

Public Sector Innovation Fund Program Guidelines

# Overview

The Public Sector Innovation Fund (PSIF) is a grants program designed to drive new, more effective solutions to complex policy and service delivery challenges in Victoria.

By providing grants ranging from $50,000 - $400,000 we support collaborative, small-scale projects that test new approaches to deliver better outcomes for Victorians.

The Fund is open to applications from any organisation working with or within the Victorian public sector. Applications can be submitted at any time.

# Objectives

By supporting innovative projects, the Innovation Fund seeks to:

* Create opportunities for new partnerships between government and other organisations
* Strengthen the innovation capability in the Victorian public sector by facilitating experiential learning
* Promote project outcomes and solutions across the public sector to encourage inter-departmental collaboration and networked responses to solve complex policy challenges
* Share the outcomes of projects and propagate new approaches, tools, and methodologies (e.g. new procurement approaches, new tools to drive behaviour change, and new collaboration platforms) across government.

# Eligibility

The 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

Projects will be evaluated against the following assessment criteria. External expertise on projects will be sought on an as-needs basis.

Over time the Assessment Criteria may be adjusted to reflect strategic government priorities.

## Strategic fit

Projects must clearly target a current or emerging need in the Victorian public sector or in an area of Victorian government service delivery.

Projects must have appropriate endorsement from the relevant Deputy Secretary or equivalent.

## Innovation

To be innovative, projects should creatively apply new knowledge, technologies, methodologies or processes to improve the effectiveness or quality of outcomes for citizens and/or the public sector.

Examples include:

* novel approaches to policy design and service delivery using behavioural insights, design thinking, co-design or evidence driven decision-making
* the use of new tools and technologies like mobility, cloud storage and computing, data analytics, modelling or visualization.

Projects may be an extension of an existing program or idea but must demonstrate significant enhancement or adaptation to be successful.

## Value

Applications should identify the value of the project proposal. This value may include quantifiable improvements through more effective services, cost reduction and avoidance, or efficiency that increases service throughput. Value may also include qualitative benefits for citizens by delivering better services to the right people at the right time.

Projects may also include secondary benefits, such as building public sector innovation capability and creating opportunities for new partnerships between government and other organisations.

## Potential to scale or replicate

Project applications should clearly identify the opportunities for project solutions, platforms, or learnings to be replicated or shared across the public sector.

Projects that are applicable to very specific, narrow contexts and lack potential to have meaningful impact on a larger scale are less likely to be successful.

Applicants must identify any barriers to future implementation and strategies for overcoming these barriers if the project 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

Stage 1 provides an outline of the public sector challenge being addressed and the proposed solution so that the department can evaluate the proposal’s alignment with the government’s priorities.

Initial applications are considered by the department on a continuous basis. Applicants will usually be contacted by the department within four weeks of their application submission.

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

## Application Stage 2 – Project Business Plan

## The Public Sector Innovation Fund is a competitive process and only a small number of projects will be invited to progress to Stage 2.

Projects that demonstrate a strong alignment with the selection criteria will be invited to work with DPC to develop their project further. This may include actively collaborating on the Project Business Plan (which includes project design, budget and scope) or identifying potential project partners and new linkages that will broaden the impact of the project.

When a project is approved to proceed to Stage 2, DPC collaborates with the applicants to develop a comprehensive Project Business Plan that provides a clear implementation plan for the project. The Project Business Plan is then assessed by a Selection Panel with reference to the Fund’s assessment criteria. Based on this assessment some projects will be recommended to the Special Minister of State for funding.

# Grant Agreement

Successful applicants are required to enter into a Common Funding Agreement, Grant Agreement or Memorandum of Understanding with DPC. In addition to complying with contract conditions, most recipients must:

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

# Project Reporting and Monitoring

Projects are monitored by DPC against the Project Business Plan. Grant recipients must report regularly on project progress and outputs and must supply 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.

Email: psif@dpc.vic.gov.au

Web: [www.publicsectorinnovation.vic.gov.au](http://www.publicsectorinnovation.vic.gov.au)