

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

IWM Grant Program 2025-28

1. What are the available funding streams under the Integrated Water Management (IWM) Grant Program

The IWM Grant Program 2025-28 has three funding streams:

- IWM Partnership Projects (separate allocations for metropolitan and regional)
- Traditional Owner-led IWM projects
- IWM Strategic Directed Investments

Application Guidelines for each stream are available on the IWM Program webpages of the DEECA website.

2. What is the IWM Strategic Directed Investment grant stream?

The SDI stream is a new funding stream under the IWM Grant Program. It is designed to support high-impact IWM initiatives that align with Victorian Government priorities. It targets large-scale, time-critical projects in Greater Melbourne and the Barwon IWM Forum area, as well as IWM planning in regional areas that are forecast to experience rapid growth. These grants aim to support rapid urban growth, enhance water security, reduce infrastructure costs, and promote sustainable development. By enabling timely and targeted investment, the SDI stream helps prevent environmental degradation and avoids the need for costly retrofits to water infrastructure.

3. What projects have been funded previously?

Under the 2021-24 IWM Grant Program, DEECA funded projects statewide that aimed to improve our water security, enhance waterway and landscape health and build greater community connections to the environment. Some examples include:

- Blind Creek's Naturalisation at Lewis Park
- Monterey Recycled Water Scheme
- Walking Wodonga Waterways
- Understanding Barriers and Enablers to IWM in New Regional Developments
- Avalon Corridor Integrated Water Management Plan

4. How much funding is available under each stream of the IWM Grant Program 2025-28?

IWM Partnership Projects - metropolitan stream

- A total of \$7.5 million is available from 2025-26 to 2027-28

- A maximum of \$2.5 million is available for each capital project
- A maximum of \$250,000 is available for each feasibility project

IWM Partnership Projects - regional stream

- A total of \$7.5 million is available from 2025-26 to 2027-28
- A maximum of \$2.5 million is available for each capital project
- A maximum of \$250,000 is available for each feasibility project

Traditional Owner-led IWM projects stream

- A total of \$2 million is available from 2025-26 to 2027-28
- A maximum of \$150,000 is available for each successful Registered Aboriginal Party
- A maximum of \$50,000 is available for each successful non-registered group.

IWM Strategic Directed Investments stream

- A total of \$7 million is available from 2025-26 to 2027-28
- \$5.5 million is available for projects in metropolitan Melbourne and Barwon IWM Forum areas. Up to \$5 million is available per project under this allocation.
- \$1.5 million is available for planning projects in regional areas that are forecast to experience rapid growth. Up to \$500,000 is available per project under this allocation.

5. What are the key differences between the funding streams?

Funding Stream	IWM Partnership Projects	IWM Strategic Directed Investments	Traditional Owner led projects
Objectives	• Implement priorities identified through IWM Forum collaboration • Build awareness, capacity and local leadership in the design and delivery of IWM outcomes, and • Demonstrate the benefits of IWM through practical delivery of IWM outcomes.	• Support investment in IWM planning and infrastructure in rapidly growing areas of Victoria (particularly the Melbourne and Barwon IWM Forum regions) to ensure sustainable urban development and water resilience. • Enable timely and proactive government investment in initiatives that would otherwise miss critical windows for influence, integration, or co-investment, • Support high-impact, system-scale projects where early intervention can address major water system risks or unlock significant social, cultural, environmental or economic benefits,	• Build cultural water knowledge and/or experience sharing cultural water knowledge in the context of IWM and caring for Country. • Increase Traditional Owner capacity to engage in IWM. • Demonstrate the benefits of IWM through practical delivery of IWM outcomes.

		• Deliver infrastructure and planning responses that prevent greater future costs or irreversible failures, such as environmental degradation, fragmented infrastructure delivery, or inefficient retrofitting • Strengthen alignment between water investments and broader government priorities, including housing delivery, climate adaptation, and Traditional Owner self-determination, and • Demonstrate the value of IWM through the practical delivery of IWM outcomes.	
Grant model	Competitive	Negotiated	Negotiated
Process	• Any eligible applicant can apply • All applications are assessed at the same time following application close date • Applications are ranked and recommended for funding in order of highest scoring until the funding envelope is met.	• Project identified • Scoping discussion between DEECA and potential applicant/s • If suitable, DEECA invites the organisation to submit an application • Applicant drafts application with guidance from DEECA as required. • Draft application submitted to DEECA for review and feedback. • Final application submitted for assessment • Applications are submitted at any time throughout the application period • Applications are assessed as they are received	• Applicants draft an EOI • Optional: applicants can submit a draft EOI to their region's DEECA IWM Project Officer for feedback • Final EOI is submitted at any time throughout application period • EOIs are assessed as they are received

Please read the application guidelines for each funding stream carefully as they contain important information for each grant stream. Some streams contain unique information about funding flexibility and inter-relations with other streams. It is critical that you read the application guidelines in full for the funding stream that you wish to apply for.

6. What if I don't know which funding stream to apply for?

If you are unsure which stream to apply for once you have read the application guidelines for each funding stream, please contact DEECA during the application open phase iwm.branch@deeca.vic.gov.au.

For partnership projects grants, if your organisation sits within a regional and metropolitan IWM forum boundary, please apply for the stream that corresponds with the location of the proposed project.

7. Can I submit applications to multiple funding streams?

Yes, provided you meet the eligibility criteria, you can submit applications to multiple funding streams.

8. Can I use grant funding from other State or Commonwealth grant programs to meet the minimum co-contribution requirements?

Yes, the source of co-contributions is flexible, provided the minimum requirement is met. The contributions may come from other secured grants, partner organisations, the lead organisation or any combination of these.

9. My project previously received funding from the IWM Grant Program. Can I apply for additional funding for the same project?

Yes, you may apply for additional funding for a subsequent stage of the same project, provided the previous stage has been successfully delivered. *For example:* If you received funding from the IWM Grant Program 2021-24 to complete the detailed design of a stormwater harvesting system, you may be eligible to apply for funding from the 2025-28 program to support its construction.

However, activities that have already been funded are not eligible for further funding. *For example:* If you received funding for the construction of a stormwater harvesting system and during delivery of the project a budget shortfall has developed, you would not be eligible to apply for additional funding under the 2025-28 program to cover that shortfall.

10. What if I don't meet the eligibility criteria?

The Application Guidelines for each funding stream outline the specific eligibility criteria for applicants and projects.

If you are unsure whether you meet the eligibility criteria, please contact DEECA for clarification during the application open phase iwm.branch@deeca.vic.gov.au.

Submitted applications that do not meet the eligibility criteria *will not* proceed to the assessment stage and *will not* be considered for funding.

11. Can I submit a joint application?

While projects are expected to be undertaken in collaboration, there can be only one lead applicant for each application. If successful, the lead applicant will be the sole party to the funding agreement and responsible for managing all grant funds directly.

It is not acceptable for the lead applicant to act as a financial intermediary and transfer the funds to another organisation for management. The State requires a clear line of accountability for public funding and cannot fund projects where it does not maintain direct financial oversight.

12. My proposed project has been endorsed by the IWM Forum, does that mean that I will receive grant funding?

Not necessarily. Projects that are seeking grant funding must go through the applicable application process under the funding stream you wish to apply for.

13. What is considered a Capital Project and a Feasibility Project?

Capital projects and feasibility projects are defined in the application guidelines as:

Capital Project

Involves on-ground works and may include design and construction (D&C) or construction only. For D&C projects, a suitably detailed design and feasibility assessment (appropriate to the scale of the project) must be completed prior to applying for grant funding.

Feasibility Project

Involves investigation or planning to support future IWM delivery. Feasibility projects may include a feasibility study or needs analysis, development of an IWM plan, preparation of a business case, creation of a functional design or research and development.

14. My project is a feasibility study. Will there be funding available for the next project stage once the feasibility study is complete?

There are no guarantees of government funding for projects after a feasibility study has been completed. An important component of any feasibility study should be to identify next stages of the project following completion, including any funding source available.

15. What if I miss the application submission deadline?

Late or incorrectly submitted applications will only be accepted at DEECA's discretion if doing so aligns with probity principles and does not compromise the integrity of the application process.

Applicants should not assume that they will be given any further opportunity to amend their application. The original application lodged should be considered final.

16. How will the applications be assessed?

Each funding stream has its own assessment criteria and weightings, detailed in its respective Application Guidelines.

Applications will be assessed by a panel of DEECA staff, with input from technical advisors as needed. All assessments will be conducted in accordance with probity principles to ensure fairness, transparency and integrity.

17. Should I include GST?

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

18. Will there be an opportunity for applicants to present on their application?

No. The assessment panel will only consider information provided in the written application by each applicant.

19. How will I be notified of the outcome?

Applicants will be notified via email once the assessment and approval process is complete. Indicative timelines for assessment and notification are provided in the relevant Application Guidelines.

20. What happens if I am successful for funding?

Following the selection of your project:

1. You will be notified of your successful application via email
2. DEECA will provide you with a funding agreement and arrange a meeting to confirm:
 - a. Project scope, timeline, budget and governance arrangements
 - b. Terms and conditions of funding
 - c. DEECA's expectations in terms of communication and project delivery

3. Once confirmed, DEECA will enter into a funding agreement with your organisation.

The DEECA Transfer Payment Funding Agreement is used for Victorian public entities, as defined under section 5 of the *Public Administration Act 2004*.

The Victorian Common Funding Agreement is used for funding agreements with all other applicable entities. Information about the Victorian Common Funding Agreement is available on <https://www.vic.gov.au/victorian-common-funding-agreement>

It is recommended that you review the terms and conditions before applying.

Funding agreements must be **signed within one month** of notification of successful grant application. Failure to execute agreements within this timeframe may result in the offer of grant funding being withdrawn and funding reallocated.

21. What happens if I am unsuccessful for funding?

All funding decisions are final and are not subject to review. Applicants will be offered the opportunity for feedback on their application.

22. What if I have other questions that are not answered by this FAQ?

If you have additional questions that are not included in this document, please contact iwm.branch@deeca.vic.gov.au noting that DEECA is bound by probity principles when responding to your questions.