

Frequently Asked Questions

Integrated Water Management Grants Program (Regional Project Funding 2021-22)

Q. What is the purpose of the grant program?

A. The Victorian Government is funding these grants to support the implementation of the Integrated Water Management Framework for Victoria (the IWM Framework) (water.vic.gov.au/liveable/integrated-water-management-program/iwm-framework).

The aim of the IWM Framework is to help state and local governments, the water sector and water sector partners work together to better plan, manage and deliver water in Victoria's cities and towns to achieve resilience and liveability for Victorian communities.

Specifically, the IWM grants will provide funding, on a co-contribution basis, to organisations that are members of the IWM Forums to deliver projects that contribute to achieving the strategic outcomes for IWM that will make the best use of all water sources and help respond to the challenges of climate change, population growth and environmental decline. These strategic outcomes are:

- Safe, secure and affordable supplies in an uncertain future
- Effective and affordable wastewater systems
- Opportunities are sought to manage existing and future flood risks and impacts
- Healthy and valued waterways and marine environments
- Healthy and valued urban, rural, agricultural and green landscapes
- Community values are reflected in place-based planning
- Jobs, economic growth and innovation.

Q. Who is eligible for the grant funding / who can apply?

A. Only organisations that are members of Victoria's 10 regional IWM Forums are eligible to apply for grant funding in this round of the grants program.

IWM Forums are collaborative groups that bring together leaders of organisations with an interest in water cycle management. The IWM Forums were established under the IWM Framework to identify and prioritise opportunities and projects that would most benefit from collaborative place-based planning.

There are five IWM Forums in metropolitan Melbourne and 10 regional IWM Forums.

Q. Can joint applications be submitted?

A. No. There must be only one lead applicant. The lead organisation will be solely responsible for entering into the funding agreement and will be solely responsible for meeting the project delivery, reporting and other requirements of the agreement.

However, projects must be delivered collaboratively with one or more IWM Forum member organisations or water sector partners. These partners should be listed in the 'Collaborative Partner Organisations' section of the

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application form and evidence for their participation – e.g. letters of endorsement – must be attached at the 'Supporting Documents' section of the Application Form.

Q. When do applications close?

A. Applications must be submitted online by 5:00pm on 13 December 2021.

Q. When do I hear whether I have been successful?

A. Applicants will be notified mid February 2022.

Q. Which grant round do I apply for if my organisation sits within both a regional and metropolitan IWM forum boundary?

A. Apply for the round (regional or metropolitan Melbourne) that corresponds with the location of the proposed project.

Q. What type of projects will be considered for funding?

A. Projects will be eligible for funding in this round only if they are part of, or derived from, projects endorsed by regional IWM Forums or listed in a Strategic Directions Statement (SDS) of a regional IWM Forum. The SDSs present the shared vision and objectives of the members of each Forum and include prioritised opportunities for collaborative implementation.

Proposed projects may be either capital projects or feasibility studies. Capital projects are defined as those that result in on-ground works and may encompass projects that include detailed design and construction or construction only. A feasibility study is a survey or analysis of the need, value, and practicability of a project, or the development of an IWM Plan, a business case or functional design for a project, that would meet the objectives of this grants program.

Regardless of the type of project, details must be provided on how Traditional Owner inclusion, including how appropriate inclusion activities, has, or will be, embedded into the project's planning and/or delivery.

To be eligible for funding under this grants program, proposed projects must also satisfy one or more of the purposes of the Environmental Contribution levy:

- promote the sustainable management of water
 - improved understanding of Victoria's water systems to inform their effective management in the long term
 - efficient and effective use of Victoria's water systems, to better manage within the known limits of the resource
 - the long-term resilience and security of Victoria's water systems
- address adverse water-related environmental impacts
 - remediate or offset adverse impacts on water-related environments arising from water extraction and associated infrastructure
 - remediate or offset processes that adversely impact on the health of water-related environments.

Funding will only be provided where a clear case for state investment is provided in the Application Form.

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Q. What will not be considered for funding?

A. The IWM grants program will not fund:

- for this round of the grants program, projects that are not able to start in the 2021–2022 financial year
- projects that will go ahead without state co-investment (i.e. where no funding gap is identified and/or there are otherwise contracted or legislated organisational obligations)
- projects located outside the state of Victoria.

Also, funding under the IWM grants program cannot be used for:

- the purchase of land
- routine or ongoing maintenance activities
- recurrent operating costs, for example rent, staffing and utility costs, and/or activities establishing expectations of ongoing funding.

However, these costs can be included in the project budget and be counted as part of the applicant's co-contribution towards the total cost of the project.

Q. How much funding is available?

A. There is \$14.1 million in funding available over three years which is divided into different funding streams including: Regional program funding 2021-22; Metropolitan Melbourne program funding 2021-22; Regional program funding 2022-23; and Traditional Owner project funding.

There is \$3.1 million available in this round which will be provided on a co-contribution basis. To be eligible, the applicant and any collaborative project partners must contribute at least 25% of the cost of the project. This contribution may be financial or in-kind (for example, through the work contributed towards the project by the staff of the applicant or the collaborative partner organisations). Preference will be given to applicants depending on the proportion of the cost they propose to contribute.

For capital projects, the maximum funding per project in this round is: \$1 million (excluding GST).

For feasibility studies, the maximum funding per project in this round is: \$200,000.

Q: Should I include GST?

A: All applicants should apply for the amount that would cover the total costs of delivering your project, including, where applicable, GST incurred on the purchase of goods and services required for the project.

Q. Will applicants be required to provide quotes?

A. Applicants are not required to provide quotes for each component of the proposed project. However, value for money will be an important consideration in the assessment process. Therefore, strong applications will demonstrate that the proposed costs reflect the most efficient use of grant funding.

At the same time, we acknowledge that construction costs are very high in the current environment. These costs should be reflected appropriately in applications.

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Q. My proposed project has been endorsed by the IWM Forum. Does that mean I will receive a grant?

A. No. The grants program is a competitive process with all applications assessed against the criteria. The grants program has only a limited pool of funds and it is likely that many applications that have been endorsed by IWM Forums, including through their SDSs, will not receive a grant.

Q. My application is for a feasibility study. Will there be funding for the project under the grants program once the feasibility study is completed?

A. There is no guarantee of government funding for projects after a feasibility study has been completed. An important component of any feasibility study should be to identify existing responsibilities for the issues identified and any funding sources available to progress the next stages of the project.

Q. How long do successful applicants have to complete their project?

A. The applicant must be able to complete the relevant milestones of the project for which grants funding is provided, and complete all other requirements of the funding agreement (including acquittals and final report), by 31 January 2024.

Components of the project for which grants funding is not received may continue beyond this date. This will be reflected in the funding agreement.

Q. How do I apply?

A. Applications must be submitted online using the Grants Online portal. To apply, go to the grant program webpage water.vic.gov.au/liveable/integrated-water-management-program and click on the 'Start New Application' button.

To prepare and submit an online application form, you must be a registered user of Grants Online. If you are already a registered user of Grants Online, you will be prompted to enter your username and password. If you are not a registered user of Grants Online, you will be asked to create a username and password.

To avoid losing data, we encourage you to save your application as you go. You can do this by clicking the 'save as draft' button at the bottom of every page. To return to a saved draft application, click on the 'Access Saved Application' button.

Applications must not exceed the word limits indicated. Applicants can attach supporting documents to the 'Supporting Documents' section. Attachments must be in an acceptable file type (such as Word, Excel, PDF or JPEG) and they must not exceed the maximum file size of 10MB.

If applicants have documents to submit that cannot be attached to an online application, they can be emailed to grantsinfo@delwp.vic.gov.au, quoting the application number. Attach all documents to one email, zipping the files if required.

Q. What are the criteria for applications?

A. The criteria are set out in the Application Guidelines. All applicants should read the guidelines carefully. To be considered, applications must first meet the eligibility criteria set out in sections 2–6 of the guidelines.

Eligible applications will then be assessed against the assessment criteria set out in section 7 of the guidelines based on the answers provided in the relevant sections of the application form and the supporting documents attached.

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Q. Will there be an opportunity for presentations by applicants?

A. No. Applications should respond to all questions as comprehensively as possible to allow the applications to be assessed.

Q. What will happen after I submit my application?

A. Applications will first be assessed against the eligibility criteria. Eligible applications will then be assessed against the assessment criteria by an assessment panel. Successful and unsuccessful applicants will be notified in writing after the assessment process is completed. Unsuccessful applicants will be offered feedback on their application. All decisions are final and are not subject to further review.

Q. Will I have to enter into a funding agreement?

A. Yes. Successful applicants must enter into a funding agreement with DELWP. The Victorian Common Funding Agreement is used for funding agreements with not-for-profit organisations, Traditional Owners and Local Government Authorities. It is recommended that applicants review the terms and conditions before applying. Information about the Victorian Common Funding Agreement is available on vic.gov.au/victorian-common-funding-agreement.

For other successful applicants, funding agreements will be generated using the standard DELWP agreement with project-specific schedules and milestones.

Q. Who can I contact for further information or help in completing my application?

A. If you require technical assistance submitting your application online, email grantsinfo@delwp.vic.gov.au.

If you have a question that is not answered here or in the application guidelines, please email your question to iwm.branch@delwp.vic.gov.au.

Please note that, for the information of all other applicants, questions emailed to the iwm.branch@delwp.vic.gov.au will be included in updated Frequently Asked Questions or posted on the IWM Online portal page without identifying the source of the question.