

# Expression of Interest – Albany Innovation Regional New Industries Fund

## 1. Introduction

### Regional New Industries Fund

The Regional New Industries Fund (RNIF) is a sub-fund of the \$16.7m the New Industries Fund (NIF) that is designed to support venture creation and accelerate business growth to diversify the Western Australian economy and create new jobs. The RNIF aims to catalyse Western Australia's competitiveness by building entrepreneurial, innovation and commercialisation capabilities in the regions.

### Albany Innovation

Albany has a strong base in creative industries and is recognised as the centre of growing agribusiness in the Great Southern. These strengths can be leveraged to create jobs for a wide section of trades and technical skills, attract highly skilled and entrepreneurial people, and drive the development of specialist food production into expanding markets.

On 17 December 2018, the Minister for Regional Development announced a grant of \$340,000 for the Design and Innovation in the Great Southern (DIGS) Hub project which delivered on an election commitment to drive innovation and start-ups in Albany. The DIGS project was designed to encourage business innovation and creativity by providing designers, community organisations and businesses with virtual and physical spaces to meet, work, learn, collaborate and thrive in the Great Southern region.

The initial proponent is no longer able to complete the project and Expressions of Interest (EOI) are now sought from organisations with demonstrated success in supporting start-ups and innovation to deliver the election commitment as outlined in the Scope of Activities.

## 2. Scope of Activities

Up to \$220,000 is available to support start-ups and innovation in the Great Southern. The successful proponent will be required to:

- Establish a collaborative workspace where emerging entrepreneurs can have access to space, technology, networks and active support to move their ideas to practical implementation.
- Provide training and mentorship for business to support the commercialisation of new innovations and growth of businesses in the region.
- Bring entrepreneurs and businesses together to support collaboration and the development of an entrepreneurial and innovation-led culture.
- Run programmes for school children to inspire them to be entrepreneurial.

The project is to be completed by 30 September 2021.

### **3. Eligibility and Assessment Criteria**

In order to be considered eligible, and to be included in the evaluation process, an application must be received by, 5pm AWST 26 October 2020. Applications will not be accepted after this time.

Applications must meet the following Eligibility Criteria:

- Have an Australian Business Number (ABN) and/or Australian Company Number (ACN);
- Be made by a valid legal entity that can enter into a funding agreement with the Western Australian Government (see Section 6);
- Include financial statements for the past two financial years that have been certified by the organisation's accountant; and
- Provide a project plan that includes a timeline, deliverables, a clear budget, resources, risks, stakeholder engagement/communications and how impact/success will be measured.

#### **Who is not eligible to apply?**

- An individual, partnership or trust (however, an incorporated trustee may apply on behalf of a trust), as defined by the Australian Tax Office.
- A government agency or body (including government trading enterprises).

#### **Merit Criteria**

All proposals will be scored against the following merit criteria:

1. Alignment of the proposed services to the Scope of Activities.
2. Demonstrated experience and a proven track record in growing local capability within regional innovation ecosystems.
3. Capacity to respond to needs/opportunities in the innovation ecosystem in the Great Southern region.

### **4. EOI Process**

An EOI is an invitation to the marketplace, to describe their proven ability to meet specific requirements, in this case providing services in regional Western Australia.

The Department will convene a panel to score applications. The panel will assess applications against the Assessment Criteria to determine the extent to which the application meets the scope requirements of the State Government and whether they offer value for money as an investment when compared to other submitted EOIs.

The scoring will then be provided to the Minister for Regional Development and the Minister for Innovation, along with advice on the strengths and weaknesses of each application for final decision on awarding funding. The Ministers' reserve the right to negotiate application scope, funding requested and outcomes as part of the EOI process.

<b>Timeline for Round 1 Funding</b>	
Closing date	Applications lodged no later than 5:00PM (AWST) Wednesday 26 October 2020
Eligibility checks	October 2020
Evaluation	October 2020
Funding offer	November 2020
Funding agreements in place	November 2020
Programs funded completed	30 September 2021

To be considered for funding from the RNIF Program, applications must be received by 5:00PM (AWST) 26 October 2020. The successful applicant will be required to be available to sign documentation prior to the end of November 2020.

## **5. How to apply**

Application forms can be found on the Department's website at [http://www.drd.wa.gov.au/projects/Economic-Development/Pages/regional\\_new\\_industries\\_fund.aspx](http://www.drd.wa.gov.au/projects/Economic-Development/Pages/regional_new_industries_fund.aspx).

Please submit a completed application form to the Department via [rnif@dpird.wa.gov.au](mailto:rnif@dpird.wa.gov.au) by 5:00PM (AWST) 26 October 2020.

## **6. Conditions of Funding**

- The successful applicant will be required to enter into a legally binding Financial Assistance Agreement (FAA) with the Western Australian Government.
- The terms and conditions of the FAA will not be negotiable at the time a funding offer is made. A template is available in advance, on request.
- The funded project must commence within 90 days after the Western Australian Government signs the FAA and be completed within the agreed timeframe.
- Only eligible expenditure incurred on or after the project's start date can be claimed by successful applicants.
- Any project expenditure made prior to notification of outcomes, is made at the project partners own risk—there is no guarantee of funding approval at any stage of the application process.
- The recipient must be willing to provide information as and when required and be open to attend media/promotion events if requested.
- The successful applicant's partners must acknowledge the Western Australian Government's funding, and where applicable relevant the Minister for Regional Development and the Minister for Innovation, in all relevant published material, media releases and public statements.
- You must advise the Department of changes which are likely to impact on your eligibility for funding.

- The Department may consult with other Western Australian Government agencies, local governments and the Australian Government to confirm accuracy of information provided in the application.
- Monitoring and evaluation plans and reporting will be required.
- Project funding will be subject to the proponent demonstrating they have achieved the project milestones as outlined in the FAA.
- No contractual or other legal relations shall exist between any applicant for funding on the one hand and the State of Western Australia (including any agent, agency, instrumentality or emanation of that State) on the other hand unless and until a formal legally binding Financial Assistance Agreement is entered into by and between them. Neither this document nor anything else shall be creative of or give rise to legal or equitable rights or obligations; such rights or obligations shall only come into being if and when a formal legally binding financial assistance agreement, referred to in the previous sentence, comes into existence.

## **7. Privacy**

The Western Australian Government collects and collates information from the application form to evaluate applications for the RNIF. Only authorised State Government officers and approved grant assessors have access to this information.

Applicants' personal information will not be disclosed to any other third party without consent, unless required by law or for the purposes of agreement.

Applicants should note that broad details of successful proposals, agreed outcomes, progress and the level of funding awarded may be published by the Western Australian State Government. Some information may be used to promote funded projects.

For audit purposes, the Western Australian Government is required to retain the applications and other supplied supporting material.

You need to be aware that the Department is subject to the *Freedom of Information Act 1992*, which provides a general right of access to records held by the Western Australian and Local Government agencies.

Information that relates to the receipt of State Government financial support may be tabled in the Western Australian Parliament. This information could include names of recipients, the amounts of financial support, the name of the project/activity and, possibly, a brief description of the project/s funded. This could result in requests for more detail to be released publicly.