



Public Sector Innovation Fund

Program Guidelines

Overview

The Public Sector Innovation Fund is a key part of the Government's reform of the public sector. The Innovation Fund supports reform by fostering innovative projects that test new approaches to delivering public value and achieving better outcomes for Victorians.

The Innovation Fund provides funding support for innovative pilot projects that test or prove new knowledge, technologies, processes or practices to deliver public value and that can be scaled or replicated across government. The Innovation Fund seeks to foster a dynamic environment of ongoing adaptation within government, while building public sector capability, agile delivery, data-driven decision-making and experiential learning.

Objectives

The Innovation Fund supports collaborative, small-scale projects that drive innovation in the Victorian public sector. By supporting innovation projects, the Innovation Fund seeks to:

- Stimulate public sector innovation by providing project-based grants and governance and advice support.
- Prioritise projects that respond to the principles of public sector reform and strategic government priorities.
- Strengthen the innovation capability in the Victorian public sector by providing an incentive for new ideas and projects and facilitating experiential learning.
- Promote project outcomes and solutions across the public sector to encourage networked responses to complex policy challenges.
- Systematise, where appropriate, learnings from projects (e.g. new procurement approaches, data tools or project methodologies) that can be disseminated across government, creating sustainable improvements to internal capability.

Benefits

The Innovation Fund will deliver benefits to citizens, the public sector and industry by building public sector innovation capability, improving outcomes for Victorians and creating opportunities for new partnerships between government and other organisations.

Eligibility

The Innovation Fund supports innovative projects within the public sector. Projects must be led by a Victorian government department, agency or statutory body, but can involve a mix of collaborating organisations, including businesses, research, not-for-profit and community organisations .

Assessment criteria

Applications for funding must demonstrate alignment with the principles and approaches of public sector reform and/or have strong alignment with the key government priorities.

Projects will be evaluated against the following assessment criteria by an internal selection committee comprising senior Department of Premier and Cabinet representatives. Projects must have appropriate endorsement from the relevant Deputy Secretary or equivalent from the applicant department or agency. External expertise on projects will be sought on an as-needs basis.

Over time the Assessment Criteria may be adjusted to reflect the evolution of public sector reform and strategic government priorities.

1. Strategic fit

Projects must clearly target an area of current or emerging need for the Victorian public sector. This may be demonstrated through strategic fit with Victorian:

Government priorities: projects that respond to Victorian Government policy priorities and contribute to public sector reform. This includes complex challenges in policy design or government service delivery that may involve multi-agency stakeholder environments such as justice, human services, health and education.

Public sector reform: projects that reflect the principles and approaches of public sector reform. Public sector reform seeks to build more collaborative, networked and innovative ways of working between government, citizens and communities to improve outcomes for Victorians.

The six principles of public sector reform are:

- Target and drive outcomes
- Invest responsibly guided by evidence
- Evaluate and measure impact
- Honour public trust through transparency and integrity
- Collaborate to deliver public value
- Enable the public sector workforce to support change

2. Innovation

Projects should not be 'business as usual', but instead demonstrate how the application of new knowledge, ICT technologies or processes will deliver improved efficiencies, effectiveness or quality of outcomes for citizens and/or the public sector. This might include:

- innovative approaches to policy design and service delivery through for example, the use of, co-design, or evidence driven decision-making; or
- use of new technologies, like high-speed broadband, mobility, cloud, data analytics, modelling and visualization.

3. Value

Projects should demonstrate how they deliver value, both public and economic, including a list of quantifiable and qualitative benefits for project participants and end users.

4. Potential to scale or replicate

Projects should clearly identify the opportunities for project solutions, platforms, or learnings to be replicated or shared across the public sector. Applicants must identify any barriers to future implementation and strategies for overcoming these barriers if the pilot or trial is successful.

Application and assessment process

Grant applications can be submitted to the Public Sector Innovation team in the Department of Premier and Cabinet (DPC) at any time.

DPC reserves the right to close applications for a period of time due to limited funding availability or resourcing constraints.

Application Stage 1 – Initial Application

Prospective applicants can submit an initial application online. The application is designed to provide the department with an outline of the public sector challenge being addressed and the proposed solution and to evaluate the fit of the proposal with the government's priorities and public sector reform. Initial applications are considered by the department on a continuous basis. Applicants will be contacted by the department within two weeks of application submission.

Selected applicants will be invited to discuss the proposal further with a departmental representative to determine the merit and feasibility of the project.

Application Stage 2 – Project Business Plan

Projects that are assessed as having a strong fit with government priorities or public sector reform will be invited to work with the department to develop the project more fully. This may include actively collaborating on project design, budget and scope, or identifying potential project partners or new linkages that will broaden the impact of the project.

The department will collaborate with applicants to develop a comprehensive Project Business Plan that provides a clear implementation plan for the project. The Project Business Plan will be assessed by a selection committee with reference to the Innovation Fund Assessment Criteria, and applicants notified if their project is recommended for grant funding.

Grant Agreement

Successful applicants will be required to enter into a Grant Agreement or Memorandum of Understanding with DPC. In addition to complying with contract conditions, most recipients where required will need to:

- accept an offer for financial assistance within one month of the date of the letter of offer, such date to be specified in the letter of offer. Any extension to the offer will be made in accordance with DPC policy or the approval of the Deputy Secretary, Governance Policy & Coordination.
- undergo a financial risk assessment prior to entering a grant agreement
- start the project within three months of the date of acceptance of offer
- undertake the project in Victoria
- agree to comply with DPC's performance monitoring and evaluation conditions, including participation in post-completion reporting
- provide audited financial statements or a statutory declaration certifying expenditure at the completion of the project
- co-operate with DPC on any publicity and marketing activities to disseminate the project findings or promote the program.

Payment of grants will be made on milestone-based instalments, the timing of which will be determined on a case-by-case basis as agreed between the Department and the recipient. Grant instalments will be subject to the achievement of project deliverables and compliance with reporting requirements.

Project Reporting and Monitoring

Projects will be monitored by DPC representatives against the Project Business Plan, which will form part of the Grant Agreement or Memorandum of Understanding. Grant recipients will be required to report regularly on project progress and outputs, in addition to providing a post-completion report 12 months after the conclusion of the project.

Contact

For more information, please contact the Public Sector Innovation team in the Department of Premier and Cabinet.

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