

Great Barrier Reef Urban Technology and Innovation Fund – Wastewater Grant Program

Frequently Asked Questions

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Australian Government



Queensland Government

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This document is intended to supplement the *Great Barrier Reef Urban Technology and Innovation Fund – Wastewater Grant Program Guidelines* and provides additional clarification and explanation for applicants. It is important to read the Guidelines in the first instance.

1. What is the funding source?

The Program is jointly funded by the Queensland Government and Australian Government. The Australian Government contribution to the Fund will come from the Reefwise Urban program, managed by the Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water.

2. Should I apply for Tier 1 or Tier 2 of the program?

The following table should assist in determining whether you should apply for a Tier 1 or Tier 2 grant.

	Tier 1	Tier 2
Grant funding available	Up to \$4,000,000	Up to \$200,000
Matched funding required	At least double the amount of grant funding sought For example, for a \$2,000,000 grant, a co-contribution of at least \$4,000,000 is required.	No minimum requirement
Project duration	Up to 3 years, from early 2027 to early 2030	Up to 2 years, from early 2027 to early 2029
Commercialisation status of system/approach	Functional Prototype	Minimum Viable Product
Great Barrier Reef catchment demonstration site	Must have a site identified with relevant permissions in place	Must have a site that is operational
Activities funded	Demonstration (including establishment of demonstration site) and commercialisation	Commercialisation / market expansion
Desired project outcome	System / approach demonstrated at industrial scale Minimum viable product achieved. Commercialisation achieved	Commercialisation progressed and market reach expanded

3. Can I submit more than one application?

Yes, there is no limit on the number of applications that an eligible organisation can submit. Eligible organisations can be involved in multiple project applications as lead applicant, project partner or a combination of both.



4. How do I prepare to submit an application?

Read the Guidelines carefully to see if your organisation and project are eligible. Only eligible applications will be considered for funding. Identify the appropriate Tier of funding for your project.

Engage with established partners and other organisations that might be able to provide financial or in-kind support. Where relevant, confirm trial hosting arrangements with partner organisations and seek written endorsements and/or letters of support.

5. If my project involves multiple organisations, who should be the applicant organisation?

Where multiple organisations are partnering on a project, choose a lead applicant organisation that meets the eligibility requirements. If successful, the applicant organisation will be the legal entity that will enter into a funding agreement with the Queensland Government. It must own the bank account into which the grant will be paid and will be legally responsible for the proper acquittal and reporting of any funds awarded.

6. How do I apply?

Access the application form on the [Great Barrier Reef Urban Technology and Innovation Fund – Wastewater Grant Program](#) webpage by choosing the relevant link (i.e. Tier 1 or Tier 2). The link will take you to the department's SmartyGrants online grants management system. You will need to create a log-in so you can save and submit an application.

7. Why is the application form restricting the amount of information I can provide in response to questions?

The application form has word limits applied to each response to avoid unnecessarily long responses. Applicants are encouraged to present responses in a clear and concise manner. If deemed necessary during the assessment process, additional information may be requested by the department.

8. Can I attach additional information to support my application?

The application forms ask specific questions to assist the applicant to respond to the assessment criteria and assist the assessors to determine which applications will be shortlisted. Applicants should focus on responses to these questions.

In addition to these questions, the application form will prompt you for any required supporting documentation, including a business website or visual representation to support the responses provided. Any documentation provided that is over and above what is asked for will not be considered by assessors.



9. How do I complete the *Project Activities and Outcomes* section of the Full Application form?

You should detail the key project activities to be completed, split into six-monthly reporting periods. You also need to detail the expected outcomes of these activities (i.e., how you will measure the ongoing success of the project at the end of each reporting period).

As a guide, each milestone should have three to seven dot points describing the key activities and outcomes for each stage of the project with numbers, targets or rates of completion, where possible.

You should ensure that any jobs to be created are included in your *Project Activities and Outcomes*.

It is important to be as realistic and specific as you can when completing this section. Should your application for funding be successful, the *Project Activities and Outcomes* which will be incorporated into the funding agreement and you will be required to report actual progress and achievements against these.

10. How do I prove that a wastewater treatment system or management approach is innovative?

This can be challenging, especially if the service elements cannot be protected through traditional IP means like patents, copyrights, or trademarks. However, there are several ways to demonstrate the innovation of a service:

- Clearly articulate its unique value proposition and how the service offers something different or better when compared to existing alternatives
- Provide evidence of the demand or need for the service and how it fills a gap in the market
- If there are innovative technologies, methodologies, or processes behind the service, explain how they work and why they are unique or groundbreaking.

Not everything is patentable, but you need to demonstrate that you have carefully considered your intellectual property position and have a strategy in place to protect your innovation.

11. What are *leading practice levels 1 to 3* in relation to end of pipe nutrient concentrations as referenced in the Guidelines?

More information can be found in the [Leading Practice Sewage Treatment Plant Environmental Management Review](#).

12. What is meant by the term 'affordable'?

Affordability is relative to the cost of building or operating a traditional-engineered, advanced wastewater treatment system. For guidance on this, refer to Table 7.2 in the [Great Barrier Reef Point Source Metadata Collection Project](#).

Affordability should consider the following:

- capital expenditure (CAPEX), operational expenditure (OPEX) and total life cycle expenditure (TOTEX)
- energy use costs
- potential or realised circular economy opportunities



- potential or realised nutrient or other trading scheme-based (e.g. EcoMarkets) opportunities
- retrofitting opportunities that avoid or delay the replacement of existing systems
- operating adjustments for existing systems that reduce costs but achieve the same treatment efficiency.

13. What is the definition of urban area for this program?

Urban areas are the gazetted urban footprint within a given local government area, which include already developed urban land and land that has been earmarked for future urban development.

This program does not fund projects that are focused on wastewater treatment systems for non-urban land use and on-site treatment systems.

14. Does my project have to be delivered within the Great Barrier Reef catchment to be eligible for this program?

Yes, Tier 1 project applications are only considered eligible if on-ground trials are to be delivered within the Great Barrier Reef catchment as defined in the Guidelines.

Tier 2 projects must relate to products with demonstration sites located within the Great Barrier Reef catchment.

15. How long should the project be?

For Tier 1 projects, the maximum duration is three years. Tier 1 projects should allow for a minimum of six months to monitor and evaluate operational performance. Therefore, projects are expected to be a minimum of two years in duration.

For Tier 2 projects, the maximum duration is two years.

16. How do I demonstrate that my project has a clear focus on commercialisation?

Your application should set out a clear plan for commercialising your innovation and increasing customer sales. It should clearly demonstrate that the plan is achievable within the project timeframe.

Activities considered 'commercialisation' for the purpose of the Great Barrier Reef Urban Technology and Innovation Fund – Wastewater Grant Program funding are:

- sales and marketing
- exhibiting at trade delegations/trade shows
- customer/investor engagement
- product or service demonstration as required by new customers/markets
- investigation of production and assembly options
- securing intellectual property protection including research, engaging specialist advice and securing patents.

Consideration will be given to allow matched funding to include:

- limited specialist testing as required by new customers/markets
- minor corrections or improvements to the product or service to meet customer/market requirements.



17. How do I determine the risk rating for each identified project risk?

Use the Risk Matrix below to identify a risk rating of Low, Medium, High or Extreme for each identified project risk.

Likelihood and Consequence

Likelihood	Consequence				
	<i>Insignificant</i>	<i>Minor</i>	<i>Moderate</i>	<i>Major</i>	<i>Critical</i>
Almost Certain	Medium (11)	Medium (16)	High (20)	Extreme (23)	Extreme (25)
Likely	Low (7)	Medium (12)	High (17)	High (21)	Extreme (24)
Possible	Low (4)	Medium (8)	Medium (13)	High (18)	High (22)
Unlikely	Low (2)	Low (5)	Medium (9)	Medium (14)	High (19)
Rare	Low (1)	Low (3)	Low (6)	Medium (10)	Medium (15)

Risk Rating

Risk level	Risk scale	Action required
EXTREME	23-25	Requires immediate action and involvement at executive management level to manage the risk.
HIGH	17-22	Requires senior management attention and involvement to manage the risk.
MEDIUM	8-16	Risk can be managed at the business level by specific monitoring or response procedures.
LOW	1-7	Risk can be managed at the business level by routine procedures or established controls.

Where likelihood levels are defined as:

Likelihood	Definition (Qualitative description)	Definition (Quantitative description)
Almost Certain	The event is expected to occur in most circumstances	May occur once a month or more frequently
Likely	The event will probably occur in many circumstances	May occur once every year
Possible	Identified factors indicated the event might occur at some time	May occur once every 2 or 3 years
Unlikely	The event could occur at some time, but it is improbable	May occur once every 5 years
Rare	The event may occur only in exceptional circumstances	May occur once every 10 years



18. How do I demonstrate that my project will result in outcomes and benefits for the Great Barrier Reef and Queensland?

The outcomes of the project should be clearly defined and quantified, as far as possible, in terms of economic, social, regional and/or environmental benefits.

In identifying economic benefits of the project, you should consider:

- sales and/or revenue from the developed wastewater treatment system/management approach
- direct employment effects
- its contribution to an increased level of entrepreneurship and innovation
- any benefit that will be delivered to regional Queensland
- any benefit that will be delivered to Indigenous businesses and/or peoples
- its potential to benefit and/or grow one of Queensland's priority industries
- its alignment with and/or contribution to any current Queensland Government policy/industry roadmap/priority industry.

19. Are costs related to intellectual property protection eligible?

Great Barrier Reef Urban Technology and Innovation Fund – Wastewater Grant Program funding can be used to cover costs to obtain professional advice on the protection of intellectual property as well as reasonable costs of protecting intellectual property.

It **cannot** be used to cover costs relating to the ongoing maintenance and/or renewal of existing intellectual property protection.

20. What travel costs can I include in my project budget?

All travel costs should be reasonable, as determined by the department. As a guide, the department considers the following to be reasonable costs for travel and subsistence:

- Domestic airfares – economy class only.
- Car hire (per day) – \$85 and fuel.
- Accommodation (per night) – \$150 – \$225.
- Meals:
 - Breakfast – \$35 (max.)
 - Lunch – \$40 (max.)
 - Dinner – \$65 (max.)

Applicants should plan for travel expenses to accompany departmental staff during site visits for program auditing purposes (once per year on average).

21. What if I miss the deadline for submitting an application?

Late submissions will not be accepted.



22. Can I make a change to my application after I have submitted it?

Only information submitted at time of application can be considered by the assessment panel.

However, you must advise the Queensland Government of any changes that occur after submission of an application that are likely to affect your eligibility.

23. How will my application be assessed?

All applications will be first assessed for eligibility, and only eligible applications will be considered further.

Applications will be assessed against key criteria in a competitive, merit-based approach by an assessment panel comprising experts in wastewater treatment, engineering, compliance and innovation commercialisation. The most meritorious applications will be recommended for consideration and approval by the delegated authority.

You may be requested to clarify information as part of the assessment. There is no implicit guarantee of approval at any stage in the process.

While all applications are assessed competitively against the same criteria, the Queensland Government reserves the right to recommend female-led, regional, and Indigenous businesses for funding in cases where those applications are identified as meritorious by the assessment panel and will provide significant benefits to the state.

24. How is the disclosure of information about my system/ approach protected during the application process?

Our external assessors are procured through an arrangement that requires them to keep all information contained in funding applications confidential and not use it except for the purposes of the assessment (unless information is required to be disclosed by law).

Where applicants have not obtained intellectual property protection this should be stated in the application and the application should disclose only what is absolutely necessary to enable the system/approach developed to be understood by the assessors.

25. When will I find out the outcome of my application?

Applicants will be advised in writing of the outcome of their application at the earliest possible time but please note that timeframes are dependent on the quality and volume of the applications submitted, as well as approval processes.

26. If my application is successful, can I publicise this?

Application outcomes are under embargo until a Ministerial has made a public announcement has been made. Letters will be sent to both successful and unsuccessful applicants, The Department will advise successful applicants when they are free to make a public announcement about their projects and will provide guidance on how to acknowledge Queensland Government support.



27. Can I check on the status of my submitted application?

Applicants will be notified in writing of the outcome of their application in due course. No early indication of likely success of an application can be provided to applicants.

28. If my application is successful, when will I receive the grant funding?

Funding is paid in instalments throughout the lifecycle of the project. Generally, the first payment is made following execution of the funding agreement between the recipient and the Queensland Government. The remaining payments are made following the submission of satisfactory reports detailing the progress, outcomes, and expenditure of the project. The schedule for payments will be set out in your funding agreement.

29. If my application is successful, will I have to provide evidence of project progress and expenditure to receive grant payments?

Yes, recipients must demonstrate that the project is being delivered in accordance with the funding agreement and provide evidence that the outcomes have been achieved and expenditure has been incurred to the satisfaction of the department.

An online progress report template will be provided for completion by recipients. Recipients will be required to complete the report to outline the progress of the project against the planned project activities and outcomes; the number of jobs created; details of expenditure of Great Barrier Reef Urban Technology and Innovation Fund – Wastewater Grant Program funds and applicant funds; and any potential media opportunities.

Recipients must provide details of all expenditure on the project in the form of a categorised transaction listing. In addition, recipients will be required to provide payment evidence in the form of invoices, pay slips, receipts, and bank statements, as appropriate.

Once the department is satisfied with the information provided, recipients are required to submit a valid tax invoice for the instalment amount (including GST), addressed to the Department of the Environment, Tourism Science and Innovation.

30. If my application is successful, am I required to spend all the grant funding in Queensland?

It is expected that, wherever possible, the grant funding will be spent within Queensland, i.e., if you are purchasing goods or services that are available in Queensland, it is expected that you would purchase them from within Queensland.

Expenditure outside Queensland is acceptable only where it is a prerequisite to ensure successful completion of the project, for example, the costs of travel and accommodation required to engage with potential new customers in a new market, and/or, the costs of procuring expertise, products, or services that are essential to the project but not available within Queensland.



31. I commenced some project activities and/or incurred costs prior to the execution of a funding agreement; can I include these activities/costs in my first progress report?

Only activities that commence after the project start date can be reported. Any project expenditure incurred prior to the project start date cannot be claimed from the Great Barrier Reef Urban Technology and Innovation Fund – Wastewater Grant Program funds or be counted as part of the applicant contribution. The project start date will be agreed as part of the negotiation of the funding agreement and is generally no earlier than the funding agreement execution date.

32. Are salary-related on-costs allowable project expenditure and if so, do they apply to the project overall, or to individual positions only, and are they to be included within the 15% administration cap?

Salary-related on-costs, such as annual leave, leave loading, superannuation, and workers compensation, can be included for the proportion of time an individual employee works directly on the delivery of the approved project. These on-costs need to be included as part of the capped 15% project administration cost limit. Non-salary related on-costs (e.g. office space rent, office and computing equipment) are not eligible administration costs.

33. If grant funding timeline does not align with the local government annual budget cycle, are local government commitments to future year cash co-contributions acceptable and are in-kind contributions allowable?

To be eligible, applications need to demonstrate a commitment to at least meeting the minimum cash contribution over the three-year project duration, which could include securing funds in future council budget cycles. Successful projects must commence by 1 March 2027 so most of the project term will occur in future local government budget cycles. In-kind contributions are welcomed, however they will not be considered as a replacement for cash contributions.

