

Regional Tourism Investment Fund 2024

Program Guidelines



Authorised by the Victorian Government, Melbourne.
Department of Jobs, Skills, Industry and Regions

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May 2024

ISBN 978-1-76090-650-4 (pdf/online/MS word)

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Acknowledgement

We acknowledge and respect the Traditional Owners of Country throughout Victoria, their ongoing connection to lands and waterways upon which we depend, and we pay respects to their culture and their Elders past, present, and future.

We acknowledge that Aboriginal self-determination is a human right enshrined in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, and we are committed to working towards social, economic, and cultural equity for Aboriginal Victorians.

We acknowledge the diversity of Aboriginal Victorians, and we acknowledge all other people of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander descent living in Victoria.

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Message from the Minister

No matter what time of year, there's always something exciting to see or do in Victoria. From hot springs and cultural experiences to boutique distilleries and world-class restaurants, Victoria has something for everyone.

To complement our exceptional tourism offerings, Victoria's packed major events calendar attracts visitors from across Australia and the world to experience the wonders of our state.

Victoria's tourism industry continues to thrive, with the recent *National and International Visitor Survey* reporting the state's tourism spending was \$37.8 billion in 2023 – a new record high.

The *Regional Tourism Investment Fund 2024* will support continued growth by backing new and innovative tourism infrastructure projects designed to improve the quality of experiences and encourage visitors to stay longer.

In 2023 we released *Experience Victoria 2033*, our strategic plan to shape the future of Victoria's visitor economy towards the projected \$58 billion over the next 10 years.

The *Regional Tourism Investment Fund 2024* will focus on the five product priorities identified in the plan: First Peoples-led experiences, wellness, arts and culture, food and drink, and nature.

By supporting the pipeline of demand-driven tourism infrastructure across small and large projects, the fund intends to create more tourism experiences, attract more visitors and employ more people across every corner of the state.

Victoria's visitor economy is booming, and we're proud to continue supporting that growth through the *Regional Tourism Investment Fund 2024*.



Steve Dimopoulos
Minister for Tourism, Sport and Major Events

1. Context

The *Regional Tourism Investment Fund 2024* (RTIF) is part of the \$170 million Regional Tourism and Events Fund (RTEF) that will ensure our regional tourism offering continues to be the very best by supporting new events, attractions and more accommodation for visitors.

The RTIF will help build tourism infrastructure projects that improve visitor experience and increase visitor spending across Victoria – creating new jobs, benefiting tourism operators and regional communities.

The fund will support the attraction of visitors to key destinations and support tourism businesses across the state with a focus on the five product priorities identified in Experience Victoria 2033 (EV33) – First Peoples-led experiences, wellness, arts and culture, food and drink and nature.

1.1. Experience Victoria 2033

Experience Victoria 2033 is the State’s strategic plan to shape the future of Victoria’s visitor economy over the next 10 years. The plan will strengthen Victoria’s enviable tourism offering by leveraging the state’s competitive advantages.

The plan has five product priorities:

Product priorities	Types of products and experiences
First Peoples-led experiences – prioritising the world’s oldest continuous living culture that will contribute to the future of Victorian tourism driven by Aboriginal self-determination.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Immersive experiences• Story telling settings• Art and heritage trails.
Wellness – experiences and products that broaden Victoria’s wellness offering.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mindfulness retreats• Wellness resorts• Geothermal and natural springs.
Arts and Culture – experiences and products that enable the visitor to engage with art and culture in new and innovative ways.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Museums• Storytelling settings• Multicultural centres• Art and heritage trails• Public art installations• Galleries• Creative venues.
Food and Drink – culinary and gastronomic experiences and products that highlight provenance and demonstrate innovation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Agricultural and regenerative farming experiences• Cellar doors• Distilleries• Breweries.
Nature – experiences, products and accommodation that activate regional Victoria’s natural assets and contribute to a healthy and resilient environment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Tracks and trails• Accommodation in / adjacent to nature-based settings.

The examples provided above are not intended to be prescriptive.

2. The Regional Tourism Investment Fund 2024

2.1. About the Regional Tourism Investment Fund 2024

The RTIF is a competitive Victorian Government investment program supported by the RTEF to fund high-potential tourism infrastructure projects that support the delivery of EV33 across regional Victoria.

The RTIF promotes partnerships between the Victorian Government, Local Government Authorities (LGAs), Alpine Resorts Victoria (ARV) and the broader tourism sector including private operators, not-for-profit organisations, Traditional Owners and Aboriginal organisations.

The RTIF is underpinned by the Department of Jobs, Skills, Industry and Regions' (the Department) priorities of driving a strong and resilient economy that benefits all Victorians – by creating more opportunities for people through jobs and skills, supporting businesses and industries to grow and prosper, and building vibrant communities and regions.

2.2. Objectives

The objectives of the RTIF are to:

1. Deliver strategic tourism infrastructure and accommodation projects that will increase visitation, improve quality of visitor experience, and increase length of stay
2. Deliver projects that broaden Victoria's tourism offering, and support and encourage year-round visitation and dispersal across regional Victoria
3. Leverage and facilitate private sector investment, including through strengthening public tourism infrastructure
4. Drive new jobs and improved outcomes for the State's visitor economy.



Photo Credit: Helen and Joey's Estate

2.3. Short-Term outcomes

RTIF reflects the Victorian Government's commitment to strengthening the visitor experience in Regional Victoria and will invest in projects that can demonstrate a commitment to achieving the following outcomes:

1. Regional Victoria has a strengthened pipeline of experience products and accommodation
2. Regions are developing a more compelling visitor offering
3. Regional accommodation is more attractive to visitors
4. Regional accommodation is more accessible.

2.4. Longer-Term outcomes

The longer-term outcomes of the RTIF are:

1. Investment in regional destinations is increasing
2. Regional destinations are attracting more visitors, getting them to stay longer and spend more
3. More international visitors are attracted to regional destinations
4. The visitor economy has an increased contribution to regional and Victorian economic growth.



Photo Credit: Central Goldfields Art Gallery

2.5. Investment priorities

Activities funded through the RTIF must support the delivery of the outcomes identified in EV33. These seven guiding principles will inform decision making:

- **Driving economic growth** – Victoria's visitor economy attracts more visitors to our state who stay longer, produce higher yield, and be more likely to return.
- **Innovative and outstanding** – Victoria pushes the boundaries and transforms original ideas into brilliant businesses, exciting products and events and ultimately, a richer experience for visitors.
- **Sustainable and regenerative** – Victoria's visitor economy creates experiences that stand the test of time by protecting and enhancing our extraordinary landscapes and biodiversity.
- **Inclusive and welcoming** – Victoria's visitor economy delivers meaningful experiences and employment for people of all identities, cultures and abilities.
- **First Peoples focused** – Victoria's First Peoples are self-determining their priorities for tourism development, creating wealth and contributing to positive outcomes for their communities and Country.
- **Valuable for our communities** – Our tourism investments align with the plans and aspirations of local communities and generate positive benefits for local communities.
- **Unique to place** – Our tourism products build on the different signature personalities of our suburbs, towns, cities and regions.

2.6. Program timelines

Applications Open	16 May 2024
Application Close	2:00 pm, 19 July 2024
Outcomes Announced	November 2024
Grant Agreements Executed	December 2024

3. Funding details

3.1. Funding streams

Funding from the RTIF is available under the following streams:

	Minimum grant amount	Maximum grant amount
Stream 1: Small-scale projects	\$100,000	\$1,000,000
Stream 2: Large-scale projects	\$1,000,001	\$5,000,000
Stream 3: Accommodation Uplift	\$500,000	\$2,000,000

Applicants can submit a maximum of one application and must choose the most appropriate stream. Please refer to [Section 4.2.2](#) for details.

3.2. Funding ratios

Applicants are required to meet the funding ratios and co-contributions outlined in the table below:

Applicant	Maximum funding ratios for co-contributions	Notes
Private applicants <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Private sector proponents 	Up to RTIF \$1:\$2 applicant <i>Example: RTIF grant amount \$100,000, applicant co-contribution \$200,000.</i> Total project cost \$300,000	Higher applicant co-contributions will be considered favorably during assessment. <i>*Please note Tier 1 and Tier 2 locations do not apply to private applicants.</i>
Public, not-for-profit <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local and State Government entities Incorporated associations Not-for-profit organisations 	TIER 1 LOCATION* Up to RTIF \$2:\$1 applicant <i>Example: RTIF grant amount \$100,000, applicant co-contribution \$50,000.</i> Total project cost \$150,000 TIER 2 LOCATION* Up to RTIF \$3:\$1 applicant <i>Example: RTIF grant amount \$100,000, applicant co-contribution \$33,333.</i> Total project cost \$133,333	Projects located across both a Tier 1 and Tier 2 location* will be considered on a case-by-case basis. The Tier 1 co-contribution will apply to relevant projects (RTIF \$2:\$1). <i>*Please note Tier 1 and Tier 2 locations do not apply to private applicants.</i>
Traditional Owner applicants <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Traditional Owner corporations, Aboriginal owned organisations and groups 	Up to RTIF \$4:\$1 applicant <i>Example: RTIF grant amount \$100,000, applicant co-contribution \$25,000</i> Total project cost \$125,000	

* See [Section 4.2.3](#) for the list of Tier 1 and Tier 2 locations

3.3. Co-contribution requirements

Projects that have received or will receive Victorian Government funding from other sources outside RTIF may apply, however any such funding cannot be considered as part of the organisation's co-contribution.

Applicant contributions may comprise of applicant's own funding or from other organisations including local government authorities, schools, educational institutions, Australian Government, and community organisations.

In-kind contributions will not be considered as part of the funding co-contribution.

In exceptional circumstances, projects requesting funding outside of the co-contribution ratios will be considered on a case-by-case basis and subject to Ministerial discretion.



Photo Credit: Ballarat Tramway Museum

4. Eligibility

4.1. Applicant eligibility

4.1.1. Eligible applicants

Applicants must be one of the following types of entities to apply:

- Private sector proponents (defined as a privately-owned or commercial organisation that has overall control and responsibility for a project that is predominantly funded through private capital)
- Local and State Government entities, based in Victoria including:
 - Public Land Managers
 - Land Management Authorities and Committees of Management
 - Local Government Authorities
 - A Victorian Alpine Resort¹.
- State or Local Government owned entities
- Incorporated associations
- Not-for-profit organisations, including community groups that are an incorporated body, cooperative or association
- Traditional Owner Corporations, Aboriginal organisations and groups, and Aboriginal-owned businesses (refer to [Section 4.1.2](#)).

In addition, to be eligible for funding applicants must:

- Have an Australian Business Number (ABN), and
- Provide audited financial reports for the past 3 years.

Where an entity is not incorporated, an auspice arrangement may be considered. The applicant and proposed project is still required to meet all other eligibility criteria.

4.1.2. Traditional Owner Corporations and Aboriginal-owned Business

Applications from Traditional Owner Corporations, organisations and groups, and Aboriginal-owned businesses must meet one of the following:

- Registered with Consumer Affairs Victoria
- Registered with the Office of the Register of Indigenous Corporations
- Registered with the Australian Securities and Investment Commission, or
- A body corporate constituted under section 8 of the *Aboriginal Lands Act 1970 (Vic)*.

To discuss if your organisation or group meets the eligibility criteria, please contact tourism.projects@ecodev.vic.gov.au.

Please include details of the project scope, location and organisation details in the email.

4.1.3. Ineligible applicants

The following applicants/entities are not eligible to apply:

- Unincorporated organisations or joint ventures (unless under an auspice arrangement)
- Individuals (Sole Traders)
- Utility and services providers
- Water corporations
- Commonwealth Government owned entities
- Businesses who are not able to meet the mandatory financial requirements (as outlined in [Section 6](#) – Supporting Documentation).

4.2. What will be funded?

The Victorian Government is looking to invest in bold, innovative, and inspiring tourism products and experiences that attract more visitors to Victoria, stay longer, and spend more.

Applications should describe or 'tell the story' of how the proposed project is a demand-driven tourism project that is connected to, or developing, a 'unique to place' experience in regional Victoria. e.g. by creating demand or a more compelling visitor offering for the town or region or providing more reasons to stay longer.

Proposed projects must focus on or align with one or more of the five product priority areas (see [Section 1.1](#)) and either build on Victoria's existing strengths and specialisations or propose a new experience.

Stronger applications will be able to show alignment to other relevant strategies and plans, for example those developed by the relevant Regional Tourism Board, Visitor Economy Partnership, and Local Government.

1. Six alpine resorts are legally incorporated under the *Alpine Resorts (Management) Act 1997* and managed by [Alpine Resorts Victoria](#)

4.2.1. Project timing

Projects funded under all streams must be:

- ‘Shovel-ready’ and commence construction within 9 months of the execution of a Grant Agreement, and
- Be completed by 30 June 2027.

4.2.2. Project Streams

Stream 1: Small-Scale Projects

Stream 1 projects take advantage of opportunities to invest in a town or region’s ‘unique to place’. It supports the development of new, or the redevelopment of existing, smaller-scale tourism infrastructure that improve useability and quality to attract new visitors and offers experience in one or more of the product priority areas identified in [Section 1.1](#).

Examples may include:

- Enhancement to a cellar door
- Extensions to wildlife sanctuary’s
- Smaller-scale accommodation options, such as new on-site eco-pods
- Development of interpretive garden, parks, cultural works.

Stream 2: Large-Scale Projects

Stream 2 supports the development of new infrastructure that is of strategic importance and contributes to ‘unique to place’ tourism experiences in regional destinations. Alignment in one or more of the product priority areas identified in [Section 1.1](#) is required. Projects must demonstrate innovative or outstanding offerings that broadens Victoria’s tourism experience along with significant benefits and outcomes for regional Victoria.

Examples may include:

- Development of a new restaurant dining area at a winery
- Development of a new exhibit at a wildlife sanctuary
- Development of a new museum or gallery
- Construction of new accommodation offerings
- Development of a new wellness retreat.

Applications for enabling activities for projects that solve site constraints that are preventing development of a broader tourism infrastructure project from progressing will be considered (e.g. road construction, site services, utility services e.g. power and wastewater infrastructure). These elements must form part of a broader project that leverages tourism investment and will not be accepted as a standalone project.

Stream 3: Accommodation Uplift

Stream 3 supports the revitalisation of existing accommodation to align with modern visitor expectations at an accommodation site.

Applications to this Stream must show evidence for demand (current or future) for the upgraded accommodation (e.g. probable increase in number of visitors, types of visitors and length of stay).

The application should demonstrate how an upgrade to the accommodation is needed not only for the business, but why it will enhance and support the town or region’s existing visitor experience.

The application should support the region’s ‘unique to place’ visitor experience and align with one or more of the product priority areas. Applicants must show how demand from these experiences supports the upgrade proposal.

Upgrades that will provide an uplift in accommodation star ratings and provide greater accessibility will be assessed more favourably.

The types of projects that are eligible for support include:

- Works that uplift and modernise e.g. upgrade from 2-star to 3.5-star rating
- Works to improve visitor amenities at camp/ caravan sites
- Upgrades to lodgings to meet a demonstrated ‘luxury’ market need
- Works on shared or private spaces that increases accessibility for all user groups.

This may be achieved through a **combination of activities** such as:

- Increasing comfort through bedroom and bathroom upgrades
- Revitalising rooms and shared spaces to create a unique accommodation offering
- Improvements to multipurpose areas that contribute to a better visitor experience (swimming pool, BBQ spaces, shared shower amenities, dining rooms etc)
- Accessibility modifications e.g. modifications to showers and vanities, door widening, installation of hoists, ramps and paths to achieve DDA requirements.

As stated in [Section 4.2.1](#) Project Timing, applications into all streams must be ‘shovel-ready’. To assist in determining the current stage of your project before applying, please visit:

[A Guide to Tourism Investment from Concept to Reality](#)

4.2.3. Eligible project location

Projects located within the following Local Government Authority areas are eligible to apply:

Tier 1 locations Local Government Areas	Tier 2 locations Local Government Areas and Alpine Resorts	
Ballarat	Alpine	Moira
Greater Bendigo	Ararat	Moorabool
Greater Geelong	Bass Coast	Mount Alexander
Greater Shepparton	Baw Baw	Mount Buller and Mount Stirling
Horsham	Benalla	Mount Hotham
Latrobe	Buloke	Moyne
Mildura	Campaspe	Murrindindi
Mornington Peninsula	Central Goldfields	Northern Grampians
Nillumbik	Colac Otway	Pyrenees
Wangaratta	Corangamite	Queenscliffe
Warrnambool	East Gippsland	Southern Alpine (Lake Mountain and Mount Baw Baw)
Wodonga	Falls Creek	Southern Grampians
Yarra Ranges	Gannawarra	South Gippsland
	Glenelg	Strathbogie
	Golden Plains	Surf Coast
	Hepburn	Swan Hill
	Hindmarsh	Towong
	Indigo	Wellington
	Loddon	West Wimmera
	Macedon Ranges	Yarriambiack
	Mansfield	
	Mitchell	



Photo Credit: Hammon Park Trail Head

4.2.4. Environmental and accessible design considerations

Projects should be consistent, where possible, with the following:

- Environmentally Sustainable Design (ESD): Infrastructure proposals are encouraged to incorporate ESD initiatives into project designs
- Universal Design (UD): A philosophy that encourages building development beyond what is required by the Disability Standards for Access to premises. The intent of UD is to create environments to be usable by all people, to the greatest extent possible, and
- [The Burra Charter](#) (BC): The BC is a set of principles that have been adopted to create a nationally accepted standard for heritage conservation practice in Australia. It is not a legal requirement to adopt the BC guidelines, however they are well entrenched in policy.

4.2.5. Ineligible projects

The following projects will not be considered for funding under the RTIF:

- Project planning for infrastructure projects such as a feasibility study, demand study, or a business case to enable prospective applications to investigate the technical and or economic viability of an infrastructure project (design and construction projects may be considered)
- Local strategic planning including economic development strategies and plans for future growth and infrastructure needs
- Projects that require ongoing funding from the Victorian Government for operation or maintenance
- Retrospective funding, where projects have been completed or have started prior to receiving funding approval e.g. where construction commences prior to December 2024
- Standalone projects purchasing plant machinery and equipment
- Projects that are considered core business for local government, for example but not limited to:
 - Construction of carparks and toilets (unless they are a component part supporting a broader tourism project)
 - Construction and maintenance of Visitor Information Centres
 - Enabling infrastructure not directly linked to unlocking private investment.

4.2.6. Ineligible expenses

The following expenses will not be funded under the RTIF:

- General business operating costs and administrative running costs, such as:
 - Costs related to lease, rent and utilities
 - Costs involved with planning or building permits
 - Costs involved in the purchase or upgrade/hire of software and ICT hardware unless it directly relates to the project or experience (e.g. wayfinding technology for an experience).
- Capital expenses such as purchasing assets for everyday business activities (e.g. drinking glasses for a new cellar door, linen for bedding)
- Purchase of non-fixed equipment and furnishings (e.g. dining tables, beds)
- Marketing, advertising, or product promotion including signage that is outside of a broader infrastructure project such as wayfinding/interpretive signage
- Maintenance of existing infrastructure / assets
- Repair of facilities where the damage can be or should have been covered by insurance
- Staff wages, training and development costs
- Purchase of land.

4.2.7. Performance

An applicant's past performance and the organisation's capacity to deliver projects on-time based on recent performance or current project management capacity will be considered.

Compliance with past Grant Agreements, the number of overdue milestones for existing projects, and current projects with unresolved budget shortfalls will also be considered.

4.3. GST

Applicants should note that all project costs included in the application must be exclusive of GST. If successful, GST will be added to your grant payment (for businesses registered for GST).

Ensure your project budget clearly states GST amounts and the grant request and co-contribution values are GST exclusive.

Example: If the approved funding is \$100,000 GST exclusive, the Department will process payments totalling \$110,000 (\$100,000 GST exclusive funding + \$10,000 GST).

5. Assessment Criteria

Streams 1, 2 and 3.

Please note each assessment response section has a character limit of 5000.

Criteria	Weighting	Considerations
1. Project need and alignment with program objectives, program outcomes and the EV33 priorities	30%	<p>How well the proposed project aligns with RTIF objectives and outcomes through demonstration of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current and/or future demand from tourism visitors to drive economic growth, e.g. attracts more visitors to our state who stay longer, produce higher yield, and be more likely to return • Support for demand from different visitor cohorts e.g. international visitors, those from diverse backgrounds or with accessibility needs • Support for the development of a more compelling visitor offering for a region by alignment with or development of the 'unique to place' visitor experience for that region. <p>How well the proposed project focuses on or aligns with one of more of the EV33 product priorities and creates or supports a high-quality product or experience: (Section 1.1)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First Peoples-led experiences • Wellness • Nature • Arts and Culture • Food and Drink. <p>For Stream 3 further considerations will be given to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How the upgrade will provide modernised facilities that support the local tourism experience (potentially resulting in an increased star rating) • Provision of better accessibility through universal design.
2. Project readiness and deliverability	25%	<p>The state of readiness and level of planning undertaken to ensure that the proposed project can be delivered in the RTIF timeframes, including demonstration of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A clear and achievable project scope • How well the organisation ensures the funded project scope will be delivered on budget • A realistic and detailed budget • Comprehensive quotes • For projects under \$1 million, quotes/independent cost estimate (less than 6 months old) are required • For projects costing over \$1 million Quantity Surveyor estimates (less than 12 months old) will be required • Sufficient risk planning and mitigation strategies • Designs, statutory planning approvals and feasibility studies • Project timeline outlining the steps that will be taken to commence works within 9 months of an executed Grant Agreement and to finish works by 30 June 2027.

Criteria	Weighting	Considerations
3. Strategic Alignment	20%	<p>How well the identified project opportunity:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Builds on or supports a region’s tourism brand to create or support ‘unique to place’ experiences • Aligns with relevant strategies and plans (for example, Regional Tourism Board, Visitor Economy Partnership, and Local Government) • Supports delivery of the investment priorities as noted at Section 2.4, which may include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - demonstrates a sustainable and regenerative approach - is inclusive and welcoming - demonstrates value for our communities - demonstrates innovation (Stream 2 specific).
4. Capability and Expertise	15%	<p>How well the applicant has demonstrated the ability to deliver on the project plan and details of key steps the organisation will take to deliver the proposed project including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who will oversee and manage the day-to-day delivery of the project? Who is the project manager, what is their experience? • Details of third parties to be appointed to contribute to the project, such as architects, engineers, building contractor • Experience of the organisation in delivering successful infrastructure projects • What’s next after the project is completed? How will the infrastructure operate once opened? <p><i>Details provided in this section should be evidenced through the activity schedule and governance structure in the project plan template.</i></p>
5. Value for Money (return on investment)	5%	<p>How well does the proposed project:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrate a need for government funding as an investment in Victorian tourism infrastructure • Detail return on investment and projections following project completion • Provide evidence of matched funding in the supporting documentation • Provide evidence confirming commitment to delivering the scope of the project and coverage of any project overspends.
6. Traditional Owner Organisations and Businesses	5%	<p>Demonstration that applicant is a Traditional Owner Corporation, organisation or group, or an Aboriginal-owned businesses.</p>

6. Supporting documentation

6.1. Documentation and information requirements

The table below outlines the mandatory and desired supporting documentation for all funding streams. Supporting documentation is used to verify statements made in response to criteria.

Please submit all documentation with your application to ensure eligibility and demonstrate project readiness. The desired supporting documentation is not a requirement, however it will further demonstrate project readiness, if applicable.

The quality of the documentation will be assessed in conjunction with its alignment to the applicant's responses to the assessment criteria outlined in [Section 5](#).

Mandatory Documents	Mandatory	Document / Evidence
Detailed Project Management Plan / Project Plan	Mandatory	<p>Project management plan (which must include risk management plan, itemised and detailed project budget, activity schedule, governance structure and ongoing operating model, including details of the project control group as outline in Section 9.8).</p> <p>Template is provided on the Business Victoria website</p>
Evidence of company registration or Aboriginal Organisation Registration	Mandatory	Evidence of appropriate registration (not for-profit organisation, incorporated associations and Aboriginal-owned businesses) as identified in Section 4.1.2
Project Costing	Mandatory	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quantity surveyor estimates (less than 12 months old) for project costs over \$1 million For projects under \$1 million, quotes/cost estimate are required (less than 6 months old) Projects are required to include a minimum of 10% contingency Consideration of a higher contingency for projects in complex delivery environments is recommended (up to 30%). <p><i>* Budget and costing details to be included in the project plan template. Contingency costs to be entered as a separate line in the budget table.</i></p>

Mandatory Documents	Mandatory	Document / Evidence
<p>Evidence of Financial Stability</p> <p><i>* Local Government Authorities, Alpine Resort Management Boards, State Government Departments and Statutory Agencies are not required to provide evidence of financial stability.</i></p>	Mandatory	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Audited Financial Reports for the last three financial years, including the 'final accounts' with Directors' Report and Declaration and should include Profit and Loss Statement, Balance Sheet, Cash Flows, and notes to the accounts. <p><i>* Unaudited accounts prepared by an Accountant registered on the Tax Practitioner Board will be accepted if audited accounts are not available.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> If the latest financial report is more than six months old, Interim Accounts (Profit & Loss Statement, Cash Flow Statements, Financial Projections & Balance Sheet) for the current year, and, in the case of public listed corporations, a half yearly financial report must be provided. The Company's financial projections for the next three financial years, including Profit and Loss and Cash Flow Statements. <p>Refer to Section 8.2 for details.</p>
<p>Funding structure and evidence confirming all funding sources, including organisation's ability to finance the co-contribution</p>	Mandatory	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Funding from a Private Entity – letter required from a CEO or person authorised to bind the organisation confirming funding commitment and evidence of available funding via a bank statement/s Funding from an LGA – Council Resolution or letter from CEO confirming funding amount requested and applicants funding commitment to the project. Funding from a Government Department – evidence of funding via letter or funding agreement must be provided. <p>Where funding from the applicant (non-LGA) is indicated:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Letter from the relevant organisation's authorised officer stating the funding amount committed Current bank statement/s demonstrating the funding amount is held by the organisation Applicant confirmation to commit to underwrite cost escalations to deliver the scope outlined in the application. This provides further confidence that the project can proceed.
<p>Letters of Support</p>	Mandatory	<p>Letters of support that demonstrate project alignment to strategies/plans may include from Regional Tourism Boards (preferred), Visitor Economy Partnerships (preferred), local councils, local business and tourism associations, Traditional Owner Organisations.</p>
<p>Evidence of Designs</p>	Mandatory	<p>Detailed design package including schematic plans</p>
<p>Activity Schedule/ Project Delivery Timelines</p>	Mandatory	<p>Details to be provided in the project plan template indicating construction will commence within 9 months of the execution of a grant agreement and completed by June 2027.</p>

Mandatory Documents	Mandatory	Document / Evidence
Evidence of relevant reports/plans	Mandatory	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Completed Cultural Heritage Management Plan Vegetation Assessments Environmental Management Plans Heritage Victoria approval Planning Permit approvals – development and use Accessibility Assessment Report/support of Universal Design (if proposing accessibility improvements) Alternatively, evidence that these types of plans are not required.
Evidence of Landowner Consent (if applicable)	Mandatory	<p>Landowner consent form (template is provided on the Business Victoria page) where the applicant is not the landowner or evidence of land ownership and tenure where the applicant is the landowner.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> If Applicable a legally binding land use agreement.
Evidence of an Auspice Organisation (where appropriate)	Mandatory	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Letter from auspice organisation detailing the auspice arrangement Statutory Declaration confirming the auspice organisation has agreed to the activity.
Evidence of Insurance	Mandatory	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public Liability Insurance Certificate of Currency.
Evidence to support the potential of the project (where applicable)	Mandatory	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Viability assessments Business case Feasibility study. <p>Please refer to the Tourism Investment guidelines and ensure your project has undertaken the necessary steps to be 'shovel ready'.</p>
Desired Documents	Desired	Document / Evidence
In-kind (where appropriate) <i>* In-kind contributions will not be considered as part of the financial contribution.</i>	Desired	Completed and signed In- kind form. (Template provided on Business Victoria Website)
Stakeholder consultation	Desired	Community Consultation plan
Evidence to demonstrate Environmental Sustainability	Desired	ESD report

Applications must demonstrate how projects will be completed by 30 June 2027. Project supporting documentation including an Activity Schedule and comprehensive Project Plan Template should evidence project readiness.

All attachments and information provided as part of the application will be taken into consideration during the assessment phase.

The Department reserves the right to request the applicant provide further details should it be deemed necessary.

All supporting documentation as outlined above, is required to be submitted via the Tourism Projects tourism.projects@ecodev.vic.gov.au by 2pm on 19 July 2024. Refer to [Section 7.3](#) for instructions.

7. Application process

7.1. Prior to application

Prior to submitting a formal application, applicants are advised to:

- Read these Program Guidelines to establish eligibility
- Read the terms and conditions for the funding offered
- Work with their local and industry organisations to identify and refine potential activities
- Seek independent financial, business and legal advice to support the completion of mandatory documentation where required
- Should you have questions regarding project eligibility or scope, contact the Tourism Infrastructure team on tourism.projects@ecodev.vic.gov.au. Requests should include:
 - Details of the project scope
 - Location of the project
 - Specific query – noting the department is unable to provide financial, business or legal advice.

7.2. Prepare an application

There is a 5000 character limit per section in the online application portal, so applicants are encouraged to clearly and succinctly address the assessment criteria outlined in [Section 5](#) and use supporting documentation to provide evidence and further detail as needed.

Applications must have the approval of the Chief Executive Officer (or equivalent duly authorised representative with the requisite authority to bind the organisation) and the person submitting the application form will be required to attest to this as part of the application process.

Before applying for funding under this program or making any decision, applicants should seek advice from their legal, business and financial advisers to determine their eligibility and the terms of the funding, including compliance with supporting document requirements.

Applicants should note that all activity costs included in the application and activity documentation must be exclusive of GST.

Any costs or risks associated with an application are the sole responsibility of the applicant.

Applicants should seek professional financial advice on the tax implications of receiving Government grants.

Applications will be accepted via the online form only. Applications via email will be deemed ineligible.

The Department makes no representation that a grant of funds will be made to any applicant and reserves the right to amend, suspend or withdraw funding under the RTIF.

Please check with a Department representative if you are unclear about any part of the application. To contact the Department, please email tourism.projects@ecodev.vic.gov.au. Please include details of the project scope and location in the email.

7.3. Submit supporting documents by closing date

Email all supporting documents by 2pm by clicking here tourism.projects@ecodev.vic.gov.au on Friday 19 July 2024. Please ensure all supporting documents are clearly named (for example, Plans – Project Name, Costs – Project Name).

Zip all supporting documents into one compressed folder. Please see instructions below on how to zip files into a compressed folder.

Quote your project name in the subject line of your email.

If documentation is not provided at the time of application the Department reserves the right to deem the application ineligible.

Please email tourism.projects@ecodev.vic.gov.au if you experience any issues with emailing your supporting documentation.

The size limit of an email varies between 20mb to 30mb. If your documents combined exceed this, you will need to split them into separate compressed folders and email them separately (for example, Part 1 – Project Name, Part 2 – Project Name).

7.4. Compressed files

Compressing files into a compressed folder: Select all files using your mouse, then right click, select Send to and then select Compressed (zipped) folder. This will prompt a Save window allowing you to save all selected files into one compressed folder.

The size limit of an email varies between 20mb to 30mb. If your documents combined exceed this, you will need to split them into separate compressed folders and email them separately (for example, Part 1 – Project Name, Part 2 – Project Name).

8. Assessment and approval process

8.1. Assessment process

- The Department will determine the project's eligibility against the relevant eligibility criteria
- Applications that are incomplete or deemed ineligible will not proceed to assessment
- Applications will be assessed and scored against the assessment criteria by an Assessment Panel
- All supplementary attachments and information provided as part of the application will be taken into consideration during the assessment process.
- An assessment panel may consider the below points and will make recommendations to the Executive Panel:
 - a. the second business unit assessment,
 - b. the due diligence and financial risk assessments (FRA) outcomes,
 - c. funding to Traditional Owner Corporation, organisation or group, or an Aboriginal-owned business
 - d. distribution of funding across Victoria's regions, including consideration for communities experiencing natural disaster impacts.
- An Executive Panel will endorse and make recommendations to the Minister for Tourism, Sport and Major Events.

Decisions regarding funding by the Minister for Tourism, Sport and Major Events are final and no further correspondence shall be entered into regarding such decisions.

8.2. Due diligence assessments

Applicants will be subject to a risk assessment to verify business details provided by an applicant with the Australian Business Register, Australian Securities and Investment Commission, Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commissioner, Consumer Affairs Victoria and/or another applicable regulator.

Any of the following circumstances may be taken into consideration in any decision whether to award a grant:

- Any adverse findings by a regulator regarding an applicant
- An applicant is placed under external administration

- There is a petition to wind up or deregister the applicant, or
- The applicant is or becomes deregistered or unregistered (including cancellation or lapse in registration).

The Department may at any time, remove an application from the process, if in the Department's opinion association with the applicant may bring the Department, a Minister or the State of Victoria in disrepute.

Where applicants are not Local Government Authorities, a Victoria Alpine Resort, State Government Departments or statutory agencies, the Department will undertake a financial risk assessment of the applicant to assess the ability of the applicant to deliver the proposed activity.

Please note that Committees of Management are required to meet the financial mandatory documentation.



The financial risk assessment requires at a minimum, the provision of the following:

- Financial Reports for the last three financial years. This should be the 'final accounts' with Directors' Report and Declaration and should include Profit and Loss Statement, Balance Sheet, Cash Flows, and notes to the accounts. If accounts are not audited, unaudited accounts prepared an Accountant registered on the Tax Practitioner Board will be accepted
- If the latest financial report is more than six months old, up-to-date Management or Interim Accounts for the current year including Profit and Loss Statement and Balance Sheet, and, in the case of public listed corporations, a half yearly financial report
- Current Business Plan, or project proposal
- The company's financial projections for the next three financial years, including Profit and Loss and Cash Flow
- An attestation of whether the applicant is or has been the subject of any investigations by the State Revenue Office (SRO) and/ or Australian Taxation Office (ATO).

Outcomes from the financial risk assessment and other due diligence assessments will be taken into consideration in any decision to recommend and award the grant.

Decisions on all matters pertaining to the award of grant funding under the RTIF are at the Department's and Minister's absolute discretion. This includes approving a lesser amount than that applied for, amending funding conditions or withdrawing the RTIF without notice.

Applications to the RTIF must include sufficient information to enable the Department to assess financial and other non-financial risks associated with the proposal as part of its due diligence. This includes consideration of elements that may pose a reputational risk to the State, such as:

- Whether the applicant has failed to meet key contractual obligations for previous Grant Agreements with the State
- Where the proposal has already been fully funded by the applicant through other means (e.g. capital raising on the Australian Stock Exchange)
- Whether the applicant is or has been the subject of any investigations by the SRO and/ or ATO.



Photo Credit: Passing Clouds Winery

9. Conditions of funding

9.1. Acceptance of letter of offer

Applicants will be advised of the decision relating to their application in writing. Successful applicants will receive a Letter of Offer from the Minister for Tourism, Sport and Major Events.

Successful applicants will have 10 business days from the date of the Letter of Offer to accept the offer in writing after which a Grant Agreement will be drawn up between the applicant and the Department.

9.2. Grant Agreements

Successful applicants will be required to enter into a legally binding Grant Agreement with the Department on its standard terms and conditions. The Grant Agreement details all funding obligations and conditions.

Grant Agreements must be signed by the organisation's Chief Executive Officer (or equivalent duly authorised representative with the requisite authority to bind the organisation) and will:

- Describe the purpose for which the funding must be used
- Set out any requirements or conditions that must be met prior to the payment of a grant instalment, and
- Outline agreed milestones and activity outcomes that must be achieved before payment of a grant instalment.

Once the Grant Agreement has been duly executed by both the successful applicant and the Department, the applicant will be required to actively manage and deliver the activity and provide accurate progress reports to the Department.

The documents provided as part of the application and as outlined in [Section 6.1](#), will become addendums to the Grant Agreement and form part of the final executed agreement.

These Guidelines and any discussions you may have with representatives of the Department are for information only, and do not constitute advice.

Applicants should seek independent advice before making an application or entering into a Grant Agreement.

9.3. Local Jobs First Policy

The Local Jobs First Policy (LJF Policy) issued under the Local Jobs First Act 2003 supports businesses and workers by ensuring that small and medium size enterprises are given a full and fair opportunity to compete for both large and small government contracts, helping to create job opportunities, including for apprentices, trainees and cadets. The LJF Policy is implemented by Victorian Government departments and agencies to help drive local industry development. The LJF Policy applies to grant projects where the value of the grant is above the threshold values of:

- \$3 million or more in metropolitan Melbourne, and
- \$1 million or more in regional Victoria.

Projects in regional Victoria funded through the RTIF must comply with the Local Jobs First Policy.

Further information regarding the requirements can be found at: localjobsfirst.vic.gov.au

9.4. Acknowledgement and Publicity Requirements

Successful applicants must acknowledge the Victorian Government's support through the RTIF. Promotional guidelines form part of the funding agreement and include the requirement that all activities acknowledge Victorian Government support through logo presentation on any activity-related publications, media releases and promotional material.

Successful applicants must liaise with the Department's program area to coordinate any public events or announcements related to the project. Plaque proofs (if applicable) MUST be submitted to the Department's program area for approval before being displayed at any public event by emailing tourism.projects@ecodev.vic.gov.au.

9.5. Capital works signage requirements

Successful applicants need to acknowledge the State Government's support for the project through appropriate signage consistent with the Victorian Government's Capital Works Signage Requirements (available at vic.gov.au/capital-works-signage-guidelines) or as otherwise specified by the Department.

9.6. Program Evaluation reporting

Reporting is critical to the Department in understanding program impact, supporting continuous improvement in program design and delivery, and delivering more effective grant programs to the people of Victoria.

After completion of the project, applicants must submit annual evaluation reports assessing the project's success in meeting its stated objectives, outputs, and outcomes. Depending on the significance of the project, these evaluation reports may be required for up to three years following completion of the funded activity.

Successful applicants may be required to contribute information on project outcomes, including longer-term impacts beyond activity completion, for use in program evaluation reviews and the Department marketing materials. It is the responsibility of successful applicants to put in place adequate collection arrangements to capture the appropriate data in relation to outputs and outcomes. Non-compliance could impact future applications to the Department's programs.

9.7. Activity commencement

The activity and any expenditure of funds associated with the activity must not commence until after the Grant Agreement has been duly executed by both the Department and the successful applicant.

Once the Grant Agreement has been executed, the successful applicant will be required to commence the activity within the agreed timeframe. If a successful applicant does not commence the activity by the commencement date, the Department may terminate this agreement in its absolute discretion.



9.8. Project control groups

A project control group (PCG) (or equivalent) must be established within 90 days once the Grant Agreement has been executed. The PCG will meet regularly to monitor and support the Project's progress in line with reporting requirements. The PCG shall comprise of representatives from the Recipient, the Department, and any other relevant stakeholders.

The PCG should be evidenced through the activity schedule and governance structure in the project plan in line with assessment criteria (Section 5).

9.9. Audit

The Department may conduct, or the Department may engage a third party to conduct, a performance review or audit of funding recipients. Funding recipients must:

- Actively cooperate with and aid the Department or any third party engaged by the Department to conduct an audit or performance review
- Make available to the Department or any third party engaged by the Department all information and records needed for the audit or performance review in accordance with any written request from the Department or third party engaged by the Department, and
- Provide the Department or any third party engaged by the Department with access to the Organisation's premises or place of business to carry out the audit or performance review.

9.10. Privacy and confidentiality

Any personal information provided by the applicant in an application will be collected and used by the Department for the purposes of assessing eligibility, program administration, and for program review and evaluation.

The Department completes a range of eligibility assessments that may include data matching to clarify the accuracy and quality of information supplied. This is part of our auditing and monitoring processes and for confirming eligibility across this program.

In the assessment of an application for the program, it may be necessary to share personal information with State and Commonwealth Government departments and agencies, as well as other external experts. If personal information about a third party is included in the application, the applicant must ensure the third party is aware of and consents to the contents of this privacy statement.

The Department collects demographic information for economic reporting purposes. No personal information is used in reporting; all reports are presented with aggregated data.

Any personal information about the applicant or a third party will be collected, held, managed, used, disclosed or transferred in accordance with the provisions of the *Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014 (Vic)* and other applicable laws.

Enquiries about access or correction to your personal information, can be emailed to tourism.projects@ecodev.vic.gov.au.

Other concerns regarding the privacy of personal information, can be emailed to the Department's Privacy Unit at privacy@ecodev.vic.gov.au. The Department's privacy policy is also available by emailing the Department's Privacy Unit.

9.11. Competitive neutrality

All successful applications to the RTIF from a Government body, including Local Government Authorities and Government agencies, will be required to comply with the Competitive Neutrality Policy Victoria (if applicable) in respect of any commercial goods or services offered by the body because of the grant.



Photo Credit: All Saints Estate

10. Terms of applying

10.1. Probity and decision making

The Victorian Government makes every effort to ensure the grant application and assessment process is fair and undertaken in line with the published program guidelines.

The decisions on all matters on recommending and awarding grant funding under this program are at the absolute discretion of the Minister and Department. This includes approving a lesser amount than that applied for.

These guidelines and application terms may be changed from time to time, as appropriate.

The Department may request the applicant provide further information should it be necessary to assess an application to the program's policy objectives.

Victorian Government staff work to the Code of Conduct for Victorian Public Service Employees (Section 61) of the *Public Administration Act 2004* (Vic), including processes set out to avoid conflicts of interest.

10.2. Disrepute

The Department may at any time, remove an applicant from the application and assessment process, if in the Department's opinion association with the applicant may bring the Department, a Minister or the State of Victoria in disrepute.

10.3. Conflict of interest

A conflict of interest arises where a person makes a decision or exercises a power in a way that may be, or may be perceived to be, influenced by either material personal interests (financial or non-financial) or material personal associations. A conflict of interest may arise where a grant applicant:

- Has a professional, commercial, or personal relationship with a party who is able to, or may be perceived to, influence the application assessment process, such as a Victorian Government staff member, or
- Has a relationship with, or interest in, an organisation which is likely to interfere with or restrict the applicant from carrying out the proposed activities fairly and independently.

Applicants must advise the Department of any actual, potential, or perceived conflicts of interest relating to a project for which it has applied for funding.

Victorian Government staff are required to act in accord with the Code of Conduct for Victorian Public Sector Employees (Section 61) issued under the *Public Administration Act 2004* (Vic). This includes an obligation to avoid conflicts of interest wherever possible and declare and manage any conflicts of interest that cannot be avoided.

10.4. Related entities

The applicant cannot use grant funding available through this program to engage the services (including supplier or consultancy services) and/or purchase products from another entity that is wholly or partly owned or controlled by the applicant. Applicants and Service Providers must be entirely separate entities. They may not be owned by the same parent company, share governance or have common directors.

In the application, applicants are required to declare any existing governance relationships between themselves and the nominated service providers. Including whether any of the activity Service Providers are subsidiaries or related bodies corporate within the meaning of the *Corporations Act 2001* or share common directors, officers or senior managers.

The Department may apply this provision at any time to disqualify an applicant from receiving grant funding if a connection between the applicant and an associated entity is identified that is not in keeping with the purpose and objectives of the program.

11. Additional information and resources

11.1. Support for applications

To help applicants prepare their application, additional information and resources are available on the Business Victoria website, including relevant application templates and frequently asked questions.

Please check with the Department representative prior to submitting if you are unclear about any part of the application.

To contact the Department regarding RTIF, please email tourism.projects@ecodev.vic.gov.au and include information regarding your location and project details.

11.2. Complaints or feedback

Applicants may request feedback on their unsuccessful application by directing their request in writing to the program team tourism.projects@ecodev.vic.gov.au

Requests can be made in relation to any of the following:

- dissatisfaction with the process and/or timeliness of the process
- communication provided by the Department or
- adherence to the published program guidelines.

The Department aims to respond to all complaints within 28 days.

Re-assessment of an application or overturning of a funding decision for a merit-based grant, will not be considered through the complaints process.

11.3. Links to online resources

[Experience Victoria 2033](#)

[Regional Tourism Boards](#)

[Visit Victoria](#)

[Tourism industry research and data](#)

[Creative Victoria](#)

[Tourism Australia](#)

[The Burra Charter](#)

[Australian Tourism Awards](#)

[Accessible Tourism – Tourism Accessibility Resource Kit](#)

[Regional Partnerships](#)

[Business Victoria](#)



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