consolidated list representing the views of all Panel members prepared.

Step 4. Review Applications 'Recommended for Funding'

- Applications which are 'Recommended for Funding' will be reviewed, with regard to:
  - population by state
  - the GDP of each state and territory
  - the distribution of projects funded in Round One and Two, including by region and state and territory
  - the socio-economic status of Local Government Areas and RDA regions, and
  - the Australian Government's commitment to support recovery and reconstruction of disaster affected areas in regional Australia.
- Final rankings will be agreed.

Step 5. Prepare Advice to the Minister

Attachment F

Details of the Contractual Arrangements between the Australian Government and Proponent

Funding Agreement

Successful applicants should enter into a Funding Agreement within 6 months of the project funding being announced by the Minister. The offer of funding may be withdrawn if the applicant cannot meet the timeframe, has not obtained agreement from the Department to obtain an extension to this timeframe, or if there are significant reasons why the project cannot commence.

The Funding Agreement is a legally enforceable document that clearly defines the obligations of both parties. The Agreement will describe the purpose for which the Australian Government funding must be used. It will provide a description of how, when and where the project will be delivered, and will set out any requirements or conditions that must be met prior to the release of funds. The Agreement will also set out milestones and project outcomes that must be achieved prior to the release of payments.

The Funding Agreement aims to:

- protect the Government's interests and ensure the effective and efficient use of public money
- set out arrangements covering treatments of any cost savings
- ensure the achievement of the agreed outputs of the project, and
- ensure appropriate recognition of Australian Government funds.

If there are any conditions or risk treatments identified by the Department or the RDAF Advisory Panel which need to be satisfied, evidence must be provided to, and accepted by, the Department that these conditions have been met, prior to grant payments being made. Conditions and risk treatments will be managed through milestones specified in the Funding Agreement. Action may be taken to terminate Funding Agreements where its requirements are not met.

A template of the RDAF Funding Agreement is available on the Department's website at www.regional.gov.au

Branding and recognition

Organisations must ensure that all advertisements, promotional activities, such as pamphlets, other publicity or fundraising events, and any other public relations matters are consistent with the branding requirements and arrangements to acknowledge Commonwealth funding set out in Funding Agreement. As a minimum, all publicly available material on the project should include the words '*Funded by the Australian Government under the Regional Development Australia Fund*'.

Successful applicants must notify the Department at least 45 business days in advance of any upcoming promotional activity, such as launches, sod-turning events, openings, graduations and visits or public statements. The Minister must be invited to all such activities. The Minister has the option of accepting, declining or nominating a representative to attend on his behalf. The representative may be another Minister, a Parliamentary Secretary, a RDA Chair and/or a local member supporting the Minister. Departmental staff may also attend.

It is not appropriate for organisations to invite a representative, such as a local Member of Parliament, to attend such a launch or function without prior agreement from the Minister's Office. Such permission must be sought through the Department.

Payment arrangements

Payments will be made on the achievement of agreed milestones. Before payments can be made, funding recipients will be required to provide:

- evidence of meeting the milestone through provision of a progress report, photographs and other documentation as requested
- evidence of meeting the obligations of the Funding Agreement
- evidence that all payments made by the Department under the RDAF for the project have been expended or committed, and
- a tax invoice, which meets the requirements of the Australian Taxation Office, for the amount of the payment.

Payments will only be made after the Department is satisfied that milestones and the associated obligations specified in the Funding Agreement have been met.

Managing the project

Once the Agreement is executed, the applicant will be required to actively manage the project. The project's progress against the Agreement will be monitored by the applicant, which will provide progress reports to the Department.

The Department will monitor progress against the Agreement by assessment of progress reports and by conducting site visits as necessary. Based on project size, complexity and the amount of funding being provided, the Department may require an applicant to establish a Project Governance Board with regular meetings and reports. The Department may be an observer at these meetings.

Reporting

Applicants must provide regular reports on their progress against the achievement of agreed milestones. Depending on the size and/or complexity of the projects, reporting will be quarterly or half yearly.

Whether reports are to be made quarterly or half yearly will be determined as part of the Funding Agreement negotiations and will be directly linked to the agreed milestones and risk assessments. Acquittal of expenditure will also be a key element of these reports.

Where progress payments are linked to the achievement of particular activities, these payments will only be made after the relevant progress report is accepted and the requirements for payment stated in the Agreement have been met, including expenditure or commitment of the previous payment.

Additionally, if funding has been approved subject to meeting certain conditions, evidence that the conditions have been met must be presented to, and accepted by the Department.

Acquittals

Applicants are required to provide the Department with financial acquittals, and audited statements upon completion of the project, that demonstrate that they have spent the Australian Government funding on the purposes specified in the Agreement. For large projects, audited statements may also be required as part of milestone reports.

Applicants should familiarise themselves with the Agreement to ensure they are able to comply with the acquittal requirements.

When the project has each been completed, applicants must submit to the Department a:

- 'Completion Report', to demonstrate that they have achieved all the agreed milestones, and
- financial acquittal and audited statement by an independent auditor, of all expenditure of Australian Government funding and other funding sources, as set out in the Funding Agreement.

Once this report has been accepted by the Department, the final grant payment will be made.

Evaluation

To enable evaluation of the benefits of Government funding, each applicant is required to identify the project's key outputs and the manner in which they will be measured (Performance Measures). These outputs and Performance Measures will be included in the Agreement. The Project Completion Report will document what was achieved with the funding provided for the project by the Australian Government. Utilising this information, the Department will determine how the funding contributed to the objectives and outcomes of the program.

Australian Government

Department of Regional Australia, Local Government, Arts and Sport

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Regional Development Australia Fund

Round Four

Supporting Regional Infrastructure Projects

October 2012

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Record of Updates to the Frequently Asked Questions

This 'Frequently Asked Questions' document is a living document, and will be updated regularly to reflect new questions or issues. The following table provides an indication to the reader of when this document was last updated and the nature of the changes.

Prior to submitting an EOI or full application review this document to ensure that the information you have based your submission on considers the full range of Frequently Asked Questions.

Date Updated	Pages Updated	Description of Update

1. EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST

1.1. What is the Expression of Interest process for Round Four?

- The Expression of Interest (EOI) process was introduced in Round Two of RDAF. It is a key element of Rounds Three and Four.
- EOIs are intended to simplify the application process, reduce the administrative burden on applicants, and provide early certainty to proponents.
- The EOI is a simple form which seeks key details about the project and applicant. EOIs must be emailed directly to the Department (rdaf@regional.gov.au). The Department will record the details of the EOI and forward EOIs to the relevant Regional Development Australia (RDA) committees.
- RDA committees will consider all of the EOIs submitted from across their region and select up to three viable priority projects to proceed to full application.
- The EOI form is available on the Department's website www.regional.gov.au.
- Details of RDA committees can be found at www.rda.gov.au.

1.2. Why is the EOI process necessary?

- The EOI process ensures that there is direct community input into the selection of priority projects. It allows communities to identify priorities and needs, and for the selection of projects that meet those priorities and needs.
- Projects are required to address priorities set out in the RDA committee's Regional Plan or Regional Roadmap.
  - ✓ Regional Plans are key documents for the region and set out key issues, priorities and action plans.
- The EOI process will minimise compliance costs for potential applicants, and provide early certainty about whether the project will proceed to the next stage of the application process.

1.3. Are the EOI forms for Rounds Three and Four the same?

- No, the EOI forms are different, given that Rounds Three and Four have different eligibility requirements and selection criteria.
- It is important that applicants complete the correct EOI form. Only completed EOIs will be accepted and considered by RDA committees.
- EOI forms can be found at www.regional.gov.au

1.4. Can I submit EOIs for Round Three and Four?

- Yes. You may submit one EOI for Round Three and one EOI for Round Four. However, the EOIs must be for a different project.

- The EOI must be submitted on the correct form for the correct round, and must meet the eligibility requirements of the round. For example, the EOI for Round Four must seek between $500,000 and $15 million, and must be for a strategic infrastructure project.
- You may also participate in a consortium to deliver another project. However, the EOI must be submitted by an eligible applicant, which has not submitted an EOI in its own right.

1.5. Do I have to be an eligible applicant to lodge an EOI?

- Yes, only eligible applicants may submit an EOI for an eligible project.
- Applicants must, in the EOI form, certify that they have read the Guidelines for Round Four of RDAF, meet the eligibility criteria, and can submit a full application and supporting documents if selected to proceed to full application.
- The EOI form must be completed in full and submitted to the Department by 5:00pm local time on Thursday, 6 December 2012.

1.6. Can I submit attachments with my EOI?

- No. Fully completed EOIs must be submitted, and must not include attachments.
- Should attachments be provided, they will not be forwarded to RDA committees nor considered by RDA committees. This ensures that all proponents of EOIs are treated fairly and equitably, and that EOIs are assessed on their merits based on a consistent set of information.

1.7. Can I submit more than one EOI for Round Four?

- No, only one EOI can be lodged by an applicant for a single project for Round Four.
- Proponents cannot lodge an EOI for the same or different projects to a number of RDA committees.
- If more than one EOI is submitted for Round Four, the first EOI received by the Department will be accepted.
- For more detail, see Section 4.1 of the Guidelines.

1.8. Is there an on-line process to submit EOIs?

- The EOI form for Round Four is located on the Department's website at www.regional.gov.au. The form should be downloaded, completed and emailed to the Department at rdaf@regional.gov.au
- If you do not receive an acknowledgement of receipt of your EOI via email within two days, you should immediately contact the Department to confirm that it has been received. Please contact the Department on 1800 005 494.

- The Department will forward the EOI to the RDA committee nominated by the applicant.

- EOIs emailed directly and solely to the RDA committee will not be considered.
  - ✓ EOIs must be sent to the Department to be considered.

1.9. Can I withdraw my EOI?

- Yes, EOIs can be withdrawn at any time by the applicant's authorised person (identified at Question 7 in the EOI form).
- Written advice of withdrawal must be provided to the Department at rdaf@regional.gov.au

1.10. Why do only three EOIs proceed to full application for Round Four?

- The EOI process is intended to reduce the compliance costs for applicants.
- Selecting the three priority projects ensures that only those applicants that can meet the eligibility and selection criteria, and meet an identified local priority or need, will proceed to full application.
- Applicants not proceeding to full application will have early certainty about the status of their application.

1.11. If I make a mistake in my EOI can I send the Department a replacement?

- EOIs can be amended or substituted up to the closing date for EOIs.
  - ✓ The closing date for EOIs is Thursday, 6 December 2012.
- Where EOIs are amended, the initial EOI must be withdrawn and a replacement EOI provided. This should be done in writing via email, with emails sent to rdaf@regional.gov.au and clearly setting out the name of the proponent, project, date of submission to the Department and reasons for withdrawal.
- Replacement or revised EOIs must be emailed to the Department before the closing date.

2. PROJECTS

2.1. My project falls into more than one of the infrastructure categories set out in the Guidelines. How do I pick the right category?

- Projects must fall into one of the four nominated categories:
  - ✓ the economy
  - ✓ the community
  - ✓ arts and culture, or
  - ✓ sport and recreation.
- Projects can fall into more than one of these categories. In this case, proponents should pick the category where the primary benefit occurs. For example:

- ✓ A new sports centre can support the regional economy and deliver significant health benefits to the community. The primary category is sport and recreation.
- ✓ A new community centre may host performances and concerts, and will also benefit the local economy during construction and in its ongoing operation. The primary category is community.

- This question assists in the assessment of the EOI and selection of projects to proceed to full application. There is no right or wrong answer.

2.2. What does investment ready mean?

- A project must commence within 12 months of signing a Funding Agreement and the project must be completed by 31 December 2016.
- Funding Agreements are to be negotiated within 6 months of the Minister's announcement of the outcomes of Round Four.

2.3. My project is based in a capital city. Is it eligible for Round Four?

- Projects located in capital cities may be eligible for RDAF funding.
- Projects located in capital cities must have a broader regional impact, or benefit regions outside the capital city. Evidence of these benefits must be provided.
  - ✓ A good example of a project located in a capital city which has a broad regional impact is the Leukaemia Foundation Patient Village project, which is located in Adelaide. The Village will comprise a Support Service Centre and 15 accommodation units for use by patients from regional SA, NT, NSW and Victoria. This project was funded in Round Two.
- Projects located on the fringe or perimeter of a capital city and service a larger regional or rural area do not have to demonstrate broader regional benefit, due to their immediate proximity to a rural area. Examples of peri-urban areas which would be exempt include Campbelltown in Sydney or Dandenong in Melbourne.

2.4. I am seeking funding for the replacement of sewerage pipes? Is this an eligible project?

- Projects which would normally be undertaken by a local council are not excluded from RDAF. However, proponents must make a case for these projects in Selection Criterion Four. This case should include a description of the project and the need for additional funding.

3. APPLICANTS

3.1. If my organisation received funding under Round One or Round Two, can I still apply for funding?

- Yes. If you are an eligible applicant and have an eligible project, you can submit an EOI under RDAF Round Four.
- If selected to proceed to full application, the RDAF Advisory Panel will consider the individual and relative merits of eligible applications and provide independent advice to the Minister on projects which are recommended for funding. The Panel will, as part of the preparation of its advice, consider the allocation of funding across states and territories in Rounds One and Two.

3.2. I am a not-for-profit organisation. Can I submit an EOI?

- Yes, not-for-profit organisations are eligible applicants for Round Four.
- Eligible not-for-profit organisations must have a minimum annual income of $1 million, averaged over the most recent two financial years.
- Applicants must have audited financial statements to confirm that they meet this eligibility criterion. These statements will be required as part of the full application.
- Not-for-profit organisations with an annual income of less than $1 million may still participate in Round Four as a member of a consortium.

3.3. Why do not-for-profit organisations need to have an annual income of $1 million averaged over two financial years?

- The annual income threshold ensures that not-for-profit organisations have the capability and capacity to deliver the project. It also ensures that they have the capacity to sustain the project in the medium term, without further Government assistance.

3.4. I am a not-for-profit organisation, and we have branches located across Australia. Are we eligible to apply for Round Four in our own right or should our head body submit one application on behalf of all of our branches?

- A branch of a not-for-profit organisation can apply for Round Four funding in its own right if it meets the eligibility criteria.
  - ✓ The organisation must be incorporated, operate independently, have an Australian Business Number and meet the income threshold (an annual income of more than $1 million averaged over two financial years).
- Not-for-profit organisations which do not meet these requirements can participate in Round Four as a member of a consortium which is led by an eligible applicant.

3.5. How is income defined for a not-for-profit organisation?

- Income is the organisation's total income or revenue. It is generally accepted in Australian accounting practice to be regular revenue identified on a profit and loss statement.
  - ✓ Income would include all usual forms of revenue, such as merchandise sales, consulting fees, lease payments for rented property, annual operating grants, consulting fees, other general fees and interest earned.
- Extraordinary items of revenue, such as asset sales, one-off share returns, write downs, asset revaluations and one-off grants, may also be included for the purposes of RDAF.

3.6. What does cash include?

- For accounting purposes, cash includes money in hand, petty cash, bank account balance, customer checks, and marketable securities. It may also include the unutilized portion of an overdraft facility or line of credit.

4. PARTNERSHIP FUNDING

4.1. Can I apply for funding for a project if I don't have partnership funding?

- Yes, however preference will be given to projects which include partnership funding. Partnership contributions ensure that benefits of the RDAF funding are maximised and that value-for-money is enhanced.
- Priority will be given to applications that provide partnership funding, in cash, of more than the required 50% of the requested grant. Priority will also be given to partnership funding which includes a contribution from other parties, such as state or territory governments, not-for-profit organisations, philanthropic organisations or the private sector.
- Applicants must provide evidence with the application to demonstrate that partnership funding has been secured.
- In-kind contributions, including land, will also be accepted.

4.2. Does land count as partnership funding?

- Yes, in-kind contributions are accepted. There is no limit on the value of in-kind contributions.

4.3. If I contribute more partnership funding, will this strengthen my application?

- Projects are assessed on individual and relative merits.
- However, RDAF seeks to maximize funding leverage. This maximizes the investment in regional Australia and the value of the Government's investment.

- Priority will be given to applications that provide partnership funding, including a cash component, of more than the required 50% of the requested grant.

- Priority will also be given to partnership funding which includes a contribution from other parties, such as state or territory governments, not-for-profit organisations, philanthropic organisations or the private sector.

5. ROLE OF REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT AUSTRALIA COMMITTEES

5.1. What is a Regional Development Australia committee?

- RDA committees bring together all levels of government to support the growth and development of regional Australia.
- There are 55 committees across Australia, which build partnerships between governments, regional development organisations, local businesses, community groups and key regional stakeholders. They provide strategic and targeted responses to social, economic and environmental issues affecting regional Australia.
- Committees are appointed by the Australian Government in conjunction with state and territory governments. Committees are made up of representatives of local government, and leaders from the community and business.

5.2. What is the role of RDA committees in the EOI process?

- RDA committees will review and assess each EOI and select up to three viable priority projects to proceed to full application.
- RDA committees will provide feedback to those applicants that do not proceed to full application.
- RDA committees will also assess EOIs for Round Three and select up to five priority projects to proceed to full application.

5.3. What will RDA committees take into account when analysing EOIs?

- RDA committees have a strong understanding of their region, and local needs and issues.
- Committees will base their assessment of EOIs on:
  - ✓ priorities in the Regional Plan
  - ✓ capacity of the project to address needs in the region
  - ✓ level of community support
  - ✓ impact of the project on the region and neighbouring regions, with endorsed projects coming from across the region, rather than any one town, locality or Local Government Area, and
  - ✓ capacity to commence the project within 12 months of signing the Funding Agreement and complete the project by 31 December 2016.
- RDA committees will not assess the eligibility of EOIs.

5.4. How will RDA committees handle conflicts of interest?

- RDA committees must adhere to robust governance requirements, including conflict of interest and probity protocols.
- Prior to reviewing EOIs, RDA committee members and staff will agree to conflict of interest requirements. They will also commit to observing stringent confidentiality and conflict of interest protocols.
- Committee members who have a conflict of interest will not review or vote on the EOI which is the subject of the conflict.

5.5. Are the RDA committees the sole decision makers on EOIs?

- Yes. RDA committees are responsible for reviewing each EOI and determining the three viable priority projects to proceed to full application.
- The Guidelines for Round Four outline the process to be used by RDA committees in prioritising applications (section 6.2, section 7.1 and Attachment D of the Guidelines).
- RDA committees must provide feedback to those applicants who submitted an EOI on reasons why the project was not selected.

5.6. Why are only three EOIs proceeding to full application in Round Four, and not all EOIs?

- The EOI process is intended to reduce the compliance costs for applicants, and to provide early certainty about whether the project will proceed to the next step of the application process.
- RDA committees use their local knowledge to select projects that meet the highest community priorities.
- The EOI process ensures that communities participate in the identification of priorities and selection of projects, either directly or indirectly through members of the RDA committee.

5.7. Can I present my case to the RDA committee?

- No. Round Four of RDAF is a competitive merit-based grants program. To ensure equity and fairness, proposed projects will only be assessed on the information included in the EOI.
- Given that EOIs play a strong role in the consideration of RDA committees, proponents are advised to present the strongest case for their project in the EOI.

5.8. Can RDA committee members or RDA staff help prepare my EOI once Round Four has opened?

- No. As RDA committees are decision-makers in a competitive Government grants program, they are bound by strict requirements about fairness, equity of treatment and transparency in decision-making.
- Once Round Four opens, RDA committee members and their staff are not able to assist potential applicants to prepare their EOI.
- RDA committees can, however, conduct information sessions which are open to all potential applicants. Such sessions must be available to all members of the community, the same information must be delivered in a consistent manner and questions and responses asked at the sessions must be placed on the RDA committee's website.

5.9. I have had dealings with my RDA committee in the lead up to the opening of Round Four. Is this a Conflict of Interest?

- No. RDA committees should be talking with local communities about the opportunities offered by RDAF.
- Committees can also play a facilitation role, identifying potential projects and bringing potential proponents together.

5.10. Does my project need to align with my local RDA committee Regional Plan or Regional Roadmap?

- Yes, the proposed project must address a priority in the RDA committee's Regional Plan.

5.11. Where can I find a Regional Plan or Regional Roadmap?

- A Regional Plan (or Regional Roadmap in South Australia and Queensland) is prepared by every RDA committee. These plans are based on extensive consultation and liaison with the community, describes the region, its characteristics and key issues, and identifies solutions. They also identify short and long term priorities for action.
- Regional Plans can be found on the website of each RDA committee (see www.rda.gov.au for details of committees).

6. ROLE OF THE DEPARTMENT

6.1. What is the Department's role in the EOI process?

- The Department is not involved in the assessment of EOIs nor in decisions on EOIs which will proceed to full application. These assessments and decisions are taken by RDA committees.

- Applicants will email their EOI to the Department, which will then be forwarded by the Department to the nominated RDA committee (EOIs should be sent to rdaf@regional.gov.au).
- The Department will publish a full list of EOIs and outcomes of the RDA committee's assessment on its website on Wednesday, 13 February 2013.
  - ✓ The Department will also invite the applicants of the up to three priority projects in each RDA region to submit a full application for Round Four.

6.2. I have questions about the program and EOI process. Who can I talk too?

- To ensure the highest standard of probity, the Department requires that questions be written (email) and sent to rdaf@regional.gov.au, and that answers be provided in writing. This ensures that consistent advice is provided to all applicants and does not advantage any single applicant and is auditable. It also ensures that all key questions can be added to this document, and made available to all other potential proponents.
- Questions to the rdaf@regional.gov.au inbox should be clear and concise, and identify the part of the process you are seeking advice on.

6.3. I am not sure if my project fits under the Round Four Guidelines. If I email a description of the project to the RDAF email address, can they advise me if my project is likely to be funded?

- No. Unfortunately the Department cannot provide advice to proponents about eligibility, either of their project or their organisation, during the EOI and application period.
- The Department is required to ensure that all potential proponents are treated in a fair and equitable manner, and that no unfair advantage is given to any one proponent.

7. DECISIONS ON EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST

7.1. Is the outcome of the EOI appealable?

- No, the decision of the RDA committee is final.

7.2. Will I get feedback if my EOI is not invited to proceed to full application?

- Yes, the RDA committee will provide feedback to all proponents of EOIs.

8. FULL APPLICATIONS

8.1. What do I do if I am invited to proceed to a full application?

- Following receipt of advice from the Department that your project has been selected to proceed to full application for Round Four, you should review the Guidelines for Round Four and:
  - ✓ if you haven't already done so, register your organisation on the Department's Grants Management System portal
  - ✓ assemble all of the supporting documents, and
  - ✓ complete the application webform in the Department's Grants Management System portal.
- Full applications must be submitted to the Department by 5:00pm local time on Thursday, 11 April 2013. Late applications will not be accepted.
- A Frequently Asked Questions document on the full application process will be available prior to the announcement of the projects selected to proceed to full application.

8.2. Can I make material changes to the scope of my project between the EOI and submitting the full application?

- The project described in the EOI and application form must be materially the same, given that EOIs were selected on a competitive basis. However, given the timing between the submission of the EOI and the application form, reasonable changes to the scope, location, value of the project and value of the partnership funding will be accepted.
- The guiding principle is that projects in the full application must not differ in any material way from the project selected by the RDA committee.

Regional Development Australia Fund - Round Four
Supporting Regional Infrastructure Projects

Expression of Interest Form

Advice to Applicants

1. Expressions of Interest for Round Four of the Regional Development Australia Fund (RDAF) opened on Friday, 26 October 2012. EOIs must be lodged by 5:00pm local time on Thursday, 6 December 2012.

2. Potential applicants are advised to carefully review the Guidelines for Round Four (the Guidelines) prior to completing this EOI form. Applicants must assess their eligibility against the Guidelines, and confirm their eligibility in the declaration section of this EOI form. Applicants must be certain that they can submit an eligible application prior to submitting an EOI.
   - ✓ RDA committees do not assess eligibility of EOIs against the eligibility criteria set out in the Guidelines.
   - ✓ The Department will assess the eligibility of the full application.

3. Eligible applicants are permitted to submit one EOI for one project in Round Four. Multiple EOIs will not be accepted. Where more than one EOI is lodged with the Department, only the first EOI will be accepted.
   - ✓ Eligible applicants can submit an EOI to both Round Three and Round Four for different projects. Proponents must be sure that they can meet the different eligibility and selection criteria for each round.

4. The EOI form cannot be changed or altered in any way. The EOI form must be completed in its entirety. Attachments will not be accepted. Responses to questions should be short and succinct.
   - ✓ Responses to each question in Part E are limited to 350 words. Text over this limit will not be considered by RDA committees.
   - ✓ Only fully completed EOIs will be accepted and must be signed by an authorised person. Incomplete EOIs and late EOIs will not be considered.
   - ✓ EOIs received by the Department prior to the closing date can be withdrawn and replaced with an updated EOI for the same project or an EOI for a different project. Advice on the withdrawal of an EOI must be provided in writing to the Department (rdaf@regional.gov.au).
   - ✓ EOIs may be withdrawn following the closing date via email to the Department (rdaf@regional.gov.au).

5. Completed EOIs must be emailed to rdaf@regional.gov.au by 5.00pm local time on Thursday, 6 December 2012. EOIs must not be emailed direct to the RDA committee.
   - ✓ All EOIs received by the Department will be acknowledged via email within two working days. If you do not receive an acknowledgement from the Department, please call 1800 005 494 as a priority to confirm that your EOI has been received.

6. The Department will notify all proponents of the outcome of their EOI on Wednesday, 13 February 2013. Details of the full application process will be published on the Department's website www.regional.gov.au.

PART A. DETAILS OF APPLICANT

1.	**Name of Applicant** *If you are a not-for-profit organisation please provide your registered business name as listed at www.abr.business.gov.au*	
2.	**Type of Applicant** *Please tick the correct box or delete the line which is not relevant*	☐ Local Government ☐ Not-for-profit organisation
3.	**Annual Income of a Not-for-Profit Organisation** *Not-for-profit organisations must have an annual income of at least $1 million, averaged over the two most recent financial years*	Annual Income $..... (year 1) Annual Income $..... (year 2)
4.	**Australian Business Number** *Must be for the applicant named is question 1*	
5.	**Physical Address of Applicant**	
6.	**Postal Address of Applicant**	
7.	**Authorised Person from Applicant Organisation** *This is the person with authority to submit the EOI, such as the Chief Executive Officer or General Manager*	Name: Title: Phone: Email :
8.	**Contact Details of Person with Responsibility for the Project** *This is the person who will have day-to-day responsibility for delivering the project, such as the Chief Engineer or Project Manager*	Name: Title: Phone: Email:

PART B. DETAILS OF PROJECT

9.	**Project Name**			
10.	**Description of the Project** *Describe the infrastructure that will be funded from RDAF funding. (100 word limit)*			
11.	**Is the activity for which RDAF funding is sought part of a larger project?** *If yes, please describe the larger project and the relationship between the activity for which RDAF funding is requested and the larger project. (100 word limit)*	No / Yes		
12.	**Category of Infrastructure** *Select the one category which best describes your project*	☐ Economic ☐ Community ☐ Arts and Culture ☐ Sports and Recreation		
13.	**Is the project dependent on the completion of any other activities?** *If yes, please describe the activities which are to be completed and the estimated time frames*	No / Yes		
14.	**What priority or priorities in your RDA committee's Regional Plan does your project address?**	Priorities:		
15.	**When will the project commence and be completed?** **When will the activity for which RDAF funding is sought commence and be completed?**		Commencement Date	Completion Date
		Project		
		Activity		

PART C. LOCATION OF PROJECT

16.	**Project Location** *What is the physical address of the project? If the project is located in more than one location, list all locations*	
17.	**If the project is located in a capital city, please describe the benefits of the project to the broader region. Describe who will benefit and how.** *Response should be no more than 100 words*	
18.	**Name of the RDA committee which has responsibility for the region where the project is primarily located.** *Only one RDA committee can be nominated*	
19.	**Local Government Area or areas in which project is located**	

PART D. DETAILS OF FUNDING

20.	**Value of RDAF grant being requested** *Must be between $500,000 and $15 million. Must be GST exclusive*	$	
21.	**Total cost of the project** **Total cost of the activity to be supported by RDAF** *Must be GST exclusive*	$ $	
22.	**Value of your organisation's contribution to the project** *Maps to Selection Criterion 3*	Cash $	In-kind $

23.	**Value of cash contributions from partners** *List whether each contribution is confirmed, or requested but not confirmed in the Status of Contribution column. Maps to Selection Criterion 3*	Name of Contributor	Value of Cash Contribution	Status of Contribution
			$	
24.	**Value of in-kind contributions from partners** *List whether each contribution is confirmed, or requested but not confirmed in the Status of Contribution column. Maps to Selection Criterion 3*	Name of Contributor	Value of In-kind Contribution	Status of Contribution
			$	

PART E. MATTERS TO BE CONSIDERED BY RDA COMMITTEES WHEN SELECTING PROJECTS TO PROCEED TO FULL APPLICATION

25.	**How does the project deliver on the priorities in your RDA committee's Regional Plan or Regional Roadmap?** *Response should be no more than 350 words*
	Response:
26.	**How will the project support the local and regional economy? Describe the economic benefits of the project, and how the project contributes to and sustains regional economic growth? (Maps to Selection Criterion 1)** *Response should be no more than 350 words*
	Response:

27.	**How does the project address needs of the community in the region? Describe the benefits of the project for local communities? (Maps to Selection Criterion 2)** *Response should be no more than 350 words*
	Response:
28.	**Describe the community support for the project, including the extent of support and nature of supporting organisations.** *Response should be no more than 350 words*
	Response:
29.	**Confirm that project (or element being funded by RDAF) will be completed by 31 December 2016. Please refer to approvals that have to be obtained, including the status of those approvals, and project delivery arrangements.** *Response should be no more than 350 words*
	Response:

30.	**If you are seeking funding for a project which is the normal responsibility of local, state or territory governments, please describe why RDAF funding is needed. (Maps to Selection Criterion 4)** *Response should be no more than 350 words*
	Response:

PART F. DECLARATION OF ELIGIBILITY

I, [*insert name*] , confirm that my organisation has reviewed the Guidelines for Round Four of the Regional Development Australia Fund.

I confirm that my organisation can meet all eligibility and selection criteria as detailed in the Guidelines for Round Four. If selected to proceed to full application, I confirm that my organisation can provide a completed application, including supporting documents, by 5.00pm local time, Thursday, 11 April 2013.

I confirm that:

- I represent a local government organisation or an eligible Not-For-Profit organisation.
- My project is 'investment ready' and, if it receives funding from Round Four, my organisation can commence work on the project within 12 months of signing the Funding Agreement with the Commonwealth.
- The component of the project for which RDAF funding from Round Four is requested will be completed by 31 December 2016.
- My project is predominantly infrastructure in nature.
- My organisation is requesting between $500,000 and $15 million (GST exclusive).
- My project has community support which can be evidenced by supporting documentation.
- My organisation can implement the project and can sustain it in the longer term.
- My organisation has, or will have at the time of applying, the following required documents to support our application:
  - ✓ letters to confirm the provision of partnership funding from the funding providers;
  - ✓ letters of support and evidence of community consultation;
  - ✓ audited financial statements for the most recent two consecutive financial years;
  - ✓ evidence to demonstrate that we have delivered projects of a similar size or scope on time and on budget;

- ✓ evidence to confirm that my organisation can sustain the project for at least five years; and
- ✓ supporting documentation that includes details of the scope and outputs of the project, sets out how the project will be delivered and identifies any risks.

- My organisation can present a strong, well supported case against the selection criteria:
  - ✓ the extent to which the project will contribute to and sustain regional economic growth; AND
  - ✓ the extent to which the project will provide community benefit; AND
  - ✓ the extent to which the applicant leverages additional funding from a variety of sources; AND
  - ✓ the extent to which the applicant is unable to otherwise fund the project (for projects which are normally the responsibility of local government or state and territory Governments only).
- My organisation is willing to enter into a Funding Agreement with the Department.

I am a person authorised to make this declaration on behalf of my organisation.

I confirm that all of the information provided in this Expression of Interest form is true, correct and accurate.

Name	**Position**
Signature	**Date**