

Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water


[dcceew.nsw.gov.au](http://dcceew.nsw.gov.au)



# NSW Expression of Interest - National Water Grid Fund

Guidelines for Applicants

April 2024



# Acknowledgement of Country

The Department Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water acknowledges that it stands on Aboriginal land. We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the land and we show our respect for Elders past, present and emerging through thoughtful and collaborative approaches to our work, seeking to demonstrate our ongoing commitment to providing places in which Aboriginal people are included socially, culturally and economically.

Published by NSW Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water

[dceew.nsw.gov.au](https://dceew.nsw.gov.au)

NSW Expression of Interest - National Water Grid Fund Guidelines for Applicants

First published: April 2024

Department reference number: OUT24/5486

## More information

<https://water.dpie.nsw.gov.au/our-work/water-infrastructure-nsw/grants-and-funding/national-water-grid-authority>

## Copyright and disclaimer

© State of New South Wales through the Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water 2024. Information contained in this publication is based on knowledge and understanding at the time of writing, April 2024, and is subject to change. For more information, please visit [dceew.nsw.gov.au/copyright](https://dceew.nsw.gov.au/copyright)

TMP-MC-R-SC-V1.2

## Document Control Table

Version #	Document Date	Description / Reason for Revision	Created By	Reviewer	Approver	Date Reviewed/ Approved
1.0	Sept 2023	Final	Manager Regional Programs Water Infrastructure NSW	Director Program Development and Management Water Infrastructure NSW	A/Executive Director Infrastructure Development Water Infrastructure NSW	23/10/2023
1.1	05/04/24	Update to current funding round and response to Machinery of Government changes	A/Manager Regional Water Project Interfaces NSW DCCEEW	Director Program Development and Management, NSW DCCEEW		10/04/24
2.0	18/04/24	Final	A/Manager Regional Water Project Interfaces, NSW DCCEEW		A/Executive Director Infrastructure Development, NSW DCCEEW	18/04/24

# Contents

Document Control Table .....	3
Key information.....	6
<b>1 Introduction.....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>2 Purpose of this document .....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>3 About the National Water Grid Fund.....</b>	<b>9</b>
3.1 National Water Grid Investment Framework.....	9
3.2 National Water Grid strategic objectives.....	10
3.3 National Water Grid investment principles.....	11
3.4 National Water Grid Program Administration Manual.....	12
<b>4 NSW priorities and considerations .....</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>5 Project proposals .....</b>	<b>14</b>
5.1 Capital and First Nations Infrastructure Programs.....	14
5.2 Science Projects.....	15
<b>6 Eligibility criteria.....</b>	<b>17</b>
6.1 Who is eligible to apply? .....	17
6.2 Who is not eligible to apply? .....	17
6.3 Joint applications.....	18
6.4 Eligible projects under the NWGF.....	18
6.5 Ineligible projects under the NWGF.....	19
6.6 What eligibility and assessment criteria does my proposed project need to meet?.....	20
<b>7 How do I submit an Expression of Interest? .....</b>	<b>21</b>
7.1 Accessing the SmartyGrants online portal .....	22
7.2 Completing the NSW EOI form .....	22
7.3 Supporting documentation.....	23
7.4 Timing of Expressions of Interest.....	23
7.5 Seeking assistance .....	24
<b>8 How are NSW project proposals assessed?.....</b>	<b>25</b>
8.1 NSW evaluation and assessment .....	25
<b>9 Role of the Australian Government.....</b>	<b>28</b>
9.1 Who will approve NWGF grants?.....	28
9.2 Notification of funding application outcomes .....	28
9.3 Successful funding applications .....	28

<b>10</b>	<b>Ethical conduct.....</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>11</b>	<b>Disclaimers and Terms and Conditions.....</b>	<b>30</b>
11.1	Marketing and communications.....	30
11.2	Complaints.....	30
11.3	Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009 .....	30
	<b>Appendix A List of eligible NSW Local Government Areas .....</b>	<b>32</b>
	<b>Appendix B National Water Grid Fund – NSW Expression of Interest Form.....</b>	<b>35</b>

---

## Key information

<b>Opening Date</b>	Friday 19 April 2024
<b>Closing Date and Time</b>	11:00pm (AEST) on Monday 13 May 2024 Please take account of time zone differences when submitting your Expression of Interest
<b>EOI Type</b>	Open and competitive round
<b>Lodging an EOI</b>	Expressions of Interests are to be submitted online via SmartyGrants
<b>NSW EOI Website</b>	<a href="https://water.dpie.nsw.gov.au/our-work/water-infrastructure-nsw/grants-and-funding/national-water-grid-authority">https://water.dpie.nsw.gov.au/our-work/water-infrastructure-nsw/grants-and-funding/national-water-grid-authority</a>
<b>Key Documents for applicants</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• NSW NWGF EOI Guidelines for Applicants (this document)</li><li>• National Water Grid Investment Framework (Oct 2022)<sup>1</sup></li><li>• National Water Grid Program Administration Manual (Feb 2023)<sup>2</sup></li><li>• National Water Grid Science Strategy (Feb 2023)<sup>3</sup> – for science projects</li></ul>
<b>Enquiries</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Email <a href="mailto:nwgf-info@dpie.nsw.gov.au">nwgf-info@dpie.nsw.gov.au</a></li><li>• Call 1300 081 047 (business hours)</li></ul>
<b>Contact Officer</b>	Michelle Kelly
<b>Position</b>	Manager Regional Water Project Interfaces

---

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.nationalwatergrid.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/investment-framework-october-2022.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.nationalwatergrid.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/nwgf-program-administration-manual-february-2023.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.nationalwatergrid.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/nwga-science-strategy-2023.pdf>

# 1 Introduction

The NSW Department of Climate Change, Energy, Environment and Water (NSW DCCEEW) is inviting eligible entities to lodge an Expression of Interest (EOI) to apply for funding under the Australian Government's National Water Grid Fund (NWGF)<sup>4</sup>.

Administered by the National Water Grid Authority, the NWGF provides funding to projects that help develop the National Water Grid and is delivered in partnership with state and territory governments.

The NSW Expression of Interest process is an open and highly competitive process. All applicants must lodge their EOIs online using SmartyGrants.

The online portal and information about the application process can be found by visiting:

<https://water.dpie.nsw.gov.au/our-work/water-infrastructure-nsw/grants-and-funding/national-water-grid-authority>

## 2 Purpose of this document

This document provides a guide for applicants on the process of preparing and submitting a NSW Expression of Interest to the current round of the National Water Grid Fund.

EOIs must be submitted before the closing time and date of **11:00pm (AEST) on Monday 13 May 2024**. Please take account of time zone differences when submitting your application.

All Expressions of Interest (EOIs) will be subject to an eligibility check followed by an assessment against set criteria.

Applicants should read and understand the following documents before submitting their Expression of Interest:

- NSW NWGF EOI Guidelines for Applicants (this document)
- National Water Grid Investment Framework (Oct 2022)<sup>5</sup>

---

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.nationalwatergrid.gov.au/framework>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.nationalwatergrid.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/investment-framework-october-2022.pdf>

- National Water Grid Program Administration Manual (Feb 2023)<sup>6</sup>
- National Water Grid Science Strategy (Feb 2023)<sup>7</sup> – if submitting a proposal for funding under the NWG Science Program

---

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.nationalwatergrid.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/nwgf-program-administration-manual-february-2023.pdf>

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.nationalwatergrid.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/nwga-science-strategy-2023.pdf>



# 3 About the National Water Grid Fund

The National Water Grid Fund (NWGF) is the Australian Government’s multi-billion dollar, 10-year water infrastructure investment program. It has been developed to improve water access and security by delivering nationally important water infrastructure projects that unlock potential, build resilience, and promote growth and sustainability.

Funding from the NWGF is guided by the National Water Grid Investment Framework which supports robust planning and responsible investment decisions that contribute to nature positive outcomes.

Applicants are encouraged to visit the National Water Grid Authority website<sup>8</sup> to:

- develop an understanding of the NWGF eligibility criteria
- see examples of previously funded projects; and
- download the following key National Water Grid documents:
  - National Water Grid Investment Framework<sup>9</sup>
  - National Water Grid Program Administration Manual<sup>10</sup>
  - National Water Program Science Strategy<sup>11</sup> – for funding under the NWG Science Program

Further information on eligibility criteria and projects can be found in Section 6 of this document.

It is important to note that only state and territory governments are able to submit project proposals to the National Water Grid Authority for funding assessment.

---

## 3.1 National Water Grid Investment Framework

Developed in collaboration with state and territory governments, the Investment Framework provides a long term, strategic approach to responsible and respectful investment in water infrastructure. The National Water Grid Investment Framework and supporting documents

---

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.nationalwatergrid.gov.au/framework>

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.nationalwatergrid.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/investment-framework-october-2022.pdf>

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.nationalwatergrid.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/nwgf-program-administration-manual-february-2023.pdf>

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.nationalwatergrid.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/nwga-science-strategy-2023.pdf>

(including the Program Administration Manual) detail the Australian Government’s policy and processes for water infrastructure investment across Australia.

The Investment Framework sets out:

- How the NWGA will work in partnership with state and territory governments
- The **eligibility criteria** for funding under the National Water Grid Fund
- The **strategic objectives** and principles for investment through the Fund
- The role science has to play in identifying opportunities and evaluating options (noting that there is a separate Science Strategy).

Changes to the Investment Framework in October 2022 allowed for a broader range of projects to be considered. This includes essential town water supplies in regional and remote communities, as well as increased engagement with First Nations peoples as projects are developed.

---

## 3.2 National Water Grid strategic objectives

Under the Investment Framework, the Australian Government will identify and invest in projects that address the program’s 3 key strategic objectives (see figure 1).

Figure 1. National Water Grid Strategic Objectives (source: *National Water Grid Investment Framework*)



### Contributing to other Australian Government priorities

In addition to the strategic objectives set out above, the Australian Government may choose to prioritise investment in projects that contribute to its broader priorities as well as enabling

productive outcomes and meeting essential town water needs. This could include projects that contribute to Closing the Gap targets or that involve water recovery for environmental outcomes.

### 3.3 National Water Grid investment principles

The Investment Framework is underpinned by eight guiding principles that all project proposals **must meet** in order to be assessed as suitable for funding (see Table 1 below).

Table 1. National Water Grid Investment Principles (source: *National Water Grid Investment Framework*)

Investment Principle	Description
1. <b>Public Benefit and national interest</b>	Projects should be of demonstrable public benefit and have a national interest element, including through securing the nation's water security, building resilience to future drought, supporting primary industries and promoting regional economic development, including through the creation of jobs.
2. <b>Strong state or territory government support</b>	There must be strong state or territory government support, including funding contributions and involvement of the private sector and local government, where appropriate.
3. <b>Highest net benefit</b>	The investment should provide the highest net benefit of all options available to increase access to or security of water, taking into account economic, social and environmental impacts
4. <b>Working together</b>	Projects should look to address circumstances which cannot be effectively addressed by private proponents, the states or other stakeholders alone
5. <b>Alignment with National Water Initiative Principles</b>	Project should align with the <u>National Water Initiative</u> principles, including appropriate cost recovery, and where full cost recovery is not deemed feasible, any subsidies are fully transparent.

Investment Principle	Description
6. Project development must include engagement with First Nations communities	Stakeholder engagement for project development must include engagement with First Nations Communities of potentially affected areas, to comprehensively identify and manage impacts on cultural heritage.
7. A consistent, robust analysis of costs and benefits is used	If providing capital, a consistent, robust analysis of costs and benefits is used, and assessment of appropriate funding and financing arrangements is undertaken.
8. Projects should include early Australian Government involvement	Early involvement in project identification and development including through the Authority's Science Program and support for business case development.

## 3.4 National Water Grid Program Administration Manual

The NWG Program Administration Manual (the Administration Manual)<sup>12</sup> provides practical detail to support the administration and management of projects under the NWGF.

The Administration Manual applies to water infrastructure projects funded, or proposed to be funded, through the NWGF. This includes business case development projects as well as construction projects. The Manual does not apply to projects seeking funding under the National Water Grid Science Program<sup>13</sup>.

Applicants should read and understand the NWG Administration Manual<sup>14</sup> in conjunction with the NWG Investment Framework and these guidelines before submitting a NSW EOI.

Chapter 2 of the Administration Manual sets out the process for consideration of projects seeking approval of funding, including associated terms and conditions.

<sup>12</sup> <https://www.nationalwatergrid.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/nwgf-program-administration-manual-february-2023.pdf>

<sup>13</sup> A separate Science Strategy exists for the NWGF Science Program

<sup>14</sup> The version of the Administration Manual referred to in this document is current as at February 2023 and may be updated by the NWGA on an as needed basis.

# 4 NSW priorities and considerations

The NSW Government continues to work with stakeholders across regional and remote NSW to identify priorities for improving water security and water quality for towns and communities.

All project applications must demonstrate that the proposal has state support, and co-funding from the state, proponent and/or beneficiaries. NSW therefore assesses projects and programs that may warrant NSW and Australian Government funding based on the criteria set out in the NWG Investment Framework, as well as the NSW-specific considerations listed below.

NSW considerations include the following criteria:

- is the project or program **identified as a NSW government priority or election commitment?**
- are there **existing policy drivers making the project or program a priority?**
- is the project **based in a regional or remote community that has critical town water security issues?**
- does the project or program **already have co-funding secured?**
- does the project or program **also improve outcomes for First Nations people and/or environmental outcomes?**

# 5 Project proposals

The National Water Grid Fund has 3 key funding streams available:

- **Capital Program** – Strategic Business Case, Final Business Case and Construction projects.
- **First Nations Infrastructure Program** – Construction and Final Business Case stages may be funded where more information is required before an infrastructure project can proceed. This is at the discretion of the Australian Government.
- **Science Program** – Feasibility/Research Study (a separate science strategy exists)

---

## 5.1 Capital and First Nations Infrastructure Programs

As part of the project identification process, proponents will be expected to demonstrate that alternative options, including non-infrastructure solutions, have been appropriately considered, prior to entering into discussions on a proposed infrastructure solution.

A project proposal can be submitted for funding at any of the 3 stages in the project's development, as illustrated in Figure 2 below.

Figure 2. The 3 stages of a construction project and minimum requirements (refer to status information) for each

Preliminary Business Case Phase	Detailed Business Case Phase	Construction Phase
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Status:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A preferred option(s) has been identified through a feasibility study (or similar) and the project is ready to progress to business case development.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>Phase Activity:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Refinement of project scope and rationale for intervention.</li> <li>• Preliminary assessment of costs and benefits.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>Phase Output:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Completion of a Preliminary Business Case that can be used to assess the merits of proceeding further with the project.</li> <li>• Information at this Phase of project development is broad and indicative.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Status:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A Preliminary Business Case (or similar strategic assessment) has been completed.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>Phase Activity:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Detailed evaluation of the preferred option and comprehensive analysis of all aspects of the project. Will include preparation of implementation documents, such as costings, procurement and risk management strategies.</li> <li>• Approvals processes underway.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>Phase Output:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Completion of a Detailed Business Case that provides clear, comprehensive evidence for decision makers and can be used as a basis for informing a decision to proceed to construction.</li> <li>• The Detailed Business Case should be developed in a manner that would allow assessment by Infrastructure Australia, in line with the IA Assessment Framework (mandatory for proposals seeking \$250 million or more in Australian Government funding).</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Status:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The final Detailed Business Case has been completed and the project is investment ready.</li> <li>• Major approvals identified and timing confirmed (approvals necessary to commence should be obtained or in process).</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>Phase Activity:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Construction of the full scope of the project.</li> <li>• May include some pre-construction readiness activities.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>Phase Output:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Project is completed and operational.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

## 5.2 Science Projects

The NWGA Science Program provides a collaborative national research portfolio which may inform decisions on where and how sustainable water infrastructure is built for a water-secure future. The Program responsibly invests in research projects that can:

- accelerate uptake of new and emerging water security technologies
- increase the use of climate resilient water sources
- underpin sustainable, nature-positive development of water resources

The NWG Science Strategy<sup>15</sup> closely aligns with the NWG Investment Framework and sets the strategic objectives for the Science Program, which include:

- **Provide safe and reliable water for regional and remote communities:** for example, analysis of currently unused groundwater resources near a community, or investigating suitable technologies to improve water quality for First Nations remote communities.
- **Generate public benefit through responsible investment in water infrastructure for productive use:** for example, identifying opportunities for sustainable development of water

<sup>15</sup> <https://www.nationalwatergrid.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/nwga-science-strategy-2023.pdf>

resources, including through comprehensive multi-disciplinary water resource assessments in northern Australia.

- **Build resilient water infrastructure that is environmentally sustainable and culturally responsive:** for example, progressing technologies to make water supplies more resilient to climate change and variability. Promising technologies include Managed Aquifer Recharge (MAR), desalination of brackish groundwater and increased use of recycled wastewater.



# 6 Eligibility criteria

We cannot consider your Expression of Interest if you **do not** satisfy all eligibility criteria.

---

## 6.1 Who is eligible to apply?

To be eligible you must have an Australian Business Number (ABN), and be one of the following entities:

- local council
- water utility
- irrigation water supply corporation or trust
- First Nations organisation
- science agency
- NSW Government Department; or
- private corporations, where the project has multiple beneficiaries.
- proponents whose projects are located in regional or remote NSW

Any private entity can put forward an application, however the proposal must have multiple receivers, or beneficiaries.

**Note:** the NSW Government may also apply for funding through the Expression of Interest process and will be subject to the same assessment process as other applicants.

---

## 6.2 Who is not eligible to apply?

- Organisations or entities without an ABN
- Private Individuals
- Proponents who put forward projects that only have one beneficiary
- Projects that supply water for the exclusive use of a private business or individual are ineligible
- Entities without an ABN

- Proponents whose project is not based in regional or remote NSW<sup>16</sup>

For the purposes of this application process, regional and remote NSW is those areas that fall outside of the Greater Sydney, Newcastle, and Wollongong metropolitan areas.

If you require further clarification on what constitutes regional NSW, please contact us by emailing us at: [nwgf-info@dpie.nsw.gov.au](mailto:nwgf-info@dpie.nsw.gov.au).

---

## 6.3 Joint applications

Joint applications are acceptable, provided you appoint a lead organisation who is the main driver of the project and is eligible to apply. Only the lead organisation can submit the NSW Expression of Interest form.

The EOI should identify all members of the proposed group, and letters of support from project partners should accompany your NSW Expression of Interest.

---

## 6.4 Eligible projects under the NWGF

The Australian Government determines the type of projects that are eligible for funding through the National Water Grid, and this may change from time to time.

Projects that may be funded under this round of National Water Grid funding include:

- recycling plants
- water treatment facilities
- desalination plants
- groundwater storage
- managed aquifer recharge
- surface water storage, such as dams or weirs
- irrigation district modernisation or expansion pipelines; and
- other projects that facilitate the movement of water

The First Nations Infrastructure Program's eligible projects include:

- upgrading networks
- fixing leaking pipes
- Bores; and

---

<sup>16</sup> Refer to Appendix A for a list of all eligible NSW local government areas.

- installation of water treatment systems

Projects may include supporting infrastructure, be either new construction projects or modifications to existing projects (such as the raising of a weir wall) and be either stand-alone or consist of a number of smaller projects with a common theme or goal.

Consideration may also be given to projects that undertake regional pilots to assess the merits of specific water infrastructure.

The key eligibility criteria is that a project must support the development of the National Water Grid<sup>17</sup>.

---

## 6.5 Ineligible projects under the NWGF

The following types of projects are out of scope and are not eligible for funding under the Program:

- **Urban water infrastructure for the sole benefit of residents in major cities** which should be funded by utilities and rate payers
- **Projects that supply water for the exclusive use of a single entity** or that primarily benefit one major customer<sup>18</sup>
- **Waste and stormwater projects**, except to the extent they include a productive economic element such as recycled water schemes
- **Disaster resilience or environmental water recovery projects**
- **Projects for routine maintenance or refurbishment** without betterment

Significant works required on existing nationally important water infrastructure, such as major safety upgrades, may be considered for funding at the discretion of the Australian Government.

**Please note:** payment for works that have already been completed will not be reimbursed by the NSW Government nor the NWGA and those expenditures should be excluded from the funding contribution being requested.

---

<sup>17</sup> Information on how a project can benefit the development of the National Water Grid is found in Chapter 2 of the NWG Program Administration Manual.

<sup>18</sup> Australian Government financial assistance to individuals and businesses (for example, for on-farm irrigation upgrades) is administered under other government programs.

---

## 6.6 What eligibility and assessment criteria does my proposed project need to meet?

The National Water Grid Authority independently assess the merits of proposals submitted against the set eligibility criteria identified in the NWG Investment Framework and supporting documents.

To be considered as eligible for assessment, a NSW project must meet all the criteria as listed below:

Be an eligible entity. – refer section 6.1 and 6.2.

- Align with NWG Strategic Objectives and Investment Principles<sup>19</sup>;
- Project to be based in regional or remote NSW
- Meet all the National Water Grid Criteria – refer to section 6.6.1 in this document and the NWG Investment Framework
- Align with NSW priorities and considerations – refer to section 6.6.2 of this document

### 6.6.1 National Water Grid criteria

These are mandatory criteria which typically elicit a yes/no response, and include:

- **new capital investment** in infrastructure
- **increases the security, quality and/or availability of water** for regional and remote communities
- **increases water security and reliability** for productive use
- **demonstrable public benefit through resilient water infrastructure** that is environmentally sustainable and culturally responsive
- **demonstrates engagement with affected stakeholders**, including First Nations people
- **supported by a state or territory government** (including securing 50 per cent co-funding contributions from the NSW Government and/or the proponent)
- **requires an Australian Government contribution** (i.e., cannot be effectively addressed by non-Commonwealth stakeholders alone).

In addition, for the First Nations Infrastructure Program and the Science Program, the following criteria also applies:

---

<sup>19</sup> Refer to section 4 of these guidelines for further information on NWG strategic objectives and investment principles

Table 2. Additional criteria for the First Nations Infrastructure Program and the Science Program

First Nations Infrastructure Program	Science Program
<p>Construction Project that prioritises First Nation communities that don't have access to clean and reliable drinking water</p>	<p>Research project that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• analyses water resources, to understand future sustainability and nature positive development options,</li> <li>• identifies and progresses alternative and emerging opportunities to increase water security and climate change resilience,</li> <li>• develops new information resources to support decision-making, including decision support tools and science communication.</li> </ul>

### 6.6.2 NSW Government priorities and considerations

Applications that meet the NWGF eligibility criteria are then assessed against the following NSW considerations:

- Is the project or program identified as an NSW government priority, e.g. an election commitment, identified in a Regional Water Strategy
- Are there existing policy drivers making the project or program a priority?
- Is the project based in a regional or remote community that has critical town water security issues?
- Does the project or program already have co-funding secured?
- Does the project or program also improve environmental outcomes and/or outcomes for First Nations people?

## 7 How do I submit an Expression of Interest?

The NSW Expression of Interest (EOI) for project proposals to the National Water Grid Fund is an open and highly competitive process.

The NSW EOI process is the first stage in identifying key information such as the project's environmental, social and economic costs and benefits, and alignment with key national, state and regional strategic plans and strategies such as the National Water Initiative and NSW Regional Water Strategies.

Before submitting a NSW EOI you should read and understand:

- these Guidelines
- the National Water Grid Investment Framework; and
- the National Water Grid Fund Program Administration Manual.

NSW Expressions of Interest will only be accepted via the online Expression of Interest form which is accessed through SmartyGrants.

It is important to know that due to probity reasons, we are unable to assist you to develop your NSW Expression of Interest. If you have general questions about eligibility or your project proposal, please email us at: [nwgf-info@dpie.nsw.gov.au](mailto:nwgf-info@dpie.nsw.gov.au)

---

## 7.1 Accessing the SmartyGrants online portal

The NSW Government uses SmartyGrants as the online portal for you to submit your NSW EOI(s). The portal allows you to lodge your Expression of Interest in a secure online environment.

Links to the SmartyGrants portal to submit your NSW EOI for the NWGF June 2024 round can be found at:

<https://water.dpie.nsw.gov.au/our-work/water-infrastructure-nsw/grants-and-funding/national-water-grid-authority>

---

## 7.2 Completing the NSW EOI form

You must address all eligibility and assessment criteria in your NSW Expression of Interest.

The expression of interest (EOI) form asks questions that relate to the assessment criteria and you should provide evidence to support your answers.

Assessment of each EOI will be against NSW priorities and Australian Government eligibility criteria.

Applicants should ensure that they read and understand the following documents:

- This NSW Guidelines for applications document
- The NWG Investment Framework
- The NWG Program Administration Manual

To have your NSW EOI assessed you must:

- complete the online Expression of Interest form
- provide all the information requested
- demonstrate how your project proposal meets all eligibility and assessment criteria
- upload all required supporting documents
- submit your EOI online

You are responsible for making sure your application is complete and accurate.

The EOI form displays size limits for answers and a number of the questions are mandatory. A copy of the NSW EOI form can be found in Appendix B of this document.

Successfully lodged NSW EOIs will receive a confirmation email with a PDF copy of the EOI attached.

---

## 7.3 Supporting documentation

You must provide the required supporting documents with your NSW Expression of Interest. The documents you attach should be the final/complete version of the document.

The required documentation is dependent on the Phase of your proposed project, for example, applications for construction funding must be supported by a Final (Detailed) Business Case and other key project management documentation.

You must attach supporting documentation in line with the directions provided in the EOI form, these guidelines and related National Water Grid documents.

You should only attach required documents; we will not consider information in attachments that we do not request.

The total of all attachments cannot exceed 25MB.

---

## 7.4 Timing of Expressions of Interest

You can only submit an application between the published opening and closing dates. We cannot accept late applications.

Expressions of Interest for eligible projects are invited **from 19 April 2024 until 11:00pm (AEST) on 13 May 2024**.

## Late Applications

To ensure fairness for all applicants, Expressions of Interest for projects in NSW must be submitted within the defined application period

A request to submit an Expressions of Interest (EOI) after the closing date and time will only be considered if the applicant can demonstrate they have experienced exceptional circumstances

Applicants seeking consideration of a late application must – **within two business days of the EOI closing date** – submit a formal request via email to [nwgf-info@dpie.nsw.gov.au](mailto:nwgf-info@dpie.nsw.gov.au).

The program team will advise the applicant of the information that will be required to support your claim.

Broadly, exceptional circumstances are events characterised by one or more of the following:

- Reasonably unforeseeable
- Beyond the applicant's control
- Unable to be managed or resolved within the application period.

Any NSW EOIs received after the Closing Date will be deemed to be 'late' and will be registered as 'late.' A late application will only be admitted for evaluation if Evaluation Panel, at its absolute discretion, determines that the acceptance of a late application will not compromise the integrity and competitiveness of the process and that it is considering applications that will provide the best outcome.

The Evaluation Panel will not accept changes, modifications, or adjustments to applications after the Closing Date unless, specific changes relate to the NWGF Investment Criteria, are deemed not to provide any applicant with an unfair advantage and are allowed at the Chair of the Evaluation Panel's absolute discretion.

---

## 7.5 Seeking assistance

If you require assistance, please send an email to our team at:

[nwgf-info@dpie.nsw.gov.au](mailto:nwgf-info@dpie.nsw.gov.au)

A pre-recorded online briefing will be available on the department's website<sup>20</sup> to assist applicants in the NSW Expression of Interest process.

---

<sup>20</sup> <https://water.dpie.nsw.gov.au/our-work/water-infrastructure-nsw/grants-and-funding/national-water-grid-authority>



# 8 How are NSW project proposals assessed?

It is important to address all criteria in your NSW EOI to have it considered.

All National Water Grid funding applications are subject to a highly competitive evaluation processes at both the State and Federal government level.

---

## 8.1 NSW evaluation and assessment

NSW EOIs submitted by the closing time and date and will undergo a competitive merit-based assessment against eligibility and assessment criteria.<sup>21</sup>

The Assessment of eligible Expressions of Interest is undertaken by an Evaluation Panel (the Panel), the composition of which has been endorsed by the Executive Director of Infrastructure Development. The Panel may also seek additional advice from independent technical experts.

The Panel will assess your application against the assessment criteria and will make recommendation to the NSW Minister for Water which projects to submit to the Australian Government for National Water Grid funding.

If the selection process identifies unintentional errors in your application, we may contact you to correct or clarify the errors, but you cannot make any material alteration or addition.

### 8.1.1 NSW evaluation and assessment process

The NSW evaluation and assessment process is undertaken in 2 stages. A probity advisor oversees the process.

#### **Stage 1: Stage one is a two-part process.**

##### **Part A: Expression of interest and gateway questions:**

Consists of a series of yes/no questions testing project eligibility against mandatory National Water Grid Investment Framework criteria. Part A allows the department and proponents to initially assess the eligibility of the proposal.

---

<sup>21</sup> Refer to Section 6 of these guidelines for eligibility and assessment criteria

After submitting your application, we may contact you for clarification if we find an error or any missing information, including evidence that supports the eligibility and/or merit of your application. However, we can refuse to accept any additional information from you that would change your submission after the application closing time.

If, based on the answers to Part A, the project is ineligible, the department will not assess Part B of the application.

### **Part B: Detailed assessment**

Comprises a series of short questions that seek more detail about the project. Part B allows the department's Evaluation Panel to further assess the eligibility of the proposal against NSW Government considerations (refer below)

Expressions of interest will be scored by the Evaluation Panel. The scores will form the basis of recommendations regarding progression to Stage 2, with the highest scoring projects generally being recommended to the NSW Minister for Water. Once approved by the Minister for Water the recommended projects will be invited to complete a full NWGA application.

The Evaluation Panel, Executive Director Infrastructure Development, Deputy Secretary Water and Minister for Water or delegate have absolute discretion in determining the number of projects selected to progress to Stage 2.

NSW DCCEEW will advise proponents of the outcome of their National Water Grid Expression of Interest in writing, whether you are successful or unsuccessful.

The NSW Government Assessment and Evaluation process concludes after Part B.

### **Stage 2: Development of NWGF funding applications**

The projects with successful EOIs from Stage 1 will be invited to complete a full NWGA application.

Using the template provided by the Australian Government and working alongside the department's Program Development Team, the proponent will have the opportunity to complete a funding application before submission to the NWGA by the department<sup>22</sup>.

The department reserves the right to not progress applications as part of Stage 2 if the Australian Government application template has not been completed in sufficient detail to satisfy the NWGF requirements.

### **Application Evidence Requirements**

Evidence and supporting documentation requirements for funding applications are set by the National Water Grid Authority. The evidence requirements are dependent on the stage of your

---

<sup>22</sup> Note: only state and territory governments can submit completed National Water Grid funding applications to the NWGA.

project for which you are seeking funding. The evidence you submit to support your funding application, may be subject to review by the department's technical staff.

Evidence required to support your project proposal, includes but is not limited to:

- **Options assessment report, feasibility study and/or business cases** that presents the benefits of the project or program. If a benefit cost ratio is available, the department's technical staff may conduct an independent review of the analysis undertaken and provide advice on the appropriateness and rigour of the estimates,
- **Cost estimates (P50/P90)**, which must use a recognised cost forecasting approach and may be subject to review by the department's technical staff. The final costing must include the department labour expense cap (LEC) and overhead costs (on-costs/corporate) to cover the costs of program administration
- **Risk Register**, which may be independently reviewed by the department's Risk and Assurance team and any gaps or issues must be addressed by the proponent prior to submission,
- **The Planning Approval pathway (and status)**, which may be reviewed by the department's technical staff and the proponent must address any gaps or issues prior to submitting the application.

### **Support provided**

The NSW DCCEEW Program Development team will provide support to all proponents throughout the development of NWG funding applications. To achieve fairness, this support may include:

- consulting and responding to generic queries from applicants regarding the NWGF and application process if required
- providing further clarification on the specific questions in the funding NWGF application template
- providing an application briefing (in the form of a recorded webinar available on the department website) to all proponents, a process diagram detailing the multi-staged process and information about what to expect and what is required (this guideline)

The support and assistance may be provided via an online meeting or/and through a written briefing.

### **Submission of NWG applications to the NWGA**

After the proponent completes the NWG application, it is reviewed by the department. The Executive Director Infrastructure Development endorses the funding applications before they are recommended to the Deputy Secretary Water Group and the NSW Minister for Water for submission to the NWGA.

# 9 Role of the Australian Government

The Australian Government will manage and assess the funding proposals and is the sole and final authorising body that decides the projects that will receive funding through the NWGF.

The NWGA provides advice to the Australian Government on project selection decisions based on their assessment. When the Australian Government selects a project for investment, the investment type, amount and conditions will be determined in the Funding and Finance stage. The NWGA will provide feedback, where possible, when a project is not successful in receiving Australian Government funding.

---

## 9.1 Who will approve NWGF grants?

The Australian Government, as administrator of the National Water Grid Fund makes the final decision about which grants applications to approve.

---

## 9.2 Notification of funding application outcomes

NSW DCCEEW will advise shortlisted proponents of the outcome of their National Water Grid funding application in writing, whether you are successful or unsuccessful. The NWGA typically advises NSW whether projects have been successful in obtaining funding 4-5 months after submission, with announcements aligned to the Federal Budget and Mid-Year Economic and Fiscal Outlook (MYEFO).

The NWGA will provide feedback, where possible, when a project is not successful in obtaining funding. If you are unsuccessful, we will give you an opportunity to discuss any feedback received from the NWGA with us.

Please note that proponents may put forward projects for future application rounds (where available) regardless of the outcome of their existing application.

---

## 9.3 Successful funding applications

If a proponent is successful in obtaining Australian Government funding through the National Water Grid Fund, the NSW Government will work with the proponent to develop and agree the proposed funding milestones to be included in the Schedule to the Federation Funding Agreement

(Infrastructure or Environment). These agreements are between the Australian and state and territory governments.

**Note:** Negotiating and executing a new schedule typically takes 3-4 months.

Once the Funding Schedule is executed by the state and federal governments, the Department will work with proponents to develop a Funding Deed (between NSW and project proponent).

Project level governance arrangements will also be set up by the Department to ensure projects are progressing appropriately. Proponents will also assist the NSW Government in submitting monthly progress reports to the NWGA.

## 10 Ethical conduct

NSW DCCEEW will use an independent probity advisor, a probity plan, and existing governance structures to identify projects and develop and assess proposals to ensure there are appropriate levels of probity, governance and transparency.

The probity plan:

- Ensures that decisions relating to funding opportunities are impartial, appropriately documented and reported, publicly defensible and lawful
- Details roles and responsibilities of persons involved in the Program as they relate to probity
- Identifies probity related processes that apply to the Program to support high standards of probity to be achieved
- Ensures consistency with NSW Premier's Memorandum - Grant Administration Guide (M2024-03).
- Ensures consistency of the Program with most recent ICAC guidance on managing grants initiatives (November 2018)

Independent probity advisors provide guidance on any issues concerning integrity, fairness and accountability that might arise from assessing risks and issues, evaluating submissions, awarding grants and administering funding agreements.

# 11 Disclaimers and Terms and Conditions

---

## 11.1 Marketing and communications

The NSW Minister for Water and the Federal Minister for the Environment and Water, or their nominated representatives, may publicly announce the outcome of the grant application program. Following execution of the funding agreement, the department will publicly disclose details of the grant on the NSW Government grants and funding finder website. Proponents must acknowledge when they have received funding under the program. Funding acknowledgement requirements are detailed on the NSW Government website.

## 11.2 Complaints

The NSW Government is committed to ensuring the process for providing funding under the program is transparent and in accordance with published guidelines, the NSW Grants Administration Guide (2024), and relevant NSW legislation. Concerns about the program or individual applications should be submitted in writing to [nwgf-info@dpie.nsw.gov.au](mailto:nwgf-info@dpie.nsw.gov.au).

Concerns will be managed in accordance with the department's complaints handling policy, which may include an independent review if required. If proponents do not agree with the way the department has handled the issue, they may wish to contact the NSW Ombudsman via the Online Complaint Form at <https://www.ombo.nsw.gov.au/Making-a-complaint/how-to-make-a-complaint>

## 11.3 Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009

Proponents should be aware information submitted in applications and all related correspondence, attachments and other documents may be made publicly available if required to do so under the *Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009* (NSW). Information deemed to be commercially sensitive will be withheld. The *Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009* (NSW) makes government information accessible to the public by:

- requiring government agencies to make certain sorts of information freely available
- encouraging government agencies to release as much other information as possible

- giving the public an enforceable right to make access applications for government information
- restricting access to information only when there is an overriding public interest against disclosure.

# Appendix A

## List of eligible NSW Local Government Areas



Table A-1. List of eligible NSW Local Government Areas

Albury City	Armidale Regional	Ballina	Balranald	Bathurst Regional	Bega Valley
Bellingen	Berrigan	Bland	Blayney	Bogan	Bourke
Brewarrina	Broken Hill City	Byron	Cabonne	Carrathool	Central Coast
Central Darling	Clarence Valley	Cobar	Coffs Harbour	Coolamon	Coonamble
Cootamundra-Gundagai Regional	Cowra	Dubbo Regional	Edward River	Eurobodalla	Federation
Forbes	Gilgandra	Glen Innes-Severn	Goulburn Mulwaree	Greater Hume	Griffith City
Gunnedah	Gwydir	Hawkesbury	Hay	Hilltops	Inverell
Junee	Kempsey	Kyogle	Lachlan	Leeton	Lismore
Lithgow, City of	Liverpool Plains	Lockhart	Mid-Coast	Mid-Western Regional	Moree Plains
Murray River	Murrumbidgee	Muswellbrook	Nambucca Valley	Narrabri	Narrandera
Narromine	Oberon	Orange	Parkes	Port Macquarie-Hastings	Queanbeyan-Palerang Regional
Richmond Valley	Shoalhaven	Singleton	Snowy Monaro Regional	Snowy Valleys	Tamworth Regional
Temora	Tenterfield	Tweed	Unincorporated Far West Area	Upper Hunter	Upper Lachlan
Uralla	Wagga Wagga	Walcha	Walgett	Warren	Warrumbungle
Weddin	Wentworth	Wingecarribee	Yass Valley		

For an interactive map of NSW Local Government Areas please visit the NSW Office of Local Government's website:

<https://www.olg.nsw.gov.au/public/find-my-council/local-government-area-boundaries-and-mapping-information/>



# Appendix B

## National Water Grid Fund – NSW

### Expression of Interest Form

# 2024 - National Water Grid Fund Application Round 2

## Form Preview

### About the program

The National Water Grid Fund (NWGF) is a major infrastructure investment program initiated by the Australian Government that supports new capital investment that increases the security, quality and/or availability of water for regional and remote communities, and/or productive use.

Working closely with state and territory governments, the primary purpose of the NWGF is to improve water access and security across the nation while delivering against a range of social, environmental, cultural, and economic outcomes.

The National Water Grid Fund aims to achieve the following three critical objectives:

- Provide safe and reliable water for regional and remote communities
- Generate public benefit through responsible investment in water infrastructure for productive use
- Build resilient water infrastructure that is environmentally sustainable and culturally responsible

The NWGF also supports science and research-based projects that will assist in identifying opportunities and evaluating options to improve water security and environmental outcomes.

The NWGF supports water infrastructure for First Nations communities in regional and remote Australia. The NWGF recognises the importance of First Nations communities playing a role in informing water infrastructure projects. We are supporting the Australian Government's [Closing the Gap Implementation Plan](#). The plan is the pathway to improve the lives of First Nations Australians.

### Instructions for Applicants

The NSW Expression of Interest process is an open competitive grant opportunity for eligible applicants. It provides an opportunity to seek potential funding through the Australian Government's National Water Grid Fund.

This form allows proponents to provide information to the NSW Government regarding their project's eligibility for National Water Grid funding and detail the project's alignment with both National Water Grid Investment Criteria and NSW Government considerations in a secure online environment.

It is important that applicants read all the information available. Before completing this application form, you should read and understand the:

- [NSW National Water Grid Fund Guidelines for Applicants](#)
- [National Water Grid Investment Framework](#)
- [National Water Grid Program Administration Manual](#)

Your application must be received by **MONDAY 13 MAY 2024 at 11:00pm (AEST)**

Successfully submitted Expressions of Interest will receive a confirmation of submission by email.

# 2024 - National Water Grid Fund Application Round 2

## Form Preview

### Late Expressions of Interest

Expressions of Interest must be submitted between the published open and closing times for the grant opportunity.

Expressions of Interest received after the closing time and date are not accepted unless an applicant has experienced exceptional circumstances, which prevented the submission of their Expression of Interest on time. Failure to allow sufficient time to prepare, review and submit an application, is not considered exceptional circumstances.

Broadly, exceptional circumstances are events characterised by one or more of the following:

- Unforeseeable
- Beyond the applicant's control
- Unable to be managed or resolved within the application period.

Expressions of Interest received after the closing date will be deemed 'late' and registered as late.

All requests for exceptional circumstances consideration will be provided to the for determination. Decisions to accept or decline a late application will be considered based on the merits of the request and in accordance with probity principles.

A late application will only be admitted for evaluation if the Evaluation Panel, at its absolute discretion, determines that the acceptance of a late application will not compromise the integrity and competitiveness of the process and that it is considering applications that will provide the best outcome.

Applicants seeking to submit a late application will be required to submit an email request to the Department via [nwgf-info@dpie.nsw.gov.au](mailto:nwgf-info@dpie.nsw.gov.au) within **two business days** of the Expression of Interest round closing. Any requests to submit a late application outside of the **two business days** will not be considered. Further information can be found in the NSW NWGF Applicant Guidelines.

### Incomplete Expressions of Interest

The eligibility criteria listed in the Detailed Application Form will be more thoroughly evaluated when proponents are asked to complete the National Water Grid Authority (NWGA) funding application in full as part of stage 2.

The Department reserves the right not to progress applications as part of stage 2 if the NWGA application template has not been completed with sufficient detail to satisfy NWGA criteria.

### Application Number

This field is read only.

### Grant Program Name

This field is read only.

The program this submission is in.

# 2024 - National Water Grid Fund Application Round 2

## Form Preview

### The application process

#### Stage 1

- The Department opens the competitive Expression of Interest round for the period 19 April 2024 to 13 May 2024.
- Proponents develop and submit an online Expression of Interest. All eligibility assessment criteria in the application must be addressed and all will have equal weighting
- Once the Expression of Interest period has closed. The Department evaluates projects for eligibility and alignment to National Water Grid Investment Framework and NSW Government consideration
- The Evaluation Panel assesses and shortlists projects to recommend to the Deputy Secretary Water Group and the NSW Minister for Water to proceed to Stage 2 (Project Proposals)
- If your project is recommended by the Evaluation Panel, and all endorsements are received, the team will contact you requesting the completion of the formal NWGF Project Proposal template
- You will be advised in writing via letter or email of the outcome of your EOI whether successful or unsuccessful.

#### Stage 2

- The Department's Infrastructure Development Team works with shortlisted project proponents to develop the formal NWGF Project Proposal.
- Once approved by the NSW Water Minister for submission, the Department's Infrastructure Development Team submits the Project Proposal to the Australian Government for assessment and funding consideration by 30 June 2024.

The NSW Government will act as the applicant on behalf of proponents as only state and territory governments can submit project proposals to the National Water Grid Fund for funding consideration,

Note: The NSW Government can also put forward its own project submissions, which are subject to the same review and assessment process.

The Australian Government's funding decision is generally made within 3 to 4 months.

### Disclaimer

The Applicant acknowledges and agrees that:

- submission of this application does not guarantee funding will be granted for any project, and the Department expressly reserves its right to accept or reject this application at its discretion;
- it must bear the costs of preparing and submitting this application and the Department does not accept any liability for such costs, whether or not this application is ultimately accepted or rejected; and
- it has read the Funding Guidelines for the Program and has fully informed itself of the relevant program requirements.

# 2024 - National Water Grid Fund Application Round 2

## Form Preview

### Use of Information

By submitting this application form, the Applicant acknowledges and agrees that:

- if this project application is successful, the relevant details of the project will be made public, including details such as the names of the organisation (Applicant) and any partnering organisation (state government agency or non-government organisation), project title, project description, location, anticipated time for completion and amount awarded;
- the Department will use reasonable endeavours to ensure that any information received in or in respect of this application which is clearly marked 'Commercial-in-confidence' or 'Confidential' is treated as confidential, however, such documents will remain subject to the Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009 (NSW) (GIPA Act); and
- in some circumstances the Department may release information contained in this application form and other relevant information in relation to this application in response to a request lodged under the GIPA Act or otherwise as required or permitted by law.

### Privacy Notice

By submitting this Application form, the Applicant acknowledges and agrees that:

- the Department is required to comply with the *Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998* (NSW) (the Privacy Act) and that any personal information (as defined by the Privacy Act) collected by the Department in relation to the program will be handled in accordance with the Privacy Act and its privacy policy (available at: <https://www.dpie.nsw.gov.au/privacy>)
- the information it provides to the Department in connection with this form will be collected and stored on a database and will only be used for the purposes of assessing proposals for the National Water Grid June 2024 funding round (including, where necessary, being disclosed to other Government agencies in connection with the assessment of the merits of an application) or as otherwise permitted by the Privacy Act;
- it has taken steps to ensure that any person whose personal information (as defined by the Privacy Act) is included in this form has consented to the fact that the Department and other Government agencies may be supplied with that personal information, and has been made aware of the purposes for which it has been collected and may be used
- the information you provide is voluntary. However, if you do not provide us accurate information or the information we require, we may not be able to proceed with the assessment of your proposal.

#### **More information about privacy**

The above privacy collection notice applies to the information you are providing in completing this form. If you would like to know more about how the department meets its obligations in collecting, storing, using and sharing personal information, you can read our complete [Privacy Policy](#) or [Privacy Management Plan](#).

You have the right to access and correct the information you provide. You may contact the NSW Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water on 02 9860 1440,

# 2024 - National Water Grid Fund Application Round 2

## Form Preview

at [privacy.dcceew@environment.nsw.gov.au](mailto:privacy.dcceew@environment.nsw.gov.au) or at 4 Parramatta Square, 12 Darcy Street Parramatta to do this, or to find out more about how we handle your information.

## Eligibility Criteria

\* indicates a required field

### Eligibility Confirmation

Applications must meet the criteria set out in the [National Water Grid Investment Framework](#), which underpins Australian Government investment decisions and processes as well as against NSW considerations set out in the [National Water Grid Fund NSW Guidelines for Applicants](#). The proponent must demonstrate how the project will provide long-term benefit to water security, agriculture and primary industry sectors, support regional economic development and build water supply resilience.

To be eligible for Australian Government funding, projects must meet all the criteria as identified in the National Water Grid Investment Framework:

- **New capital investment in infrastructure** that increases the security, quality and/or availability of water for regional and remote communities, and/or productive use
- **Demonstrable public benefit with a national interest element and demonstrated engagement** with affected stakeholders (including First Nations people); and
- **Demonstrate strong State Government support** (including securing funding co-contributions such as state, proponent and/or beneficiaries) and **is dependant on a contribution from the Australian Government.**

**First Nation Infrastructure Program project** proposals must demonstrate that it is a **Construction Project** that prioritises **First Nation communities that don't have access to clean and reliable drinking water**

**Science Program project proposals** are **research projects** that:

- analyse water resources, to understand future sustainability and nature positive development options,
- identify and progress alternative and emerging opportunities to increase water security and climate change resilience
- develop new information resources to support decision-making, including decision support tools and science communication

### NSW Considerations

The Department assesses project proposals based on the need to meet all National Water Grid Investment Framework criteria and a number of NSW Government specific considerations.

All project proposals must demonstrate that they have strong NSW State Government support, for example:

- A confirmed State Government funding commitment, or
- Is identified in a Regional Water Strategy and/or Regional Water Strategy Implementation Plan; or
- other state or regional strategy or plan

Other NSW specific considerations include:



# 2024 - National Water Grid Fund Application Round 2

## Form Preview

- Is the project or program identified as an NSW government priority or election commitment
- Are there existing policy drivers making the project or program a priority
- Is the project based in a regional or remote community that has critical town water security issues
- Does the project or program already have co-funding secured
- Does the project or program also improve environmental outcomes and/or outcomes for First Nations people

Proponents may be eligible to apply for funding to:

- **Develop either a Preliminary Business Case or Detailed Business Case:** potential total Australian Government funding will be up to 50 per cent for either study
- **Undertake construction work:** potential total Australian Government funding will be up to 50 percent of the project's total capital costs for delivery.
- **Deliver a Science Program:** potential total Australian Government funding will be up to 50 percent of the project's total capital costs for delivery.

**Note: The 50 percent limit is inclusive of ALL Australian Government funding. If your project contribution includes Australian Government funding this forms part of the 50 percent Australian Government contribution.**

### Eligible projects include:

- Essential town water systems in regional and remote communities
- Water recycling and treatment plants
- groundwater storage
- dams or weirs
- pipelines
- desalination plants
- irrigation district modernisation or expansion; and
- Other water storage and distribution solutions

### Ineligible projects include:

- on-farm initiatives
- urban water storage and distribution systems (without a benefit to primary industry or regional development)
- maintenance or refurbishment projects without a benefit element
- projects supplying water for the exclusive use of a private business or individual

### Eligible organisations include:

- Water Utilities and Local Government Authorities
- irrigation organisations, irrigation trusts, or irrigation water supply co-operatives
- Science Agencies

Further information about eligible projects and organisations is found in the NSW NWGF Guidelines for Applicants

**Is your organisation one of the following entities: a local government authority (including Regional Organisation of Councils or Joint Organisation), local water utility, water corporation, irrigation water co-operative, private irrigation trust, First Nations organisation, science agency, or private corporation that has multiple beneficiaries? \***

Yes

# 2024 - National Water Grid Fund Application Round 2

## Form Preview

No

**Is your project located in regional or remote New South Wales (regions outside Greater Sydney, Newcastle and Wollongong metropolitan areas)? \***

- Yes  
 No

**Is your project a new capital investment? \***

- Yes  
 No

**I confirm that the applicant and project is eligible according to the criteria outlined in the Program Guidelines \***

Yes

If you have questions as to your eligibility email [nwgf-info@dpie.nsw.gov.au](mailto:nwgf-info@dpie.nsw.gov.au) or phone 1300 081 047

## Contact Details

\* indicates a required field

## Applicant Details

**Applicant \***

Individual  Organisation

Organisation Name

Title First Name Last Name

<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
----------------------	----------------------	----------------------

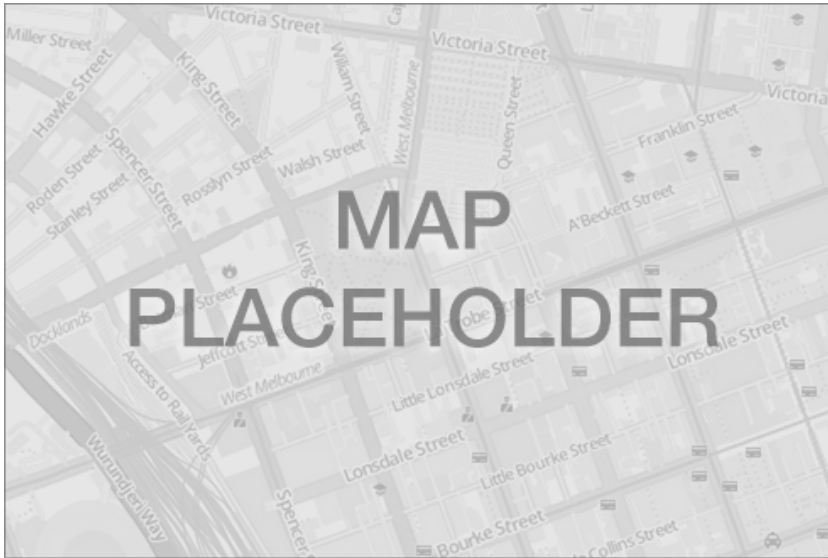
For organisations: please use the organisations full name. Make sure you provide the same name that is listed in official documentation such as that with the ABR, ACNC or ATO.

**Applicant Primary Address**

Address

<input type="text"/>
<input type="text"/>

# 2024 - National Water Grid Fund Application Round 2 Form Preview



## Applicant Postal Address

Address

## Applicant Primary Phone Number \*

Must be an Australian phone number.  
Country code not required, area code for landlines is required.

## Applicant Email Address \*

Must be an email address.

## Applicant Website

Must be a URL.

## Primary Contact Details

### Primary Contact \*

Title      First Name      Last Name

This is the person we will correspond with about this grant.

### Primary Contact Position \*

e.g., Manager, Board Member or Fundraising Coordinator.

# 2024 - National Water Grid Fund Application Round 2

## Form Preview

### Primary Contact Phone Number \*

Must be an Australian phone number.  
Country code not required, area code for landlines is required.

### Primary Contact Other Phone Number

Must be an Australian phone number.  
Country code not required, area code for landlines is required.

### Primary Contact Email \*

This is the address we will use to correspond with you about this grant.

## Applicant Organisation Details

\* indicates a required field

### Organisation Details

#### Please detail the primary activities of the applicant organisation. \*

Word count:  
Must be no more than 200 words.

#### Please enter the Australian and New Zealand Standard Industrial Classification (ANZSIC) code for the applicant organisation. \*

#### Does the applicant organisation have an Australian Business Number (ABN)? \*

Yes  No

#### Applicant Organisation ABN \*

The ABN provided will be used to look up the following information. Click Lookup above to check that you have entered the ABN correctly.

Information from the Australian Business Register
ABN
Entity name
ABN status
Entity type

# 2024 - National Water Grid Fund Application Round 2

## Form Preview

Goods & Services Tax (GST)

DGR Endorsed

ATO Charity Type [More information](#)

ACNC Registration

Tax Concessions

Main business location

Must be an ABN.

**Applicant Organisation ACN or AIN \***

## Project Details

\* indicates a required field

**Title \***

Word count:

Must be no more than 25 words.

Provide a name for your initiative. Your title should be short but descriptive.

**Brief description \***

Word count:

Must be no more than 50 words.

Include a brief summary of who will benefit from this initiative, what activities you will do and what outcomes you expect from your activities.

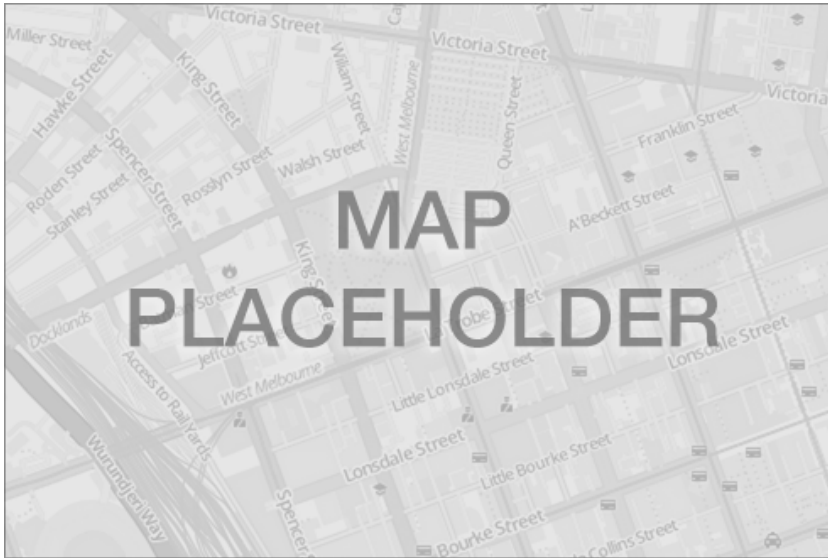
**Anticipated start date \***

**Anticipated end date \***

**Primary location of your initiative**

Address

# 2024 - National Water Grid Fund Application Round 2 Form Preview



--	--

Any, but at least one field is required.

Primary location does not need to be a specific address, and can be postcode, suburb, state, etc. If delivered online, please specify the area of focus for delivery.

**Will the project be carried out out at more than one location? \***

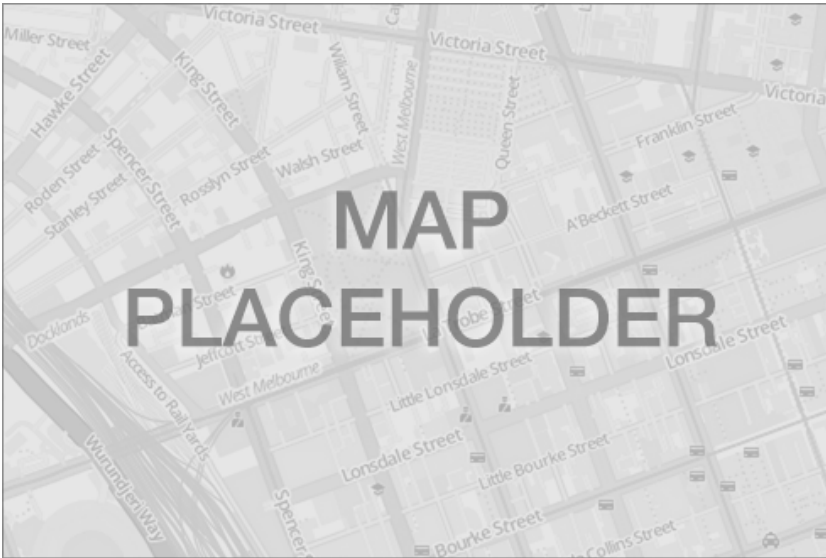
- Yes
- No

Additional Location/s

**Additional locations**

Address

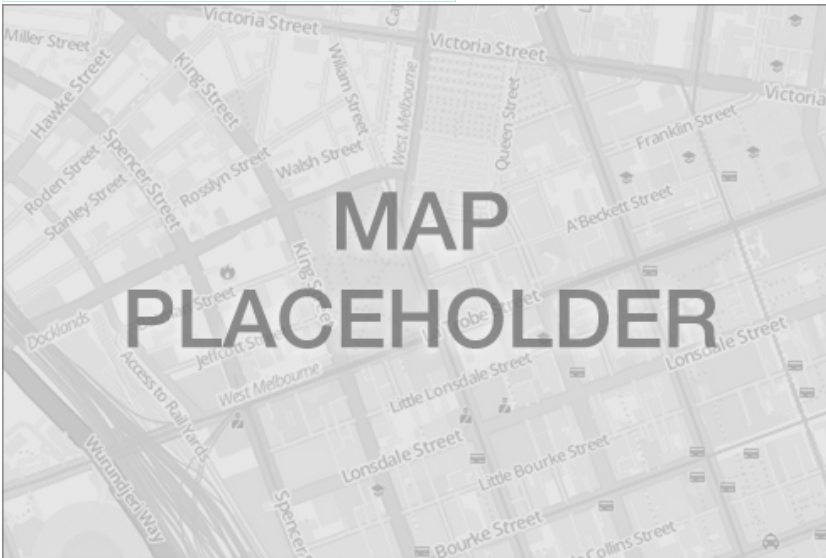

# 2024 - National Water Grid Fund Application Round 2 Form Preview



--	--

## Additional locations

Address

--	--

## Project Funding Category

Funding Stream

**What NWGA Funding Stream are you intending to apply for? (Create a separate application if more than one project (that is not part of a program of works) or applying for more than one category) \***

# 2024 - National Water Grid Fund Application Round 2

## Form Preview

- Capital Program – Strategic Business Case, Final Business Case and Construction projects.
- First Nations Infrastructure Program – Construction and Final Business Case stages may be funded where more information is required before an infrastructure project can proceed.
- Science Program – Feasibility/Research Study.

### Project Type

**Select the project type you are applying for. \***

- Feasibility Study (applicable to science projects only)
- Preliminary Business Case
- Detailed Business Case
- Construction Phase

**Select which of the following applies to your science proposal \***

- Analyses water resources to understand future sustainability and nature positive development options
- Identifies and progresses alternative and emerging opportunities to increase water security and climate change resilience
- Develops new information resources to support decision making, including decision support tools and science communication

### Proposed Funding Profile

How much funding (excluding GST) is the applicant seeking for this activity? Use \$0 for when funding not required for a financial year or funding source. Other contributions can include your contributions, Australian Government grants (included in the maximum 50 percent contribution by the Australia Government) and other organisational contributions.

Financial Year	National Water Grid	NSW Government	Other Contributions	Total
	Must be a dollar amount.	Must be a dollar amount.	Must be a dollar amount.	This number/ amount is calculated.
2025-2026	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$
2026-2027				
2027-2028				
2024-2025				
2028-2029				
2025-2026	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$
2026-2027				
2027-2028				
2024-2025				
2028-2029				
2025-2026	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$
2026-2027				
2027-2028				
2025-2026	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$
2026-2027				
2027-2028				



# 2024 - National Water Grid Fund Application Round 2

## Form Preview

2024-2025 2028-2029				
2025-2026 2026-2027 2027-2028 2024-2025 2028-2029	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$

### Funding Total

#### Federal Funding

\$

This number/amount is calculated.

#### State Funding

\$

This number/amount is calculated.

#### Other Contributions

\$

This number/amount is calculated.

#### Total Project Cost

\$

This number/amount is calculated.

#### Is co-funding for this project or program already secured? \*

- Yes  
 No

#### Please provide further detail \*

Word count:

Must be no more than 250 words.

#### Is part of the co-contribution made up of Australian Government Funding? \*

- Yes  
 No

As per the program guidelines any secured Australian Government funding will form part of the 50 percent contribution toward the project. If for example a 10 percent secured contribution was from a separate Australian Government grant then a maximum of 40 percent of the project cost could be obtained through the National Water Grid Fund.

#### How much is the Australian Government co-contribution? \*

# 2024 - National Water Grid Fund Application Round 2

## Form Preview

\$

Must be a dollar amount.

**Provide an estimate for the construction cost. Do not include the business case cost being applied for in this application. \***

Must be a dollar amount.

### Project Information

**Provide a detailed description of the project proposal, including the primary objectives and the key expected benefits. \***

Word count:

Must be no more than 250 words.

**Provide details on the project scope, including infrastructure components if applicable. \***

Word count:

Must be no more than 250 words.

**Describe the problem or opportunity the project will address. Describe how the proposed project will alleviate a problem or take advantage of an opportunity and bring benefit to the National Water Grid. \***

Word count:

Must be no more than 250 words.

**Outline the options that have been considered in developing the proposed project - both infrastructure and non-infrastructure options. Why is the proposed project the preferred option. \***

Word count:

Must be no more than 250 words.

### Funding Criteria

**How does the application propose new capital investment in infrastructure that increases the security, quality and/or availability of water for regional and remote communities, and/or productive use? \***

# 2024 - National Water Grid Fund Application Round 2

## Form Preview

Word count:  
Must be no more than 250 words.

**How does the project show demonstrable public benefit with a national interest element and demonstrated engagement with affected stakeholders (including First Nations people)? \***

Word count:  
Must be no more than 250 words.

**Is the project dependent on a Commonwealth funding contribution? \***

- Yes
- No

**How does the project improve environmental outcomes? How does the project respond to environment concerns and consider the impacts of climate change? \***

Word count:  
Must be no more than 250 words.

### NSW Alignment

In addition to the eligibility criteria set out by the Australian Government in the NWGA Investment Framework, there are several NSW considerations that must also be addressed.

**Is the project or program identified as a NSW Government priority or does it align with the strategic priorities of NSW Government? \***

- Yes
- No

**Please provide further detail \***

Word count:  
Must be no more than 250 words.

**Are there existing policy drivers making the project or program a priority? \***

- Yes
- No

**Please provide further detail \***

# 2024 - National Water Grid Fund Application Round 2

## Form Preview

Word count:

Must be no more than 250 words.

**Is your project based in a town with critical town water security issues that require the NSW Government's immediate intervention? \***

- Yes
- No

**Please provide further detail \***

Word count:

Must be no more than 250 words.

**Is your project based in a regional or remote community with a projected growth rate above that for all regional NSW? \***

- Yes
- No

**Please provide further detail \***

Word count:

Must be no more than 250 words.

**Summarise any economic, environmental, social and cultural outcomes/benefits the project will deliver. \***

Word count:

Must be no more than 250 words.

**Summarise any project risks, including economic, political, technical, environmental and legal risks. \***

Word count:

Must be no more than 250 words.

**Has alternative funding been considered for this project? \***

- Yes
- No

**Please provide further detail \***

Word count:

# 2024 - National Water Grid Fund Application Round 2

## Form Preview

Must be no more than 250 words.

### Stakeholders

**Is there community and/or stakeholder support for the project ? If so please list stakeholders. \***

**Projects seeking more than \$7.5m in Australian Govt. funding will need to provide an Indigenous Participation Plan (IPP). Can you provide an IPP? (construction projects only). \***

- Yes
- No

**Projects seeking more than \$20m in Australian Govt. funding will need to provide an Australian Industry Participation Plan (AIPP). Can you provide an AIPP? (construction projects only) \***

- Yes
- No

**Projects seeking more than \$6m in Australian Govt. funding will need to provide a WHS Accreditation Scheme. Can your construction firm gain WHS Accreditation? (construction projects only). \***

- Yes
- No

**Will the proponent meet all ongoing costs for the life of the asset, and have the ability to maintain/operate the project? (construction projects only). \***

- Yes
- No

### Supporting Documentation

\* indicates a required field

**Preliminary Business Case Application - Are you able to provide/attach support for your preliminary business case application with any of the documents listed below? \***

- Feasibility Study
- Planning Study
- None of the above

Select all that apply

# 2024 - National Water Grid Fund Application Round 2

## Form Preview

You've indicated that you can support your Preliminary Business Case with one or more of the below documents.

- Feasibility Study
- Planning Study

Please include this/these document(s) as attachment(s).

### **Attach Preliminary Business Case attachments. \***

Attach a file:

### **Detailed Business Case - Are you able to provide/attach support for your detailed business case application the documents listed with the below? \***

- Preliminary Business Case
- Project Risk Register
- Cost Estimates
- None of the above

Select all that apply.

You've indicated that you can support your detailed business case with or more of the below documents.

- Preliminary Business Case
- Project Risk Register
- Cost Estimates

Please include these documents as attachments.

### **Attach Detailed Business Case attachments. \***

Attach a file:

### **Construction Phase - Are you able to provide/attach support for your construction application the documents listed with the below? \***

- Detailed Business Case
- Project Risk Register
- Detailed Cost Estimates
- None of the above

Select all that apply.

You've indicated that you can support your construction phase project with or more of the below documents.

- Detailed Business Case
- Project Risk Register
- Detailed Cost Estimates

# 2024 - National Water Grid Fund Application Round 2

## Form Preview

Please include these documents as attachments.

### **Attach Construction Phase project attachments. \***

Attach a file:

**Please upload supporting documents here. Limit to only those supporting documents relevant to the NWGF Application Guidelines, as these are the only ones that will be assessed.**

Attach a file:

### **List what documents you've attached to support your application**

## Declaration and Authorisation

\* indicates a required field

### Declaration

The Applicant represents and warrants that this application has been submitted by an authorised representative of the Applicant (e.g. CEO, Chief Financial Officer, General Manager, Director, Chair of the Board, President, authorised manager etc).

Where this Application is submitted in the course of employment by a representative of any kind (e.g. authorised representative or agent) of the Applicant, you: (i) acknowledge and agree that the Applicant is deemed to be jointly and separately bound by this application; and (ii) represent and warrant that you have the authority to represent and bind the Applicant as contemplated by this provision.

By submitting this application form I hereby declare that:

- I agree for my project to be automatically considered in other NSW funding programs;
- I have read and understood each of the acknowledgements, agreements, representations and warranties provided above, and that each of these are true and correct;
- All information provided including the responses to each question in the relevant sections of this application is true and correct to the best of my knowledge;
- Any information contained in this application may be disclosed to other Government agencies, staff administering the program, and to external stakeholders (including consultants, lawyers and other advisers) as part of the assessment of this application;
- I am authorised to submit this application on behalf of, and have the authority to represent and bind the Applicant;

# 2024 - National Water Grid Fund Application Round 2

## Form Preview

- I understand that any false declaration may render this application ineligible/invalid; and
- All relevant conflicts of interest have been declared

### Authorisation

**I agree \***

Yes

**Name of authorised person \***

Title      First Name      Last Name

<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
----------------------	----------------------	----------------------

Must be a senior staff member, board member or appropriately authorised volunteer

**Position \***

Position held in applicant organisation (e.g. CEO, Treasurer)

**Phone number \***

Must be an Australian phone number.

We may contact you to verify that this application is authorised by the applicant organisation

**Email \***

Must be an email address.

### Applicant Feedback

You are nearing the end of the application process. Before you review your application and click the **SUBMIT** button please take a few moments to provide some feedback.

**How did you find the online application process?**

Very easy       Easy       Neutral       Difficult       Very difficult

**How many minutes in total did it take you to complete this application?**

Estimate in minutes i.e. 1 hour 60

**Please provide us with your suggestions about any improvements and/or additions to the application process/form that you think we need to consider.**

**How did you hear about this funding opportunity? \***

- Community group
- Peak industry group
- Department's website



# 2024 - National Water Grid Fund Application Round 2

## Form Preview

- Email or e-newsletter from the department
- Social media
- Other:

At least 1 choice must be selected.