



Renewable Energy Innovation Fund

Grants Round 3
Guidelines



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Government

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1. Canberra, the knowledge economy, and the jobs of the future

Canberra has a dynamic, knowledge-based economy with a vibrant research and development, and start-up culture.

The Government's achievements in shifting the ACT to 100% renewable electricity is delivering much more than renewable electricity to the Canberra community. Our world-leading ambition is also creating new businesses, research and training opportunities, attracting international renewable energy companies to the Territory, expanding the horizons of companies already here, and creating commercial opportunities for new and emerging ventures, creating the jobs of the future for Canberrans.

It is an exciting time to be in the renewable energy, energy storage and zero emission transport sectors as the world moves into a net zero emissions economy. Energy markets globally are transitioning away from traditional centralised models to a more dynamic, decentralised web of energy generation, storage devices and control systems. Yet many significant challenges remain in making the transition to this new global energy future.

2. Renewable Energy Innovation Fund

The ACT Government's industry-funded Renewable Energy Innovation Fund (REIF) is driving the long-term development and sustainability of the renewable energy industry in the ACT. The REIF aims to help develop and commercialise innovative, emerging renewable energy technologies required to support the zero emissions transition.

The REIF was originally created from \$12m in industry contributions associated with the ACT Government's first and second wind auctions.

The REIF is administered by the ACT Government, through the Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate (EPSDD). In allocating REIF funds, the REIF Administrator receives input and guidance from an independent technical assessment panel comprising leaders from Canberra's renewable energy business and academic community.

3. Grants objective

REIF Grants Program aim to provide flexible, early-stage funding to businesses within the ACT to support a broad diversity of new and emerging technologies, ventures and activities consistent with the funding scope provided at [Appendix A](#).

Where applicable, applicants should consider how their proposal aligns with complementary government objectives and policies including, but not limited to:

- [ACT Climate Change Strategy 2019–2025](#)
- [The ACT Zero Emissions Vehicle Strategy 2022-30 \[PDF 1.5MB\]](#)
- [Our Pathway to Electrification – Position Paper](#)
- [10th Legislative Assembly Parliamentary and Governing Agreement \[PDF 560KB\]](#)
- [Canberra’s Living Infrastructure Plan](#)
- [Zero-Emission Transition Plan for Transport Canberra](#)
- [ACT Waste Management Strategy 2011–2025](#)

Outcomes

The expected outcomes from REIF Grants Program (the Program) projects are to support:

- » The acceleration of research, development, and commercialisation of innovative clean energy solutions.
- » The growth and development of the ACT renewable energy sector.

4. What funding is available through REIF Grants Program?

Round 3 of REIF Grants Program has up to \$1.5 million in total funding available. This will be offered under a single funding round. To apply for funding, all applicants need to be aware of the following:

- Organisations can apply for funding between \$50,000 and \$300,000 (excluding GST).
- Applicants must have matched funding to support the ACT Government’s contribution. This matched funding may be sourced from either private funds or Commonwealth Government funding, in-kind contributions, or a combination of these sources.
- Organisations must be able to demonstrate that they have sufficient funds and capabilities to commence and complete the project.
- Applications should be for renewable energy research, development, and innovation projects.
- Applicants must provide a plan outlining the proposed project and the funding requested, articulating the benefits to the zero emissions transition and the ACT economy.

5. Eligibility criteria

5.1 General eligibility

The Program is open to businesses with expertise in clean technology innovation.

A lead organisation seeking a REIF Grant must:

1. Have an Australian Business Number (ABN).
2. Hold all insurances required by law, including \$10 million public liability insurance and workers compensation.
3. Be an ACT based organisation, OR the majority of the proposed funded activities must occur within the ACT.
4. Have satisfactorily acquitted all outstanding grant milestones, reporting requirements, and obligations, including financial acquittals for previous REIF funding or any other ACT Government agency grant.
5. Be able to demonstrate a contribution to the ACT achieving net zero emissions by 2045. Generation, transport, or green hydrogen projects must be based entirely on renewable resources.
6. Be registered for the Goods and Services Tax (GST) if applicable (if turnover is greater than \$150,000 per annum).
7. Be able to achieve all project milestones within three years of commencement.
8. Be able to demonstrate the minimum 1:1 matched funding contribution. Co-contributions can include in-kind contributions, higher cash contributions will be viewed favourably during assessment.

5.2 Who is not eligible to apply?

The following are not eligible to receive funding under the REIF:

- A Commonwealth, state or territory government agency.
- Universities and other research institutions are only eligible if they partner with a business, with an independent ABN as the lead applicant. They may not apply as the lead applicant.

Applicants must disclose any legal proceedings or investigation, including litigation, arbitration, mediation or conciliation that are taking place, pending or (to the best of the applicant's knowledge, after having made proper enquiry) threatened against the applicant or a related body corporate (as defined in the *Corporations Act, 2001*).

Applicants are not eligible if:

- the ACT Government determines that any information provided by the applicant regarding legal proceedings or investigations materially impacts their suitability as a grant recipient
- the organisation and individual shareholders of the organisation are subject to any insolvency event
- the applicant or organisation are named on the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade sanctions list.¹

5.3 Eligible expenditure

To be eligible, expenditure must:

- be expenditure directly related to undertaking the project
- be incurred by the applicant within the project duration
- be a direct cost of the project and not be provided for the benefit or profit of related bodies
- meet the conditions set out in these guidelines and the Deed of Agreement.

Eligible expenditure is calculated as the GST inclusive amount less any GST credits the recipient, or its representative member, is entitled to claim. Where equipment and resources purchased to undertake the project are also used for activities unrelated to the project, the total cost of those resources considered eligible expenditure may be adjusted proportionally. Successful applicants must keep payment records of all eligible expenditure and be able to explain how the costs relate to the agreed project activities. EPSDD may ask successful applicants to provide records of the expenditure they have paid. If successful applicants do not provide these records when requested, their expense may not qualify as eligible expenditure.

5.4 Ineligible expenditure

Grant funding does not cover:

- expenditure that does not directly support the successful completion of the project
- ongoing operational expenses
- salaries for positions that have already been accounted for in organisational budgets
- business-as-usual staff costs unrelated to the project, for example redundancy or retirement benefits, workers compensation payments, professional fees or memberships
- activities carried out or committed to before the grant is offered and accepted
- legal costs associated with a consortium, disputes or funding arrangements not agreed to as part of the Deed of Agreement
- the purchase and installation of solar photo-voltaic panels or battery storage systems.

1 <https://www.dfat.gov.au/international-relations/security/sanctions>

6. Selection process

Appendix B provides a flow chart illustrating the selection process under the REIF Grants Program.

Once proposals have been submitted, the technical assessment panel will review all eligible proposals against the merit criteria below. More information or clarifications may be requested before the final assessment and approval.

6.1 Merit criteria

REIF Grants will support projects that contribute to the ACT Government's vision of Canberra as an internationally recognised centre for renewable energy research, innovation and investment. Each application will be assessed against the guidelines and selection criteria on the application form. In addition, the assessment panel will consider the application as a whole and make an assessment as to the merit of the application in meeting the aims and objectives of the Program.

Proposals that meet the eligibility criteria will be considered against the following merit criteria:

- 1. Technical and commercial viability (30%).** The extent of potential commercial opportunities flowing from the funded activity and the strength of the proponent's business model. The project applies robust processes to research, trial, demonstrate or deploy innovative renewable energy solutions. The application shows a high potential for demonstration and scalability of new technologies and ventures.
- 2. Innovation and knowledge sharing (20%).** Innovation and broadening the knowledge base in the ACT renewable energy sector is an important objective of the REIF. The following will be assessed under this criterion:
 - a.** The project clearly demonstrates innovative and transformational approaches to supporting the zero emission transition. This can be demonstrated via the technology used, business model or other aspects; and
 - b.** The approach to sharing the learnings gained from the project.
- 3. Application quality and organisation capacity (20%).** The applicant has demonstrated their capability to deliver the project and described previous experience in delivering similar projects and managing risks. The applicant has demonstrated an understanding of, and ability to obtain, any permission or approvals required to deliver the project (where appropriate). The application must provide sufficient information to make an informed assessment.
- 4. Value for money (30%).** The level of funding requested is proportionate to the project outcomes and benefits. In the context of the entire project, the timing of the project, the amount of requested funding and the planned expenditure demonstrates a sound investment.

7. How to apply

7.1 Grant timelines

Applicants are required to submit their application via an online application management system called SmartyGrants. Applications must address the eligibility criteria and requirements for funding. If these are not addressed, the application will not be assessed for funding. Applications must be submitted by the due date advertised on the [Everyday Climate Choices Website](#).

A public announcement of the successful grant recipients may be expected to take place within three months of the application deadline.

7.2 How to submit your application

All applications must be submitted online via the REIF Grants Round Three [SmartyGrants Application Form](#).

Hardcopy or email applications will not be accepted.

You will need to create a log in to begin your application and you may begin anywhere in the Application Form. Please ensure you save as you go.

SmartyGrants provides an online help guide for applicants. This guide will explain the essential steps you need to take to complete and submit your Application Form. The help guide is accessible at: <https://applicanthehelp.smartygrants.com.au/help-guide-forapplicants/>. If you have any questions about the guidelines and/or eligibility requirements, please contact the REIF Team. If you are having difficulty in accessing the online application form or if an error occurs, please contact the REIF Team for assistance via phone on 13 22 81, or email at EPSDD.RenewableEnergyInnovationFund@act.gov.au.

Navigating (moving through) the grants application form

On the right-hand side of every screen, there is a box which links directly to every page of the application. Click on any page to jump directly to that page. You can also click 'next page' or 'previous page' on the top or bottom of each page to move forward or backward through the application.

Saving your draft application and returning

You can press 'save' at any point and log out. When you log back in, your draft application will be saved, and you can start where you left off.

Submitting your application

The submit button is on the final page. You will not be able to submit your application until all the questions are completed.

Attachments and support documents

You may wish to upload/submit attachments to support your application. For some categories you will have to include attachments. This is very simple but requires you to have the documents saved on your computer, on a portable drive, or similar. If you are not able to upload a document, please contact the Contact Officer for support.

Completing an application in a group/team

A number of people can work on an application using the same log-in details provided that only one person is working on the application at any given time. Ensure you save as you go.

Once you have completed your Application Form it will be submitted to the Program Officer.

PLEASE NOTE: REIF staff are unable to view your application until it is submitted. All supporting documentation must be submitted with the grant application.

You can upload supporting documentation to your Application Form on the page after the declaration and privacy statement.

If you submit your application and then realise you forgot to add an attachment, and it is before the deadline, we can re-open the form for you. For any technical difficulties, you need to contact the REIF Team for assistance on 13 22 81 during business hours or via email at EPSDD.RenewableEnergyInnovationFund@act.gov.au before the deadline.

Proposals are to be submitted electronically via the [SmartyGrants](#) website.

The proposal must include:

- a detailed project description and objectives;
- proposed project timeline;
- project benefits and expected outcomes;
- implementation plan, including timing of key milestones and deliverables;
- a knowledge sharing plan;
- the benefits of the funded activities to the ACT renewable energy ecosystem; and
- details on existing or proposed co-funding arrangements.

Applications must be received by the due time and date, as outlined on the website. Late applications will not be accepted.

If you do not comply with the above eligibility requirements, your application will not be assessed for funding.

Unsuccessful applicants may request verbal feedback on applications from the REIF Team. Requests for feedback must be submitted in writing to EPSDD.RenewableEnergyInnovationFund@act.gov.au

8. Accepting a grant

8.1 Grant requirements and payment process

Successful applicants will be required to enter into a Deed of Agreement (Agreement) with the ACT Government setting out the terms and conditions for which funding will be provided. No funding will be released until EPSDD and the Applicant have executed the Agreement and the appropriate milestone evidence identified in the Agreement has been met. EPSDD reserves the right to withhold payments in cases where evidence has been provided but the EPSDD deems that there are concerns relating to the delivery of the Project. In this instance, the EPSDD will release funding when appropriate actions have been taken to ensure the Project is delivered within the agreed timeframes

Following notification, successful applicants are required to develop and agree reporting arrangements with the Program Administrator. Payments will be paid upon agreed milestones outlined in the Agreement. Payments can take up to 30 days to process following the execution of the Agreement and upon receipt of an invoice. The payment amount will be determined per the milestones in the Agreement and may be either a lump-sum or instalment based.

8.2 Goods and Services Tax (GST)

GST is payable to organisations that receive financial assistance under this Program if they are GST registered with the Australian Tax Office (ATO) and can provide an Australian Business Number (ABN) – i.e. if turnover is greater than \$150,000 per annum. For successful applicant organisations, EPSDD will gross up the grant/s by 10% if registered for GST and after receipt of a Tax Invoice. Organisations that are not registered for GST will not have their grants grossed up. Recipients are responsible for determining their tax liabilities for grant payments.

8.3 Publication

All successful applicants and the funded amount will be published on the [Everyday Climate Choices](#) website following notification and the execution of the Deed of Grant. Grant recipients should not publish any announcement of their success prior to the ACT Government announcement of the list of grant recipients.

8.4 Acknowledgement

Recipients are expected to acknowledge the ACT Government's support, and this will form part of the Deed of Agreement. Recipients must consult EPSDD prior to the publication of any project promotional materials and liaise with EPSDD to coordinate any public events or announcements related to the Project. Successful applicants may be required to contribute information on activity outcomes for use in REIF evaluation or EPSDD's communication materials. Subject to any specific requirements in an executed Deed of Agreement, if successful applicants make a public statement about a funded project, it is a requirement to acknowledge the support provided by EPSDD. The following wording is suggested: "This Project received grant funding from the ACT Government's Renewable Energy Innovation Fund and [other funding body – where applicable]."

9. Acquittal of funding

All successful applicants/organisations must expend the funds within the timeframes nominated in the Agreement for the REIF grant.

When you have expended the funds, you are required to log on to SmartyGrants (www.smartygrants.com.au) and complete the acquittal process. Use the same username and password to log in that you used to register with SmartyGrants when you applied for the grant.

Within three months of the termination date of the grant period, the successful recipients must provide EPSDD the completed acquittal and expenditure with the following:

1. A copy of the relevant audited financial statement or invoices, receipts, bank statements or other financial documentation that clearly identifies the income and expenditure of the grant, in accordance with the matching funding requirement; or
2. Documentation that clearly identifies the income and expenditure of the grant signed by the official auditor, CPA or accountant of the organisation; and
3. Pictures of the completed project.

10. Important information for applicants

10.1 Accessibility

The ACT Government is committed to making its information, services, events, and venues accessible to as many people as possible. If you have difficulty reading a standard printed document and would like to receive this publication in an alternative format – such as large print or audio – please phone the Access Canberra Contact Centre on 13 22 81.

If English is not your first language and you require the translating and interpreting services, please phone 131 450.

If you are deaf or hearing impaired and require **National Relay Service**, please phone 131 677 then ask for 133 427

10.2 Addendum

Any additional information provided by EPSDD as part of the REIF will be posted online at [Everyday Climate Choices Website](#). In addition, all applicants that have started or submitted an online application form will be notified by email to the address that is registered with SmartyGrants.

10.3 Confidentiality

All material submitted to EPSDD is provided in confidence. However, the ACT Government may promote successful applicants for the mutual benefit of the REIF Grants Program and the applicant. Details of applications will not be made available to third parties without permission. However, applicants should be aware that the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act 2016 apply to documents in EPSDD's possession.

10.4 Complaints

A complaint is defined as an expression of dissatisfaction in relation to the application process and/or an unsuccessful application for a grant. You or your representatives have the right to raise your concerns. This information supports us to improve services and supports your right to ask questions about the grant application process as well as decisions made in relation to an unsuccessful application.

You can expect to:

1. be treated respectfully, fairly and in confidence
2. have your concerns dealt with as soon as possible
3. be informed of progress
4. be told of the outcome.

11. Further information

For more information on the REIF Grants Program, the eligibility requirements or to lodge a complaint, please contact the REIF Team:

Email: EPSDD.RenewableEnergyInnovationFund@act.gov.au

Phone: 13 22 81

Appendix A – Funding scope

Developing solutions to complex energy problems will require innovation and collaboration across Canberra's renewable energy innovation ecosystem. REIF Grants will focus on the demonstration and scale-up of new technologies and ventures which will support the development of the ACT as an export-oriented hub for renewable energy research, innovation and investment.

Projects funded by REIF Grants Program must align with the following research, education and business sectors:

- Renewable energy generation science, engineering and social science
- Energy storage science, engineering and social science
- Energy generation asset management
- Distributed energy resources (DER) and market integration
- Electrification in the transport, residential and commercial sectors
- Renewable hydrogen
- Energy efficiency and demand management solutions

The ACT Government has legislated commitments to becoming a net-zero emissions city by 2045. Since the ACT reached 100% renewable electricity in 2020, our attention has shifted to the next biggest source of emissions in transport and natural gas use. While not essential, the ACT Government encourages proposals that contribute towards these policy goals and help consolidate and grow the ACT's renewable energy sector:

- Projects that integrate renewables with smart zero-emission transport, heating and hot water energy demands.
- Projects that address the barriers to the greater uptake of zero emission vehicles.
- With the increasing electrification of the transport sector, and in heating and cooking, there is an interest in projects that help reduce the risks of increasing peak electricity demand. Projects that address the resilience and reliability of the grid in the face of this transition will be of interest.
- Projects that assist the transition pathway away from natural gas use for residential and commercial applications and address the associated impacts on consumers and the grid.
- The re-purposing and recycling of renewable energy components and batteries.

Appendix B – Selection process

