Regional Jobs and Infrastructure Fund

Regional Jobs Fund
Regional Infrastructure Fund
Stronger Regional Communities Program
Application Guidelines
Regional Jobs and Infrastructure Fund

Context

The Regional Jobs and Infrastructure Fund (RJIF) is the Victorian Government’s overarching regional development package. It focuses on major projects, employment and communities. More details on the RJIF are available at www.rdv.vic.gov.au.

The RJIF has five strategic objectives:

- Create jobs of the future and diversify the regional employment base.
- Improve productivity and enhance long-term competitiveness of Regional Victoria through innovation and transition to new growth opportunities.
- Create the conditions for business growth by enhancing workforce skills, providing enabling economic infrastructure and facilitation expansion into new markets.
- Improve the livability of our cities, centres and towns to attract and retain families and young people to live and work.
- Enhance community capacity through collaboration, leadership development and regional planning.

The RJIF was established by the Regional Development Victoria Act 2002 (Act) as a trust fund in the public account. The Act describes the activities for which the trust is to be applied:

- to provide better infrastructure, facilities and services in rural and regional Victoria.
- to strengthen the economic, social and environmental bases of communities in rural and regional Victoria.
- to create jobs and improve career opportunities in rural and regional Victoria.
- to support the development and planning of local projects in rural and regional Victoria.

Regional Development Victoria (RDV) administers the programs within the RJIF. Programs currently open include:

- Regional Infrastructure Fund
- Regional Jobs Fund
- Stronger Regional Communities Program.

Definition of rural and regional Victoria

Rural and regional Victoria is defined under the Act as comprising the 48 Local Government Authorities outside of metropolitan Melbourne plus the six alpine resorts set out in Schedule 2 of the Act.

The Local Government Authorities include 10 regional cities and 38 rural municipalities.

Maximum funding ratios under the programs consider the differing capability and capacity between regional cities, large and small rural councils and alpine resorts as described in the following table.

Information only

These Guidelines and any discussions you may have with an RDV office representative are for information only, and do not constitute advice.

Applicants should seek independent advice before making an application or entering into a Grant Agreement.

Applications are at the cost of the applicant.

RDV makes no representation that a grant of funds will be made to any applicant and reserves the right to make no funds available under the RJIF.

Assessment of non-financial risks

Applications to the RJIF must include information to enable RDV to assess other non-financial risks associated with the proposal as part of its due diligence. This includes consideration of elements that may pose a reputational risk to the State, such as:

- Whether the applicant has already received grants from the Victorian Government.
- Whether the applicant has failed to meet key contractual obligations for previous grant agreements with the State.
- Where the proposal has already been fully funded by the applicant through other means (e.g. capital raising on the Australian Stock Exchange).
- Where due diligence (probity checks) uncovers other adverse findings.
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<td>Latrobe</td>
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<td>Mayne</td>
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<td>South Gippsland</td>
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<td>Surf Coast</td>
<td>Towong</td>
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<td>Wellington</td>
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Additional information and resources

Regional Partnerships Outcomes Roadmaps:

- Barwon Regional Partnership
- Central Highlands Regional Partnership
- Gippsland Regional Partnership
- Goulburn Regional Partnership
- Great South Coast Regional Partnership
- Loddon Campaspe Regional Partnership
- Mallee Regional Partnership
- Ovens Murray Regional Partnership
- Wimmera Southern Mallee Regional Partnership
Regional Jobs and Infrastructure Fund

Regional Jobs Fund Application Guidelines

The Victorian Government invests in seven high potential, high value sectors to drive Victoria’s economic growth including:

- food and fibre
- advanced manufacturing
- professional services
- new energy technology
- medical technology, life sciences and healthcare
- transport, defence and construction technology
- international education.

Description and objectives of the fund

The Regional Jobs Fund (RJF) provides Victorian Government financial assistance primarily to businesses seeking to develop and expand operations in regional Victoria.

The aim of the RJF is to attract new investment, create new jobs and retain existing jobs in regional Victoria and to support businesses to improve their productivity and competitiveness.

The RJF program will consider the following types of projects resulting in the retention and creation of new jobs; development of business innovation and productivity, as well as the provision of utilities and infrastructure:

- investment projects where regional Victoria is in competition with interstate or international locations (i.e. footloose investments)
- projects attracting footloose capital into new and/or existing facilities
- investment to develop new facilities, expand existing facilities and repurposed facilities.
- projects that underpin the sustainability of businesses and the retention of jobs in regional Victoria
- projects introducing new technologies, plant and equipment and systems to improve productivity, competitiveness and business growth
- projects enhancing the skills of the workforce to raise productivity
- the introduction of innovations, technologies, equipment and processes to develop and increase exports
- projects improving supply chain efficiencies through collaborative projects
- projects boosting the capacity of new and existing regionally significant employment precincts such as CBDs, health, education, innovation, industrial and special purpose precincts
- projects that involve utility and service connections and/or upgrades to activate business investment and create jobs (i.e. typically, consideration will be given to projects that require upgrades to electricity supply, gas supply, water supply and wastewater treatment services).
- projects that focus on water and energy savings that improve the operational sustainability of a business in a regional location such as solar and water recycling projects.

Funding assistance

Applicants are expected to attempt to maximise funding from a range of sources, including:

- loans from financial institutions
- equity from business investors
- grants from the Commonwealth Government
- contributions from Local Government Authorities
- contributions from utility / service providers
- other sources.

Priority will be given to projects that are considered investment ready, have a well demonstrated need for government assistance and which deliver a place-based economic impact.

Activities that will generally not be funded

The following activities will generally not be considered for funding:

- projects primarily to meet regulatory requirements.
- requests for retrospective funding where projects have been completed or have commenced prior to receiving funding approval.
- ongoing operating costs or salary subsidies.
- purchase of property.
- projects undertaken by the private sector as a result of a Victorian Government contract.
- projects normally funded through commonwealth, state or local government sources.
- projects requiring operational funding from the Victorian Government once completed.
- telecommunication service improvements and access road upgrades will not be considered.
Who can apply?
The RJF is primarily a regional business development program. Individuals are not eligible to apply under this program.

Applications will be considered from:
- private sector businesses
- business and industry groups including:
  - chambers of commerce and business associations
  - industry peak bodies
  - business and industry clusters and networks.

Applications that involve the provision of enabling infrastructure necessary to activate projects delivering investment and jobs may be considered from:
- utility and services providers
- water corporations
- Local Government Authorities
- incorporated not-for-profit organisations operating businesses.

Fund details
The RJF is a competitive fund with applications received throughout the year on an ongoing basis.

Application and assessment process
To ensure the suitability of projects, all applicants will need to go through the following four-step process.

Step 1: Prior to application
Prior to submitting a formal application, applicants are advised to:
- read these Application Guidelines to establish eligibility
- discuss the proposed project with your local RDV Business Centre
- read the terms and conditions for the funding offered
- express interest in applying for financial assistance by preparing a short description of the project, including the magnitude of the investment and jobs to be retained and created through the project

Applicants should note that projects may not proceed to the formal application and assessment process where the project:
- can potentially be implemented through another government funding program (applicants may be referred to alternative funding programs, if appropriate)
- does not meet the objectives of the fund
- does not strongly demonstrate economic benefits to regional Victoria
- is not ready for implementation
- is not strongly aligned to regional priorities identified through the nine Regional Partnerships
- does not strongly demonstrate a need
- does not strongly demonstrate that Victorian Government financial assistance is necessary for the investment/project to proceed.

An RDV representative will help determine the project’s eligibility before an application form is completed. Applicants requiring further information should contact the local RDV Business Centre.

Step 2: Prepare an application
In preparing an application for financial assistance through the RJF, applicants should clearly and succinctly describe the project by detailing:
- the key activities to be undertaken as part of the project
- the business need that the project is addressing
- project management arrangements
- resource requirements

Documentation to support the project such as a feasibility study, business case, business plan and letters of support should be attached to the application.

Applicants will need to demonstrate how the project will address the core criteria of the RJF program.

Step 3: Assessment process
Applications will undergo a two-stage assessment process.

1. Determining the eligibility of the proposed project by assessing the project’s ability to meet the core RJF criteria.
2. All eligible applications will be considered by the Minister for Regional Development.
Core RJF criteria

The primary aims of the RJF are to attract investment, create new jobs and retain existing jobs in regional Victoria. Therefore, assessment criteria are weighted towards these quantifiable economic development benefits. In preparing the application, applicants will be asked to provide relevant supporting documents to demonstrate the project’s ability to address each of the following criteria:

a) Improvements to business sustainability
b) Economic benefits to regional Victoria
c) Rationale for Victorian Government financial assistance
d) Demonstrated project feasibility and delivery
e) Financial viability of applicant.

a) Improvements to Business Sustainability

Applications should demonstrate clearly how the proposed project will:
• increase productive capacity of the business
• improve operating efficiencies
• reduce costs
• enhance productivity
• improve competitiveness
• strengthen competitive advantage
• remain after funding has ceased.

b) Economic Benefits to Regional Victoria

Applications should demonstrate clearly how the proposed project:
• attracts investment to regional Victoria through the construction of facilities, purchase and installation of new plant and equipment, creation of productive enterprises
• creates new jobs and retain existing jobs
• creates indirect employment (e.g. construction jobs, supply chain jobs, etc.)
• builds on identified regional competitive advantage
• creates flow on investment in supply chain partners
• enhances the strength and sustainability of the industry in the region
• enhances utility services infrastructure to regional Victoria
• produce additional regional exports or import replacement
• generate long-term benefits that remain after funding has ceased.

c) Rationale for Government Support

Applications will need to explain why Victorian Government support is required to allow the project to proceed:
• secure the investment
• address a funding gap
• improve an uncommercial payback period
• bring the project forward by a number of years
• deliver greater scale jobs and benefits
• provide encouragement and confidence to lenders, equity partners and foreign investors.

d) Demonstrated Project Feasibility and Delivery

Applications should clearly demonstrate that:
• all regulatory requirements including land tenure, planning and environmental issues have been identified and resolution strategies are in place to the satisfaction of RDV
• suitable project management arrangements are in place in both the developmental and operational phases of the project
• project risks have been identified and strategies are in place to manage them

Financial modelling/budgeting for proposed projects is required to be submitted.

e) Financial Viability of Applicant

Applicants will be asked to provide copies of annual reports and audited financial statements (i.e. audited profit and loss statements and balance sheets) covering the last three years with their application. This will enable RDV to assess the financial viability of the applicant and their ability to manage and complete the project.
Lodgment of Applications

Completed applications should be submitted online to RDV via the supplied Application Form.
Regional Infrastructure Fund

Application Guidelines

Description and objectives of the fund

The Regional Infrastructure Fund (RIF) seeks to assist the growth of rural Victoria by providing grants for infrastructure projects that have the potential to stimulate economic activity in Regional Victoria.

The objectives of the RIF are:

- to increase economic and social benefits through improved community access and usability of precincts
- to increase economic and social benefits through investment in strategic infrastructure.

Projects seeking funding will need to demonstrate how they will:

- improve economic performance and growth
- create and capture value by harnessing key regional strengths such as social, environmental or economic assets, capital or specialisations
- enhance the social and/or economic resilience and competitiveness of the location
- align with state and regional priorities (i.e. Regional Partnership priority, or Regional, State or National or Council-endorsed plan or strategy)
- maximise the value for money to the state including leveraging investment or funding from other sources
- demonstrate long term feasibility and viability that will sustain positive impacts
- will be delivered within two years of receiving funding approval.

Funding will be provided for projects that:

- improve the economic performance of a precinct
- improve business, transport, retail, education, social, cultural, industry or community linkages
- provide multi-purpose infrastructure, suitable and accessible for a wide range of business and community groups such as business hubs, co-working spaces, community and event facilities
- support cultural initiatives of economic significance to the region such as renewal of buildings and sites, arts and cultural centres or resource facilities.

Funding assistance

Applicants are expected to attempt to maximise funding from a range of sources, including:

- loans from financial institutions
- equity from business investors
- grants from the Commonwealth Government
- contributions from Local Government Authorities
- contributions from utility / service providers
- other sources.

Priority will be given to projects that are considered investment ready, have a well demonstrated need for government assistance and which deliver a place-based economic impact.

Note: as all projects are expected to be delivered in a two-year timeframe from signing of the grant agreement, evidence should be provided that demonstrates all relevant approvals and permits required to commence the project can be obtained within this delivery envelope.

Activities that will not be funded

The following activities will not be considered:

- early-stage project planning
- project planning for infrastructure projects such as a feasibility study, a demand study, or a business case to enable prospective applicants to investigate the technical and or economic viability of an infrastructure project
- local strategic planning including economic development strategies and plans for future growth and infrastructure needs
- requests for retrospective funding, where projects have been completed or have started construction prior to receiving funding approval
- ongoing operating costs or salary subsidies
- private sector projects undertaken as a result of a government contract
- projects where funding is normally provided by other state, commonwealth or local government sources
- projects requiring ongoing funding from the Victorian Government when completed
- activities that are considered Local Government Authority core business
- projects that are only purchasing plant and equipment
- purchase of land.
Who can apply?
Applications will be considered for projects from Councils from regional and rural Victoria. Councils can also sponsor projects on behalf of the business and industry groups including:

- chambers of commerce and business associations
- industry peak bodies
- business and industry clusters and networks
- incorporated not-for-profit organisations and community groups that have an Australian Business Number (ABN) or can provide written advice from the Australian Tax Office that no withholding tax is required from the grant payment.

Individuals are not eligible to apply.

Fund details

The RIF will comprise a single competitive round in the 2019/20 financial year.

The round will open on 6 November 2019 and close on 18 December 2019. Successful applications are expected to be announced in late-January 2020.

Funding available will be capped at $500,000 per project.

Maximum funding ratios are:

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<tr>
<th>Applicant</th>
<th>Maximum funding ratios for co-contributions</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Regional City</td>
<td>Up to RDV $1 : $1 other</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Large Rural Council</td>
<td>Up to RDV $2 : $1 other</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small Rural Council or Alpine Resort</td>
<td>Up to RDV $3 : $1 other</td>
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</table>

While joint investment with other Victorian Government program funding is encouraged, co-contributions from other sources to meet the required funding ratio must be derived from non-Victorian Government sources.

In determining the RDV funding level, the total Victorian Government contribution will be taken into consideration.

Small rural councils and alpine resorts are the only Local Government Authority entity that are eligible to claim in-kind contributions to the projects. The in-kind contribution will be capped at 25% of the applicant’s contribution.

Application and assessment process

To ensure the suitability of projects all applicants will need to go through the following process.

Step 1: Prior to application
Prior to submitting a formal application, applicants are advised to:

- read these Application Guidelines to establish eligibility
- discuss the proposed project with your local RDV representative
- read the terms and conditions for the funding offered
- express interest in applying for financial assistance by preparing a short description of the project, including the magnitude of the investment and jobs to be retained and created through the project.

Step 2: Prepare an application
If the initial assessment is successful, the applicant will be invited to apply for program funding and an online link to an application form will be sent to the applicant.

Applicants should use the online application form to clearly and succinctly describe the project by detailing:

- the challenge or opportunity it is looking to address;
- the objectives of the project;
- the desired outcomes;
- the outputs to be delivered; and
- any resource requirements.

Applicants should address the assessment criteria of the RIF program and provide the supporting documents required by the application form.

Applicants should submit the following documents where required with the application.

All applications must provide:

- a response to the assessment criteria
- completed project plan, including consideration of key risks
- cost estimates/quotes
- letters of support, as appropriate
- evidence confirming funding sources
- evidence of land ownership/tenure
As required, applications should also include:

- a joint use agreement or a completed notification of intent to enter into a joint use agreement form, including a letter of endorsement from the relevant agency
- copy of completed Cultural Heritage Management Plan, Vegetation Assessments, Environmental Management Plans, etc. as appropriate or evidence that these types of plans are not required
- evidence that relevant approvals to commence the project have been obtained, such as Planning Permit, Heritage Victoria Permit, etc.
- schematic plans for the project.

For grants over $300,000, also provide:

- quantity surveyor’s estimate
- construction plans for the project (desirable).

Where the applicant proposes to enter the funding agreement on behalf of a supported organisation the application must include written confirmation from the supported organisation that they have reviewed the application and agree to its content and that the project will be delivered by the applicant on their behalf.

**Step 3: Assessment process**

Applications will undergo a two-stage assessment process.

1. Determining the proposed project’s eligibility. This will be done by assessing the project’s ability to meet the assessment criteria outlined in Step 2. This stage will also consider key risks and issues associated with the project.
2. Eligible applications will be considered by the Assessment Panel against the assessment criteria. The Assessment Panel will make a recommendation to the Minister for Regional Development.

The Assessment Panel is chaired by RDV and includes representatives from the Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions, the Department of Treasury and Finance and the Department of Premier and Cabinet. Where relevant, comments and advice will be sought from other Victorian government departments and agencies.

**Assessment criteria**

Eligible applications will be assessed against their response to the questions and criteria listed below, as well as supporting documents.

Weightings in percentage are provided as a guide to the relative importance of different criterion in the assessment process.

**Project aims – 20%**

The application demonstrates the extent to which the project addresses each of the following criteria:

- economic benefits (e.g. increased business, employment opportunities and increased skills)
- act as a catalyst for regional and community growth
- social and environmental benefits (e.g. social inclusion and improved community connections)
- demonstrates uniqueness in terms, opportunities, challenges or constraints relevant to the region or place.

**Project need – 30%**

The application demonstrates the extent to which the project:

- addresses an existing identified gap or issue
- has an identified need for the project supported by evidence of previously undertaken investigations
- requires Victorian Government support such as funding, facilitation, other interventions or approvals to proceed
- details the risk to the project without Victorian Government support from this source
- is supported by local, regional, state or Commonwealth strategy or plan, knowledge and information demonstrating the challenges being confronted by the community such as drought, rapid economic change, population growth and decline
- is strongly supported by the regional partnership, local government authority, the community and is consistent with regional plans, shared priorities and the direction of regional strategic plans.
Project delivery – 30%

The application demonstrates the extent to which the project:

- demonstrates project feasibility (ie. how the project benefits will be sustained once funding ceases)
- is investment ready, supported by a clear project management approach, relevant approvals and realistic timeframes
- is financially viable, based on sound cost estimates and represents value for money
- that all legal, land tenure, planning and environmental issues have been identified and resolved or satisfactory resolution strategies are in place
- access to suitable project management in both the developmental and operational phases of the project
- that project risks have been identified and strategies are in place to manage them
- detailed preliminary project implementation plan demonstrating how the project can be successfully delivered within anticipated timeframes (no more than two years from approval) and budget
- incorporates principles of environmentally sustainable design and addresses Universal Design while complying with relevant anti-discrimination legislation
- is consistent with good heritage practice, ie The Burra Charter (if heritage listed)
- sources materials and resources to deliver the project which strengthen the regional community and economy.

Capability, capacity and track record – 20%

The application demonstrates the extent to which the applicant:

- has undertaken thorough project consultation in developing the project including project partners, other funding bodies, sponsors, other Government Departments and Agencies, community etc.
- is financially viable and has the capacity to manage and complete the project
- demonstrates experience in infrastructure project delivery, including on time on budget track record
- if relevant, demonstrates successful application of previous funding received from the Victorian Government.

Step 4: Approval process

The Minister for Regional Development, in consultation with relevant Ministers, will consider the advice received from the Assessment Panel and determine whether to approve the application. Applicants will be advised of the decision relating to their application in writing. Successful applicants will receive a letter of offer from the Minister for Regional Development. The letter of offer will outline the funding obligations attached to the offer of funding.

Environmentally sustainable design

Infrastructure proposals are encouraged to incorporate Environmentally Sustainable Design initiatives into project designs.

Universal design

Universal design is a philosophy that encourages building development beyond what is required by the Disability Standards for Access to premises. The intent of universal design is to create environments to be usable by all people, to the greatest extent possible.

The Burra Charter

The Burra Charter is a set of principles that have been adopted to create a nationally accepted standard for heritage conservation practice in Australia. It is not a legal requirement to adopt the Burra Charter guidelines, however they are well entrenched in policy.
Regional Jobs and Infrastructure Fund

Stronger Regional Communities Program

Application Guidelines

Description and objectives of the program

The Stronger Regional Communities Program (SRCP) aims to support rural and regional towns in attracting families and young people to live and work in regional Victoria. It will do so by investing in community-led initiatives and partnerships that create or enhance the conditions for economic growth and build resilient, diversified and sustainable economies.

Strong communities are characterised by high levels of social and economic participation. They demonstrate effective decision-making and strong networks and are attractive to people considering moving to live and work.

The objectives of the SRCP program are to:

• improve the livability of regional and rural towns in order to attract and retain families and young people;
• increase community capability and provide increased opportunities to collaborate, innovate and drive change, and
• increase community resilience to social, economic and environmental shocks.

Activities that may be considered include but are not limited to:

• supporting locally-led partnerships to address economic development challenges and grow opportunities
• establishing or growing community and small enterprise projects
• community strengthening projects which incorporate an infrastructure component
• increased local civic and economic development skills
• collaboration that results in local economic development or community resilience initiatives flourishing
• increasing local community participation, diversity and collaboration in planning, decision making and regional priority projects
• population retention and attraction activities that attract unskilled and skilled labour, professionals and businesses into the regions

• initiatives that build skills, increase participation and grow local economic programs
• engaging community groups to welcome new and potential families to the area
• using existing networks to identify and promote employment opportunities.

Funding assistance

Applicants are expected to attempt to maximise funding from a range of sources, including:

• loans from financial institutions
• equity from business investors
• grants from the Commonwealth Government
• contributions from Local Government Authorities
• contributions from utility / service providers
• other sources.

Priority will be given to projects that are considered investment ready, have a well demonstrated need for government assistance and which deliver a place-based economic impact.

Activities that will generally not be funded

The following activities would generally not be considered:

• strategic or project planning activities
• event sponsorship
• requests for retrospective funding, where projects have commenced (i.e. equipment purchased, contracts entered into or construction has begun) or have been completed prior to receiving funding approval
• projects requiring ongoing funding from the Victorian Government
• ongoing operating costs or salary subsidies except where a salary subsidy provides administrative and project management support for groups of Local Government Authorities and project partners
• private sector projects undertaken as a result of a Victorian Government contract
• projects where funding is normally provided by other state, commonwealth and/or local government sources
• any costs to meet regulatory requirements
• the purchase of vehicles
• the purchase of land.
Regional Jobs and Infrastructure Fund

Stronger Regional Communities Program
Application Guidelines

Who can apply?
Applications will be considered from business and industry groups including:
• chambers of commerce and business associations
• industry peak bodies
• business and industry clusters and networks
• Local Government Authorities
• Government agencies
• incorporated not-for-profit organisations, including community groups that are for example:
  – cooperatives or associations
  – social enterprise organisations.
Individuals are not eligible to apply.

Program details
The SRCP is a competitive program with applications received throughout the year on an ongoing basis. Funding will be capped at $50,000 per project. Maximum funding ratios are:

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Local Government Authorities are ineligible from providing in-kind support as part of their funding contribution.

Application and assessment process
The process for applying for funding under the program is outlined below:
• complete an Expression of Interest (available through RDV regional team representatives) to determine the eligibility of your idea and gain early advice to identify a project’s merits and risks
• RDV will undertake an initial assessment against program eligibility and assessment criteria and provide feedback
• if initial assessment is successful, the applicant will be invited to apply for program funding (an on-line link to an application form will be provided)
• Applicant organisations will undergo a probity check to ensure that business registrations are up to date. In addition, some organisations may be selected for an independent financial risk assessment
• RDV will assess applications against the assessment criteria
• RDV will make a recommendation to the Minister for Regional Development
• the Minister will consider the advice and determine whether to approve the application for funding.
Applicants will receive a letter confirming the outcome of the application.

While joint investment with other Victorian Government program funding is encouraged, co-contributions from other sources to meet the required funding ratio must be derived from non-Victorian Government sources.

In determining the RDV funding level, the total Victorian Government contribution will be taken into consideration.

In-kind contributions can be included as part of the total project costs in calculating the level of grant assistance.

In-kind contributions will be considered subject to the following requirements:
• no more than 50% of total recipient contribution can be in-kind
• professionals costed at $80 – $150 per hour
• skilled labour costed at $45 per hour
• unskilled labour costed at $20 per hour
• equipment costed at standard commercial hire rate.
Assessment criteria

Applicants should use the online application form to clearly and succinctly describe the project by detailing: the challenge or opportunity it is looking to address; the desired outcomes; the outputs to be delivered; and any resource requirements.

Eligible applications will be assessed against their response to the questions and criteria listed below, as well as supporting documents.

Weightings in percentage are provided as a guide to the relative importance of different criterion in the assessment process.

Project aims – 20%

The application demonstrates the extent to which the project addresses each of the following criteria:

- economic benefits (ie: increased business, employment opportunities and increased skills)
- new and improved infrastructure or facilities (ie: regional and community growth)
- social and environmental benefits (ie: social inclusion and improved community connections)
- demonstrates project feasibility (ie: how the project benefits will be sustained once funding ceases).

Project need – 30%

The application demonstrates the extent to which the project:

- addresses an existing identified gap or issue
- is supported by local knowledge and information demonstrating the challenges being confronted by the community such as drought, rapid economic change, population growth and/or decline
- aligns with state, regional and community priorities.

Project delivery – 30%

The application demonstrates the extent to which the project:

- is investment ready, supported by a clear approach and realistic time-frames
- is financially viable, based on sound cost estimates and represents value for money
- sources materials and resources to deliver the project which strengthens the regional community and economy.

Capability, capacity and track record – 20%

The application demonstrates the extent to which the applicant:

- proposes a collaborative approach with a range of partners and indicates how they will contribute to the project
- proposes an effective project management approach and delivery including proposed Project Control Group
- has consulted; including with project partners, other funding bodies, other government departments and agencies etc.
- demonstrates capacity to implement and/or source expertise to manage the project
- if relevant, demonstrates successful application of previous funding received from the Victorian Government.
Compliance and Governance

Project costing treatment of GST

Applicants should note that all project costs included in the application must be exclusive of GST. Applicants must have an Australian Business Number (ABN) and be registered for GST or provide written advice from the Australian Taxation Office that no withholding tax is required to be withheld from the grant payment.

Who signs the application?

Applications from Local Government Authorities must be signed by the Chief Executive Officer.

Applications from other proponents must be signed by the Chief Executive Officer (or person authorised to bind the organisation).

Conditions of funding

Successful applicants will be required to enter into a Grant Agreement with RDV, detailing all funding obligations and conditions.

The standard terms and conditions on which the funding is offered for each program are available from:

- the RDV website at www.rdv.vic.gov.au
- by contacting their local RDV representative.

Grant Agreements are legally enforceable documents that clearly set out the obligations of both parties. The Grant Agreement aims to protect the Victorian Government’s interests and the efficient and effective use of public money.

It also ensures there is appropriate recognition of Victorian Government support in project-related publications, media releases and promotional material.

Grant Agreements must be signed by the organisation’s Chief Executive Officer (or equivalent person with authority to bind the organisation) and will:

- describe the purpose for which the funding must be used
- set out any requirements or conditions that must be met prior to the payment of a grant instalment
- outline agreed milestones and project outcomes that must be achieved before payment of a grant instalment.

Once the Grant Agreement has been signed, the applicant will be required to actively manage and deliver the project and provide accurate progress reports to RDV. During a project, RDV may conduct site visits as necessary.

In some instances, based on project size, complexity and the amount of funding being provided, a project control group (or equivalent) may need to be established with regular meetings and reports. At its discretion, RDV may be either a participant or observer in these meetings.

Successful applicants must enter into a Grant Agreement and commence the project within three months from the date of the funding offer.

If a project does not commence within this timeframe, the grant will be reviewed by RDV.

Projects with a total project value of, or greater than $1 million are required to meet the Local Jobs First Policy requirements: https://localjobsfirst.vic.gov.au/

Monitoring, evaluation and reporting

Successful applicants will be required to cooperate with an evaluation which is undertaken during and/or after completion of the project. Successful applicants will also generally be required to submit progress and completion reporting, assess progress of the project against milestones, outputs and outcomes and provide evidence of project completion.

After completion of the project, applicants must submit annual evaluation reports assessing the project’s success in meeting its stated objectives, outputs and outcomes. Depending on the significance of the project, these evaluation reports may be required for up to three years following completion of the funded project.
Successful applicants may be required to contribute information on project outcomes, including longer-term impacts beyond project completion, for use in program evaluation reviews and RDV marketing materials. It is the responsibility of successful applicants to put in place adequate collection arrangements to capture the appropriate data in relation to outputs and outcomes. These arrangements will assist RDV to undertake a robust evaluation of the RJIF.

RDV reports on grants and programs it administers. The reporting includes the identity of successful applicants and projects and, where applicable, deviations from or exceptions to the assessment and approvals processes set out in these guidelines.

Privacy

Any personal information about the applicant or a third party in the application will be collected by RDV, a statutory body within DJPR for the purpose of grant administration. This information may be provided to other Victorian Government agencies for the purposes of assessing applications. If personal information about third parties is included in the application, ensure third parties are aware of the contents of this privacy statement and the contents of the DJPR Privacy Policy available from the Privacy Officer (details below).

Any personal information about the applicant or a third party in correspondence will be collected, held, managed, used, disclosed or transferred in accordance with the provisions of the Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014 (Vic), Health Records Act 2001 (Vic) and other applicable laws. DJPR is committed to protecting the privacy of personal information.

The department’s privacy policy is available from:

**Privacy Officer**
Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions
GPO Box 2392
Melbourne, VIC, 3001, AUS
Email: privacy@ecodev.vic.gov.au

Enquiries about access to information about you held by DJPR should be directed to:

**Freedom of Information Manager**
Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions
GPO Box 2392
Melbourne, VIC, 3001, AUS
Email: foi@ecodev.vic.gov.au

Competitive neutrality

All successful applications to the RJIF from a Government body, including Local Government Authorities and Government agencies will be required to comply with the Competitive Neutrality Policy Victoria (if applicable) in respect of any commercial goods or services offered by the body as a result of the grant.

Acknowledgement

Successful applicants need to acknowledge the Victorian Government’s support through the provision of a grant from the RJIF. The Grant Agreement includes a requirement that all activities acknowledge Victorian Government support through logo presentation on any activity-related publications, media releases and promotional material in accordance with the Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions (DJPR) guidelines.

A Victorian Government-endorsed sign must also be placed at the site of infrastructure activities.

Successful applicants must liaise with RDV to coordinate any events or announcements related to the activity. Successful applicants may be required to contribute information on activity outcomes for the state to use in communications materials.
Contact Details of Regional Offices:

**Ballarat**
111 Armstrong Street Nth.
Ballarat 3350
Tel: (+61 3) 5327 2800
Fax: (+61 3) 5327 2830
Email: information.ballarat@rdv.vic.gov.au

**Bendigo**
Level 1, 156–60 King Street
Bendigo 3550
Tel: (+61 3) 4433 8000
Fax: (+61 3) 4433 8099
Email: information.bendigo@rdv.vic.gov.au

**Geelong**
Level 2, Harrison Place, 237 Ryrie Street
Geelong 3220
Tel: (+61 3) 5215 6000
Fax: (+61 3) 5215 6099
Email: information.geelong@rdv.vic.gov.au

**Mildura**
131 Langtree Avenue
Mildura VIC 3500
Tel: (+61 3) 5051 2000
Fax: (+61 3) 5051 2020
Email: information.mildura@rdv.vic.gov.au

**Shepparton**
79a Wyndham Street
Shepparton 3630
Tel: (+61 3) 5895 4100
Fax: (+61 3) 5822 2554
Email: information.shepparton@rdv.vic.gov.au

**Traralgon**
33 Breed Street
Traralgon 3844
Tel: (+61 3) 5166 7300
Fax: (+61 3) 5175 0324
Email: information.traralgon@rdv.vic.gov.au

**Wangaratta**
Wangaratta Government Centre 1st Floor
62 Ovens Street
Wangaratta 3677
Tel: (+61 3) 5722 7101
Fax: (+61 3) 5722 7109
Email: information.wangaratta@rdv.vic.gov.au

**Warrnambool**
703–709 Raglan Parade
Warrnambool 3280
Tel: (+61 3) 5561 4135
Fax: (+61 3) 5561 3851
Email: information.warrnambool@rdv.vic.gov.au

**Wodonga**
Level 2, 111–113 Hume Street
Wodonga 3690
Tel: (+61 2) 6059 0200
Fax: (+61 2) 6059 0250
Email: information.wodonga@rdv.vic.gov.au