Community-led Solutions Economic Development Grant Opportunity

General Feedback

The Department of Social Services has provided the following General Feedback for applicants of the Community-led Solutions – Economic Development grant opportunity.

Overview

The grant opportunity application period opened on 25 November 2022 and closed on 19 January 2023 for 12 organisations. On 19 December 2022, the application period was opened for 3 additional organisations and closed on 17 February 2023. The grant opportunity received 7 applications.

The Community-led Solutions – Economic Development grant opportunity builds on the 2021 $30 million Jobs Fund and 'Job Ready' initiative, seeks to support vulnerable and disadvantaged people, particularly Indigenous people, on pathways to self-reliance and empowerment through local community driven solutions that strengthen economic participation in selected regional communities.

The objective of the grant opportunity is to create self-sustaining and ongoing local job opportunities, through community-led capital and infrastructure projects. Successful infrastructure projects would strengthen economic development, build individual capacity, and promote self-determination and choice for First Nations people and their communities.
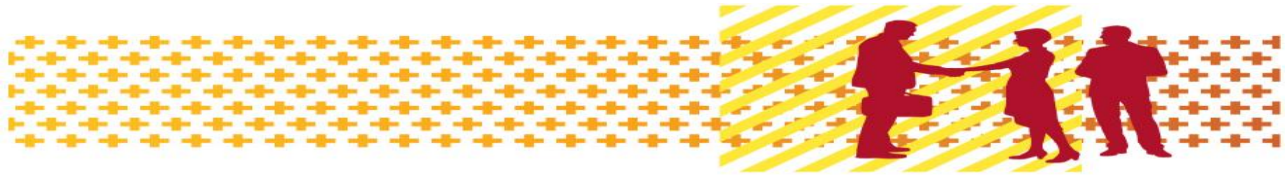
Selection process

The Community Grants Hub undertook the screening for organisation eligibility and compliance against the requirements outlined in the Grant Opportunity Guidelines. This information was provided to the Department of Social Services, who provided the final decision on whether an application did not meet the eligibility and/or compliance criteria. The Community Grants Hub undertook the preliminary assessment of all applications using a targeted competitive selection process.

Following preliminary assessment, all assessed applications were referred to the Department of Social Services for consideration by the Selection Advisory Panel.

Applications were assessed on merit, based on:

- how well applications met the assessment criteria
- whether applications provide value with relevant money.

In addition, when assessing the extent to which the application represents value with relevant money, the Selection Advisory Panel took into consideration:

- the overall objective/s to be achieved in providing the grant
- the relative value of the grant sought
- extent to which the geographic location of the application matched identified priorities
- the extent to which the evidence in the application demonstrated it would contribute to meeting the outcomes/objectives
- how the grant activities would target groups or individuals.

Each applicant was required to address the following selection criteria:

Criterion 1: Describe how this project aligns with your local community's needs.

Criterion 2: Describe the project in detail.

Criterion 3: Describe how the project will deliver ongoing employment opportunities and financial sustainability.

Criterion 4: Demonstrate your organisation's governance structure.

Applicants were identified based on the strength of their responses to the selection criterion and their demonstrated ability to meet the grant requirements outlined in the Grant Opportunity Guidelines.
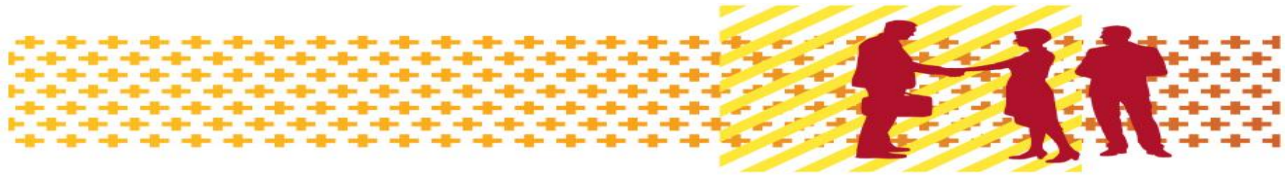
Applications which did not meet the requirements within the Grant Opportunity Guidelines were notified of this outcome in writing.

Selection results

There was a strong interest in the grant opportunity and applications were of a high standard. Applications were assessed according to the procedure detailed in the Grant Opportunity Guidelines and outlined in the selection process above.

This feedback is provided to assist grant applicants to understand what generally comprised a strong application and the content of quality responses to the assessment criteria for this grant opportunity.

Preferred applicants provided strong responses to the selection criteria and demonstrated their ability to meet the eligibility and compliance requirements outlined in the Grant Opportunity Guidelines. Further detail about what constituted a strong response to each criterion is provided below.
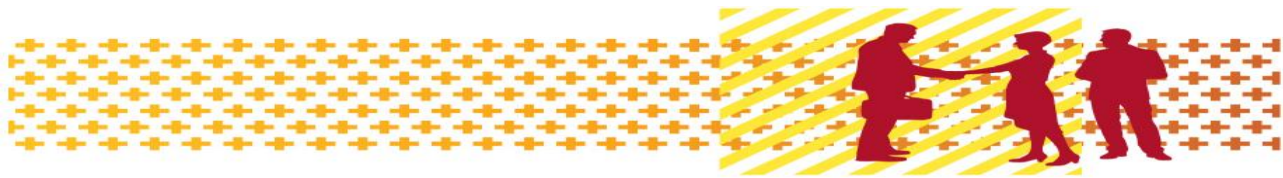
Criterion 1:

Describe how this project aligns with your local community's needs.

When addressing the criterion, strong applicants will:

- describe the problem or need in the community that your project will address (that is, social disadvantage or high unemployment rates)
- describe how consultation has been held or involved the target groups in the design of the project
- provide evidence of the need for the project, including the extent to which the identified problem or need relates to the identified community needs, missions, goals and vision etc. (that is, as per a local community strategic plan [such as an Empowered Communities Regional Plan], local investment plan, statistics, research, empirical evidence, evidence of unmet need/service gap, consultation outcomes).

Strength	Example
Applicants were required to describe the problem or need in the community that their project will address (that is, social disadvantage or high unemployment rates).	Strong responses: - clearly outlined the problem or needs of the community, and how their project aims to address the problem or need of the community - identified gaps in current programs and described how their project would help to fill gaps to address the problems or needs of the community.
Applicants were required to describe how consultation has been held or involved the target groups in the design of the project.	Strong responses: - clearly detailed evidence of community consultation and the involvement of stakeholders in the design of the project, including how the community was engaged to participate, who was involved (that is, community leaders, local organisations) and the contribution made by the community to the development of the project proposal.

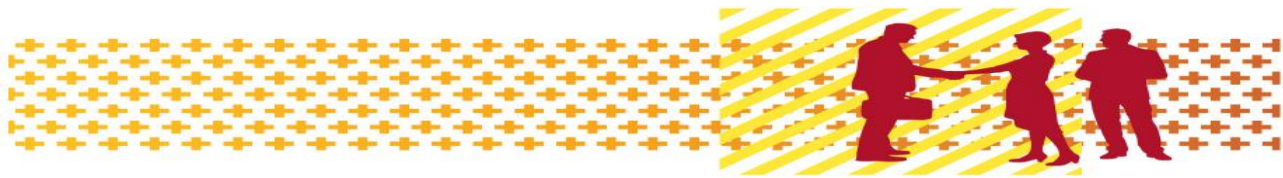| Strength	Example
Applicants were required to provide evidence of the need for the project, including the extent to which the identified problem or need relates to the identified community needs, missions, goals and vision etc. (that is, as per a local community strategic plan [such as Empowered Communities Regional Plan], local investment plan, statistics, research, empirical evidence, evidence of unmet need/ service gap, consultation outcomes).	Strong responses: ▪ referred to socio-economic and demographic data as well as other supporting information to identify the problem or needs in the community ▪ provided clear links between how their project will address the problem or needs of the community and the evidence provided.

Criterion 2:

Describe the project in detail.

When addressing the criterion, strong applicants will:

- provide details of how the project will be implemented and promoted
- outline how many people will be trained/employed during the build phase
- outline how the project demonstrates value with money
- include a detailed project plan (including risk/mitigation assessment works, materials, labour costs), formal quotes, business plan including contingency funding
- provide if the project can be modified, the details of a modified project scope that they will deliver if only partial funding is available.

Please note, additional information could be provided in Appendices A and B templates.

Strength	Example
Strong applications were required to demonstrate how the project will be implemented and promoted.	Strong responses: ▪ provided a comprehensive overview of the project and how it will be implemented and managed ▪ provided an overview of how the project will be promoted and the methods that will be used (that is, television, radio and social media).
Strong applications were required to outline how many people will be trained/employed during the build phase.	Strong responses: ▪ detailed the number of people expected to be trained/employed during the build phase, the type of training and/or employment they will be engaged in.

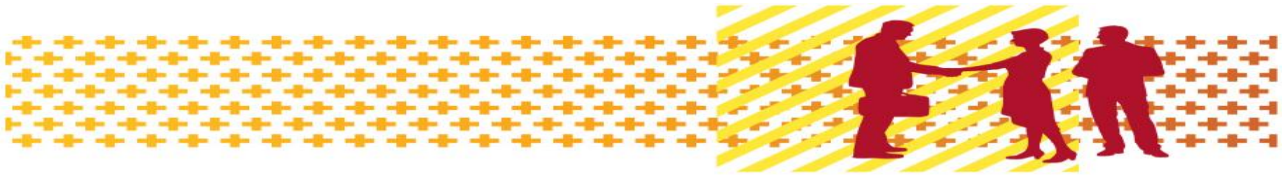| Strength	Example
Strong applications were required to demonstrate how the project demonstrates value with money.	Strong responses: ▪ provided comprehensive documentation to demonstrate project costs presented value for money that led to employability and sustainability.
Strong applications were required to include a detailed project plan (including risk/mitigation assessment works, materials, labour costs), formal quotes, business plan including contingency funding, etc.	Strong responses: ▪ provided detailed project plans including a breakdown of material costs, demonstrated strategies for risk mitigation and contingency planning in remote locations.
Strong applications described how the project can be modified, the details of a modified project scope that they will deliver if only partial funding is available.	Strong responses: ▪ provided details of how the project could be modified and identified how the modified project scope would impact the outcomes of the project.

Criterion 3:

Describe how the project will deliver ongoing employment opportunities and financial sustainability.

When addressing the criterion strong applicants will:

- describe how their project, after the infrastructure has been commissioned, will lead to ongoing training/employment opportunities into the future

- detail how financial sustainability will be achieved including self- funding operations after the infrastructure has been commissioned. For example, how will revenue from the operation cover costs into the future, including surplus?

Strength	Example
Strong applications were required to describe how their project, after the infrastructure has been commissioned, will lead to ongoing training/employment opportunities into the future.	Strong responses: ▪ povided comprehensive information in relation to ongoing training/employment opportunities and how the infrastructure will lead to ongoing opportunities in the future.

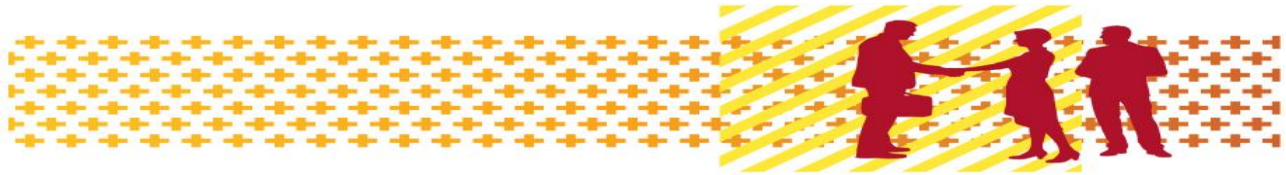| Strength	Example
Strong applications were required to detail how financial sustainability would be achieved including self-funding operations after the infrastructure has been commissioned. For example, how will revenue from the operation cover costs into the future, including surplus?	Strong responses: ▪ demonstrated how the project will be self-sustaining after the infrastructure has been commissioned as well as identified how revenue from the project will cover costs into the future, identifying risks and contingency plans to manage risks and alternative options for funding.

Criterion 4:

Demonstrate your organisation's governance structure.

When addressing the criterion strong applicants will:

▪ provide an overview of their organisation, including the project management expertise to lead the project to completion, governance structures, geographical coverage and dispute resolution policies

▪ describe why their organisation is well-placed to lead this project to target groups within identified community/ies. The application should include evidence, experience, qualifications in delivering infrastructure projects and land acquisition details

▪ describe the relevant experience/qualifications of staff managing the project and how they ensure staff are appropriately skilled and supported, including staff from any consortium or sub-contracting arrangements.

Strength	Example
Strong applications were required to provide an overview of their organisation including the project management expertise to lead the project to completion, governance structures, geographical coverage and dispute resolution policies.	Strong responses: ▪ provided comprehensive information in regards to the organisation's governance structures, previous experience in the delivery of other or similar projects, experience of staff members involved in the project, risk management procedures.
Strong applications were required to describe why their organisation is well-placed to lead this project to target groups within identified community/ies. These applications included evidence, experience, qualifications in delivering infrastructure projects and land acquisition details.	Strong responses: ▪ demonstrated how the organisation is well-placed to deliver this project using examples of past experience in delivering similar projects ▪ demonstrated a strong understanding of the community.

Strength	Example
Strong applications were required to describe the relevant experience/qualifications of staff managing the project and how they ensure staff are appropriately skilled and supported, including staff from any consortium or sub-contracting arrangements.	Strong responses: - Detailed staff experience and qualifications and described how the staff members experience will benefit the project.