



Recovery for Regional Tourism Program

Frequently Asked Questions

As at 28 April 2021

The \$50 million Recovery for Regional Tourism program (the Program) was announced by the Australian Government on 27 September 2020 to deliver tailored assistance to nine regions heavily reliant on international tourism.

This initiative is part of the \$1 billion COVID-19 Relief and Recovery Fund to support regions, communities and industry sectors disproportionately affected by the economic impacts of COVID-19.

More information on the program can be found on the [Austrade website](#).

These FAQs are intended to inform applicants from the nine regions identified as eligible for assistance under the program. A list of approved projects can be found on the [Austrade website](#).

They are designed to be read in conjunction with the [program guidelines](#).

The list of FAQs will be updated as more questions are raised.

Any questions can be referred to RegionalTourismRecovery@austrade.gov.au.

1. Entity eligibility

1.1 I AM RUNNING A BUSINESS IN AN ELIGIBLE REGION. CAN I APPLY FOR GRANT ASSISTANCE UNDER THE RECOVERY FOR REGIONAL TOURISM PROGRAM?

No. The Program Guidelines specify that regional tourism organisation(s) or, in limited circumstances, a state or territory tourism organisation, are the eligible applicant entities. This is in recognition that key tourism strategies for a region are managed through these organisations. Projects must be tailored to suit the needs of the region, and they must be developed following extensive consultation within the region.

2. Eligible activities and expenditure

2.1 HOW DO WE MANAGE GST?

The grants are not subject to GST, as noted in Section 10.3 of the Program Guidelines. This means all amounts in the budget and milestones of the Application Form and in the final Funding Agreement will be exclusive of GST. You may need to pay GST to your suppliers and claim it back via your Business Activity Statements. It is recommended that your accounting team is across your planning and project milestones to manage cash flow.

2.2 CAN PROJECTS OR ACTIVITIES BE DELIVERED OUTSIDE MY REGION?

Projects must deliver benefits into one of the nine regions eligible under the Program. In most cases, this will mean projects must be delivered in your region. However, projects and expenditure on activities outside your region may be eligible if they provide a direct benefit to

your region. For example a marketing activity carried out in a location outside your region that directs interstate visitation to your region could be eligible.

2.3 CAN I APPLY FOR FUNDING FOR A PROJECT THAT BUILDS ON A CURRENT OR PREVIOUS INITIATIVE?

The Program will only fund projects that are defined in your grant agreement and that involve expenditure incurred on or after the start date of your agreement, and therefore not projects that have already commenced. However, we may consider new and discrete projects that build on the achievements of a previous initiative.

2.4 WE HAVE A PROJECT ALREADY UNDERWAY AND WE HAVE ALREADY INCURRED INITIAL COSTS. CAN THIS PROJECT BE FUNDED UNDER THE PROGRAM?

No. The Program will only fund activities and expenditure that commence/are incurred after your funding agreement is in place.

2.5 WILL THE PROGRAM FUND STAFF COSTS?

Wages and other staff costs for ongoing staff are defined as ineligible expenditure in the Program guidelines. However, the Program will fund costs of **new, temporary** staff employed specifically and exclusively to implement an eligible activity. Funding for such staff is capped at \$80,000 over the life of the grant agreement, unless you can make a case for a higher amount in your application.

2.6 WE RECEIVE REGULAR FUNDING FOR OUR ONGOING ACTIVITIES FROM THE STATE GOVERNMENT. DOES THIS MAKE THE ACTIVITIES WE APPLY FOR UNDER THE PROGRAM INELIGIBLE FOR FUNDING?

While the program will not fund a project or activity that is already funded by another Australian, state or local government, **new/additional activities** and associated expenditure that are not funded within your existing funding allocation will be eligible, subject to all other eligibility requirements being met.

Ongoing operational funds that contribute to a project under the program may be considered a co-contribution.

2.7 CAN I APPLY FOR A 'FUNDING POOL' THAT COULD BE PUT ASIDE FOR A DEFINED CATEGORY OF ACTIVITY (EG NEW EVENTS) THAT I COULD THEN DRAW ON TO FUND ACTIVITIES AS THEY ARE DEVELOPED AND IMPLEMENTED?

No. The Program Guidelines require the Assessment Panel to assess **individual projects and activities** within an application against the Program's assessment criteria. A proposal for a funding pool does not constitute a project or activity. Without full knowledge of particular projects and activities, the Assessment Panel and the Decision Maker is not able to make an assessment on those individual projects/activities.

2.8 WILL THE RECOVERY FOR REGIONAL TOURISM PROGRAM FUND CONSTRUCTION OR ACQUISITION OF NEW TOURISM-RELATED ASSETS?

The Program **may** fund construction or acquisition of tourism-related assets in some limited circumstances. As with any project (and related expenditure) put forward for assessment, applicants should have regard to the Program's Assessment Criteria (refer section 6 of the Program Guidelines). In this particular circumstance, any project or activity that involves the acquisition/construction of tourism-related assets must demonstrate that it can **deliver impact quickly** to aid rapid economic recovery.

In addition, applicants should note that the following costs/expenditure are not eligible for support under the Program (refer section 5.4 of the Guidelines):

- Costs for the purchase or upgrade/hire of software and ICT hardware, **unless** it relates directly to the project.

- Capital expenditure for the purchase of assets such as office furniture and equipment, motor vehicles, computers printers or photocopies is ineligible expenditure, **unless** the asset is seen as **essential** and **dedicated exclusively** to the delivery of the project.
- Costs of purchasing, leasing, depreciation or, or development of land.
- Costs of purchasing land or the purchase or construction of buildings, and the development of road, rail or port facilities.

2.9 WILL THE PROGRAM FUND FEASIBILITY AND SCOPING STUDIES TO EXAMINE THE POTENTIAL MARKET AND LIKELY SUCCESS OF NEW TOURISM PRODUCTS AND EXPERIENCES?

Costs involved in feasibility and scoping studies are **unlikely** to be eligible as they tend to involve preliminary work on a project that may not lead to actual implementation of the project. As Program assessment criteria include the need to **deliver impact**, it is unlikely that feasibility/scoping studies would be eligible for support under the Program. However, implementation plans and reports that advise/guide how to implement an activity that already has all of its approvals may be eligible. Similarly, market research reports that will provide input into marketing campaigns that have already been approved may be eligible.

2.10 WILL THE RRT PROGRAM FUND 'FAMILIARISATION' ACTIVITIES WHERE AN APPLICANT MEETS THE TRAVEL COSTS OF BRINGING TRAVEL OPERATORS/ PROVIDERS TO A LOCATION TO PROFILE THE ATTRACTIONS AND EXPERIENCES AVAILABLE?

Familiarisation programs are a common mechanism used to promote a destination and drive demand. These activities will involve meeting the travel costs of wholesalers and others in the travel trade to bring them to a location to demonstrate the full range of experiences available. The exclusion of 'travel costs' in paragraph 5.4 of the Guidelines is an item aimed at excluding normal and regular operating travel costs of an applicant's employees, not travel costs which are embedded in a project aimed at driving demand such as a familiarisation activity. Accordingly, providing all other eligibility and assessment criteria are met, the Program will fund travel costs incurred as part of a familiarisation program – for both the external parties and employees of the applicant who are reasonably required to participate in the program to accompany the external participants.

3. Funding arrangements and grant application process

3.1 HOW MUCH GRANT FUNDING CAN I RECEIVE EACH YEAR?

The Program has been allocated a total of \$50 million for expending over two financial years to 30 June 2022. Funding of \$20 million is available in the 2020-21 year and \$30 million in the 2021-22 financial year.

When preparing your application and allocating funding to projects, it would be helpful if you could spread expenditure across the two financial years on a 40% to 60% basis (i.e. 40% of your funding is allocated in 2020-21 and 60% in 2021-22).

3.2 WHAT CAN BE CONSIDERED A FUNDING CO-CONTRIBUTION?

The Australian Government strongly encourages funding co-contributions to amplify the impact of projects funded by the Program. This could include in-kind contributions or funding for initiatives and programs already announced that projects funded under this Program could build on. We will discuss co-contributions with you as projects are developed.

Co-contributions could come from different sources, not just you as the applicant. For example, they could come from the state or territory tourism organisation, or other arms of the relevant state/territory government. Alternatively, they could come from other local entities such as local government or private businesses in the region.

3.3 WHO DO WE NEED TO CONSULT WITH, AND IN WHAT WAY, TO ARRIVE AT THE PROJECTS WE SUBMIT FOR FUNDING? WHAT EVIDENCE WILL AUSTRADE REQUIRE ABOUT OUR CONSULTATION?

The Program has been established to support projects that meet the identified needs of regions and address gaps in existing assistance. Accordingly, applicants are asked to undertake a thorough process to arrive at projects that meet this requirement. Stakeholders we anticipate you would consult with include: local tourism businesses, local tourism councils or business chambers, state and territory tourism organisations and local government authorities. We are not prescriptive on the form your consultations take, only that it has been inclusive, has provided a real opportunity to provide input, and follows a robust and equitable process. Examples of consultation processes could include: surveys, calls for expressions of interest, and workshops/meetings. We would ask you to outline the process you went through to filter ideas to arrive at the final submission. You will need to outline full details of your consultation at Part E of the Application Form.

4. Project delivery

4.1 PROJECTS MUST BE DELIVERED IN A COVID SAFE WAY - WHAT DOES THIS MEAN?

In your application you must provide details of how you will deliver your projects in a COVID safe way. You will need to address this for each project, and your approach will differ from project to project depending on the nature of the project. You will need to detail how projects are delivered in a way that is compliant with applicable government health regulations in relation to COVID-19. This may include noting that COVID safety plans and practices are in place for companies that will deliver the initiative, or making the development and implementation of COVID safety plans one of the deliverables for any project or activity.

5. Approved projects

5.1 HOW CAN I FIND OUT MORE ABOUT THE APPROVED PROJECTS?

A list of approved projects is available on the [Austrade website](#). We encourage you to get in contact with the Registered Tourism Organisation or State Tourism Organisation for further information. Contact details are provided on the approved list of projects. However, queries can also be referred to RegionalTourismRecovery@austrade.gov.au.

5.2 HOW LONG DO THE PROJECTS RUN FOR?

Project activity must be completed by 31 May 2022.