



Disaster Ready Fund Round Four 2026-27 Guidelines

Opening and closing dates and times for Project Proposals to be submitted to state and territory government Lead Agencies:	Lead Agencies open: 29 May 2026 Lead Agencies close: 5:00pm (local time in their jurisdiction) on 1 July 2026
Opening and closing dates and times for Applications to be submitted to NEMA by Lead Agencies:	NEMA opens: 9:00am AEST on 2 July 2026 NEMA closes: 5:00pm AEST on 25 August 2026
Commonwealth policy entity:	National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA)
Administering entity:	NEMA
Enquiries:	Applicants should submit questions to the Lead Agency in their state or territory – details are available at: www.nema.gov.au/programs/disaster-ready-fund/ Lead Agencies should submit questions to NEMA at: disaster.ready@nema.gov.au NEMA aims to provide a reply to enquiries within five (5) working days. This timeframe may be longer during peak periods or for more detailed requests for assistance.
Date grant opportunity guidelines released:	29 May 2026
Type of grant opportunity:	Targeted competitive

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1 Disaster Ready Fund: Round Four 2026-27 processes

The Disaster Ready Fund is designed to achieve Australian Government objectives

This grant opportunity is part of the above grant program which contributes to NEMA's Outcome 1: To develop, lead and coordinate the Commonwealth's approach to emergency management, including the support of activities relating to preparedness, response, relief, recovery, reconstruction, risk reduction and resilience for all-hazard emergencies and disasters. NEMA works with stakeholders to plan and design the grant program in line with relevant requirements under the [Disaster Ready Fund Act 2019](#)¹ and better practice approaches in the [Commonwealth Grants Rules and Principles 2024](#)², where possible.



The grant opportunity opens

NEMA publishes the grant opportunity guidelines on GrantConnect³ and NEMA's website.



Applicants prepare and submit Project Proposals to Lead Agencies

Applicants complete a Project Proposal form and address the eligibility and assessment criteria to be considered for a grant.



Lead Agencies vet Project Proposals, seek ministerial endorsement and submit Applications to NEMA

Lead Agencies (or the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications and the Arts in the case of Indian Ocean Territory Project Proposals) undertake an initial review of Project Proposals against the eligibility and assessment criteria and seek endorsement from the relevant minister(s) in their jurisdiction to submit the most competitive Project Proposals as Applications to NEMA.



Applications are assessed by the Australian Government

NEMA checks Applications for eligibility and seeks advice from other Commonwealth bodies and external experts to inform eligibility decisions, merit assessment and funding recommendations. Where needed, additional advice on eligibility matters is concurrently sought from members of an Assessment Panel (the Panel), who also undertake an individual preliminary assessment of Applications against the assessment criteria, including overall value with relevant money. The Panel then meets to finalise its assessment and makes funding recommendations based on eligibility decisions, the merits of each Application and other considerations set out in the Guidelines, including DRF Investment Principle 4.



(continued overpage)

¹ <https://www.legislation.gov.au/C2019A00090/latest/text>

² <https://www.legislation.gov.au/F2024L00854/latest/versions>, noting that financial assistance provided to States in accordance with section 96 of the Australian Constitution is not a grant for the purposes of the CGRPs and therefore not bound by CGRP requirements.

³ <https://www.grants.gov.au/>

NEMA makes grant recommendations

NEMA's Coordinator-General (or their delegate) recommends projects to the Minister for Emergency Management for funding approval, based on advice (assessment outcomes and recommendations) from the Assessment Panel.



Grant decisions are made

The Minister for Emergency Management decides which Applications are successful.



NEMA notifies Lead Agencies of the outcome

NEMA notifies Lead Agencies and the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications and the Arts of Application outcomes, who in turn notify Applicants. The provision of funding remains subject to the Commonwealth entering into funding agreements with states and territories.



The Commonwealth enters into funding agreements with states and territories

Funding agreements (Schedules to the *Federation Funding Agreement – Environment*) are developed by NEMA for co-signing by the Minister for Emergency Management and the relevant minister(s) for each successful state or territory. Once Schedules are signed, the Australian Government Treasury transfers funding, including any Administrative Funding to State and Territory Treasuries as a single, upfront payment.



Lead Agencies enter into grant agreements and develop implementation plans with successful Applicants

Lead Agencies enter into separate grant agreements (Individual Grant Agreements) with successful Applicants (Project Proponents) and work together to develop Implementation Plans for submission to NEMA within two months of FFA Schedules being signed.



Implementation Plans are reviewed and endorsed

NEMA reviews and endorses Implementation Plans, following which projects may formally commence.



Delivery of grants

Projects are delivered in accordance with FFA Schedules, Individual Grant Agreements and Implementation Plans. Lead Agencies manage the grants and report to NEMA in line with the Audit and Reporting Framework.



Evaluation of the Disaster Ready Fund

NEMA evaluates specific grant activities and the Disaster Ready Fund as a whole, in line with the DRF's Monitoring and Evaluation Plan. NEMA bases this on information provided by Lead Agencies and that NEMA collects from various sources.

1.1 Introduction

These grant opportunity guidelines contain information for the Disaster Ready Fund (DRF) Round Four 2026-27 grant opportunity.

Applicants and Lead Agencies must read these grant opportunity guidelines before applying.

This document sets out:

- the purpose of the grant program/grant opportunity
- the eligibility and assessment criteria and how to apply
- how grant Applications are considered and selected
- how grantees are notified and receive grant payments
- how grants will be monitored and evaluated
- responsibilities and expectations in relation to the grant opportunity.

Applicants and Lead Agencies should also refer to related resources and supporting materials published on NEMA's website (e.g. frequently asked questions, checklists, copies of templates referred to in the Guidelines, etc.).

This grant opportunity and process will be administered by NEMA in line with relevant requirements under the [Disaster Ready Fund Act 2019](#)⁴ (DRF Act) and better practice approaches in the [Commonwealth Grants Rules and Principles 2024](#)⁵ (CGRPs), where possible.

1.2 About the National Emergency Management Agency

The National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) was established on 1 September 2022 to drive a more coordinated approach to preparing for and responding to disasters.

NEMA's strategic objectives include leading and coordinating national action and assistance across the emergency management continuum and contributing to saving lives, reducing harm, and maintaining public trust to mitigate the consequences of disasters and build back better through investment in people, capabilities and communities.

NEMA is Australia's lead agency for the [Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030](#) (Sendai Framework) and is responsible for driving domestic implementation through the [National Disaster Risk Reduction Framework](#). Given the cross-cutting impacts of disasters, NEMA partners with Australian Government agencies, governments at all levels and all sectors to deliver its objectives.

2 About the grant program

2.1 About the DRF

The DRF is the Australian Government's primary disaster resilience and risk reduction initiative.

Under the DRF Act, up to \$200 million in Commonwealth Funding can be drawn annually from 1 July 2023 for natural disaster resilience and risk reduction initiatives across Australia. Projects are delivered in partnership with Australian state and territory governments.

In 2026-27, a portion of the annual drawdown will be reserved to offset critical spending on national capability programs that enhance Australia's preparedness and resilience, with the balance (\$142.477 million) available as grants through DRF Round Four.

⁴ <https://www.legislation.gov.au/C2019A00090/latest/text>

⁵ <https://www.legislation.gov.au/F2024L00854/latest/versions>, noting that financial assistance provided to States in accordance with section 96 of the Australian Constitution is not a grant for the purposes of the CGRPs and therefore not bound by CGRP requirements.

DRF Objectives and Investment Principles

The objectives of the program are to:

- increase the understanding of natural disaster impacts, as a first step towards reducing the risk of future natural disaster impacts,
- increase the resilience, adaptive capacity and/or preparedness of governments, community service organisations and affected communities to future natural disasters to minimise the potential impact of natural hazards and reduce the risk of future natural disasters, and
- reduce the exposure to risk, harm and/or severity of a future natural disaster's impacts, including reducing the recovery burden for governments, cohorts at disproportionate risk, and/or affected communities.

These objectives are underpinned by the DRF Investment Principles, which guide DRF investment decisions and are reflected in the DRF's activity types and assessment criteria, to encourage projects that are:

1. **Risk informed** – Proposals draw on evidence of disaster risk (e.g. risk assessments) when outlining case for funding.
2. **Aligned with plans** – Proposals align with existing national, state and territory, and local hazard mitigation and resilience or adaptation plans, or provide evidence that the planning process is underway. Where plans do not exist or are in development, proposals could support the development of those plans.
3. **Priority targeted** – Proposals demonstrate alignment with the Second National Action Plan National Actions.
4. **Diverse and equitable** – Investment decisions support outcomes across a broad range of natural hazard and project types, geographic areas (including both urban and regional/remote locations), domains (including the social, built and natural environments), and consider the DRF's potential population impact (including a project's relative per-capita benefit).

The intended outcome of the program is communities that are better informed, more resilient and less exposed to future natural disaster risks and impacts in the long term, across the built, social, natural and economic domains.

2.2 Program Context and Strategic Alignment

The DRF is being delivered in the context of consecutive, concurrent and compounding natural hazards (e.g. extreme heat, fires, floods, cyclones, etc), which are increasingly placing pressure on emergency management organisations and communities. This is being amplified by climate change, which drives more frequent, intense hazards at scales and in locations not experienced before.⁶

The National Disaster Risk Reduction Framework and the [National Strategy for Disaster Resilience](#) are the overarching frameworks guiding Australia's efforts to reduce disaster risk and improve Australia's disaster resilience, and align internationally with the Sendai Framework. National Action Plans and the Australian Government's disaster risk reduction programs, including DRF, put these frameworks into practice.

The [Second National Action Plan](#) to implement the National Disaster Risk Reduction Framework was endorsed by National Emergency Management Ministers on 25 August 2023. The Plan drives coordinated action across Australian society so that individuals, communities, sectors and governments are working together towards common disaster risk reduction goals.

⁶ [National Climate Risk Assessment](#).

The Second National Action Plan identifies four key priority areas for national action:

1. Understand disaster risk;
2. Accountable decisions;
3. Enhanced investment; and
4. Governance, ownership, and responsibility.

The DRF supports implementation of the Second National Action Plan by providing funding for preparedness and risk reduction activities, underpinned by Investment Principle Three.

2.3 Previous DRF Rounds

Round One (2023-24) of the DRF opened in January 2023 and closed in March 2023. The Australian Government Minister for Emergency Management (the Minister) announced 187 successful projects with \$200 million of Australian Government investment on 7 June 2023.

Round Two (2024-25) of the DRF opened in January 2024 and closed in March 2024. The Minister announced 164 successful projects with close to \$200 million of Australian Government investment on 28 August 2024.

Round Three (2025-26) of the DRF opened in January 2025, with project proposals to Lead Agencies closing in April 2025 and applications to NEMA closing in June 2025. The Minister announced \$200 million in Australian Government funding for 96 successful projects on 17 November 2025.

All projects funded under previous rounds are published on [NEMA's website](#).⁷

2.4 About the DRF Round Four 2026-27 grant opportunity

Round Four of the DRF will build on previous rounds by making up to \$142.477 million available for natural disaster risk reduction and resilience initiatives in 2026-27.

Applicants and Lead Agencies should note the following key changes⁸ for Round Four:

- Notional funding allocations have been revised, with 75 per cent of project funds allocated to infrastructure projects (such as cyclone shelters, levees, and sea walls), and 25 per cent allocated to other eligible project types (such as planning for future infrastructure and capacity building), in line with the Australian Government's focus on risk reduction activities that deliver tangible benefits (including insurance-related benefits) for communities.
- The eligible hazard and activity type lists have been updated, with some previously eligible hazards and activities no longer eligible under Round Four.
- Additional priority will be given to the following project types where Applications are similarly rated: those that will be ready to commence construction when projects commence (mid-2027) and those with demonstrated insurance benefits.
- Maximum project durations have reverted to three years for all project types.
- Co-contribution sources have been clarified (land valuations are not eligible) and requirements have been reduced for projects led by state and territory government bodies in smaller jurisdictions.

⁷ The number of active funded projects may have changed since announcements due to withdrawals and reallocations.

⁸ A number of administrative improvements have been made for Round Four, not all of which are listed here. NEMA strongly recommends that Applicants and Lead Agencies read the Guidelines in their entirety to ensure they are familiar with all requirements before submitting a Project Proposal or Application.

- A separate (fourth) assessment criterion has been introduced to more explicitly address value with money requirements under the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013* and the CGRPs.
- Baseline funding amounts and application caps for states and territories have been adjusted in line with changes to total funding and assessment timelines for Round Four, and associated rules for baseline funding have been clarified.
- The distribution formula for program Administration Funding has been revised in response to feedback from Lead Agencies.
- Evidence requirements have been reduced for ABN applicants and clarified for other applicant types.
- Additional guidance has been provided on 'Business as Usual' (BAU) activities, cost-benefit analysis, and scoring of applications against the assessment criteria (see Appendices C, D, E and F).
- Additional support materials including an Applicant checklist and cost benefit analysis template have been developed and will be published by NEMA prior to Applications opening.
- The DRF Audit and Reporting Framework has been updated to simplify and standardise grantee reporting across all DRF rounds.
- Commonwealth assessment processes have been streamlined to expedite round outcomes.
- Application, Lead Agency review and Commonwealth assessment periods have been adjusted to reduce overlap with the higher risk weather season and to better align with government budget cycles.

The Minister reserves the right to open subsequent funding rounds in any financial year. The decision to open subsequent funding rounds is a matter for the Australian Government. While no decisions have yet been made about a fifth round, the following change is anticipated:

- Historical investments will cease to be eligible as a co-contribution source under Round Five, but remain eligible in Round Four.

3 Grant amount and grant period

3.1 Grants available

The Australian Government has announced a total of up to \$1 billion over five years for the program. For Round Four, up to \$142.477 million in Commonwealth funding is available in 2026-27, with up to:

- \$104.608 million notionally allocated for infrastructure projects (infrastructure funding stream), encompassing the following primary project activity types as defined in the Glossary:
 - investment in grey infrastructure
 - investment in green-blue infrastructure (including nature-based solutions)
 - investment in social infrastructure
 - investment in natural hazard monitoring infrastructure
- \$34.869 million notionally allocated for other eligible project types, and
- \$3 million notionally allocated for administrative support for Lead Agencies.

All allocations listed above are indicative only; that is, the Australian Government may at its discretion reduce the total amount of Commonwealth funding available, and the Assessment Panel and Minister have discretion to recommend and approve, respectively, grants that differ in amount from the notional sub-allocations (see sections 8.2.3 and 8.3).

The minimum total project value (Commonwealth funding and co-contribution combined) is:

- \$0.5 million for infrastructure funding stream projects, and
- no minimum amount for other project types.

There is no maximum total project value, but projects cannot seek more Commonwealth funding than is available in the stream under which they apply (i.e. \$104.608 million for infrastructure projects and \$34.869 million for other projects).

3.1.1 Required co-contributions

Lead Agencies are required to demonstrate that a co-contribution will be made (by the Lead Agency, the Applicant or any delivery partners) towards each project in line with the requirements set out in the table below.

Table 1: Co-contribution requirements

Co-contribution category	Commonwealth funding towards eligible project costs	Minimum co-contribution towards eligible project costs
First Nations organisations as defined in the Glossary. Local councils located in 'very remote' and 'remote' locations per the Australian Bureau of Statistics' Remoteness Structure, listed in Appendix A.	Up to 90 per cent of eligible project costs	At least 10 per cent of eligible project costs
Other 'low rate-based' councils, determined using the ratio of Financial Assistance Grant to Net Rate Income, listed in Appendix B. Not-for-profit organisations as defined in the Glossary.	Up to 80 per cent of eligible project costs	At least 20 per cent of eligible project costs
Territory government bodies in the Australian Capital Territory and Northern Territory.	Up to 70 per cent of eligible project costs	At least 30 per cent of eligible project costs
State government bodies in Tasmania and South Australia.	Up to 60 per cent of eligible project costs	At least 40 per cent of eligible project costs
All other Applicants.	Up to 50 per cent of eligible project costs	At least 50 per cent of eligible project costs

Eligibility for each co-contribution category will be determined based on the Applicant type nominated in the Application form, irrespective of any delivery partners, together with any supporting evidence. Lead Agencies must ensure that these details are entered correctly and that evidence is provided, where required (see section 4.2).

3.1.2 Co-contribution types and sources

Co-contributions must be directly linked to delivery of the DRF project.

Co-contributions can include, but are not limited to:

- a financial (cash) contribution provided at the time of project commencement;

- in-kind contributions, such as wages directly attributable to the delivery of the project, and/or supplies, materials, and specific equipment required to execute the project:
 - In-kind contributions can be based on existing resources, but cannot include historic work undertaken or staff time spent prior to project commencement or land valuations. The in-kind contribution must be appropriately identified and valued in the project budget.
- funds the Applicant or a delivery partner has already invested in a program or project on or any time after 1 July 2024 (historical investments), but only where the Australian Government's contribution from the DRF is expected to extend or enhance that program or project subject to alignment with the DRF Objectives. The Australian Government will not fund project cost overruns.
 - No more than 50 per cent of the required co-contribution amount can be derived from historical investments.
 - Where historical investments form part of a co-contribution, the Application must clearly identify this in the project budget and describe how the DRF project will extend or enhance the prior investment. Evidence of the historical investment should also be provided as an optional attachment.

All parties named on an Application as being involved in delivery of a proposed project (i.e. the Applicant and any delivery partners) must contribute to the project financially, in-kind and/or through historical investments.

With the consent of the Lead Agency, an Applicant may submit a Project Proposal to a Lead Agency that nominates an in-principle co-contribution (i.e. a co-contribution pending formal approval) while the Applicant and/or delivery partner goes through formal internal approval processes to secure the formal (actual) co-contribution. The Applicant and/or delivery partner must be able to commit to the formal co-contribution prior to the Lead Agency signing of the relevant Schedule. If an in-principle co-contribution does not result in the actual co-contribution prior to the signing of the Schedule, the Minister may withdraw the Australian Government's offer of funding for the project/s.

With the exception of financial assistance provided to local government under the Australian Government's [Financial Assistance Grants program](#), Australian Government funding from any other source (including past and current Commonwealth grants and contributions funded from Commonwealth appropriations) cannot be used to meet minimum co-contribution requirements.⁹

3.1.3 Baseline funding

Each state and territory will be allocated baseline project funding of \$5.343 million under Round Four to support equitable distribution¹⁰ provided each Lead Agency submits eligible Applications of sufficient quality and value – that is:

- individual applications must meet the minimum requirements for funding consideration outlined in section 6 to qualify for baseline;
- and
- the cumulative value of qualifying Applications across all streams must be at least \$5.343 million in Australian Government funding.

⁹ For the avoidance of doubt, Australian Government bodies may contribute to projects provided minimum co-contribution requirements are met from non-Commonwealth funding sources. Own-source and commercial revenue generated outside of government appropriations is not considered to be a Commonwealth source for DRF co-contribution purposes.

¹⁰ The baseline amount is not per project. The baseline funding allocation is only the Australian Government's component of funding, and does not include a state and territory's co-contribution.

There is no baseline project funding allocation for the Indian Ocean Territories. Successful projects from the Indian Ocean Territories will not count towards Western Australia's baseline project funding.

Multi-jurisdictional or national projects will not count towards the baseline project funding of the coordinating Lead Agency or any Lead Agency involved in the project.

If Applications of insufficient quality and value (as defined above) are submitted by a Lead Agency, the Panel will have discretion not to recommend the baseline funding allocation for that state or territory, and any residual funding may be reallocated.

3.1.4 Program Administration Costs

NEMA has allocated up to \$3 million in Administrative Funding to support Lead Agencies with DRF Program Administration Costs. This is vital to ensuring DRF projects are successfully implemented, delivered and reported on appropriately.

Lead Agencies will be entitled to an Administrative Funding baseline amount of \$100,000 per jurisdiction, excluding the Indian Ocean Territories, plus a per-project loading¹¹ based on the number and duration of projects awarded to each jurisdiction. The Administrative Funding baseline amount is subject to Lead Agencies agreeing to match that amount¹² (either cash or in-kind) and will be reduced proportionally if project funding baselines (section 3.1.3) are not met, with final amounts (including per-project loadings) to be confirmed through Schedules. The Administrative Funding for Round Four will be a one-off payment (i.e. not per year) made after the Schedules are co-signed, and will not be adjusted for any subsequent project or Schedule variations. The amounts awarded to each Lead Agency will be published on the NEMA website.

Administrative Funding provided by the Australian Government:

- can be used for any costs incurred by Lead Agencies that directly relate to administering funded DRF projects. Appropriate uses of Administrative Funding may include but are not limited to: staff to coordinate development and endorsement of Implementation Plans and fulfil audit and reporting requirements, engaging an external auditor, IT costs (e.g. grants administration software, data storage) over the delivery timeframe.
- cannot be paid to Applicants or project delivery partners (for any reason) or for costs related to the preparation, coordination, review or facilitation of DRF Project Proposals or Applications that have not yet been assessed and funded by the Commonwealth.

Lead Agencies have discretion to use their matched component of Administrative Funding for any costs that directly relate to administering funded projects or project proposals under the DRF, including for costs related to the preparation, coordination, review or facilitation of DRF Applications.

For Western Australia and the Indian Ocean Territories:

¹¹ For each project awarded, the relevant Lead Agency will receive Administrative Funding equivalent of 1.5 units for the first year of delivery and 0.5 units for each additional delivery year based on the project duration outlined in the Application, where the dollar value of each unit is set by subtracting the total baseline Administrative Funding payable to all states and territories from the total Administration Funding available (\$3 million) and dividing the remainder by the aggregate number of units across all projects awarded nationally.

¹² NEMA will confirm this with Lead Agencies following outcome notifications once total Administrative Funding entitlements have been calculated.

- the per-project loading will be calculated from and provided for successful Western Australian projects as well as any successful Indian Ocean Territories projects, with no requirement for the Lead Agency for Western Australia to match the loading.
- any additional funding required to support the Lead Agency for Western Australia in its administration and reporting of Indian Ocean Territories projects must be sought by the Lead Agency for Western Australia from the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications and the Arts under existing service arrangements. The Lead Agency for Western Australia must submit a resource fee proposal to the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications and the Arts, if negotiating an amount above the standard Administrative Funding payable under section 3.1.4 should this be required.

Lead Agencies may be required to report on the use of Administrative Funding provided by the Australian Government in accordance with the DRF Audit and Reporting Framework.

3.2 Project period

The maximum project period is three (3) years for all project types.

Project periods formally commence from the date of NEMA's written endorsement of the relevant Implementation Plan.

4 Eligibility Criteria

The Australian Government cannot consider Applications that do not satisfy all eligibility criteria.

4.1 Who is eligible to apply for funding?

DRF funding is delivered under the [Federation Funding Agreement – Environment](#) between the Australian Government and state and territory governments. This approach recognises that states and territory governments have primary responsibility for disaster management in their jurisdictions, and are best placed to understand and coordinate priorities for disaster resilience.

Only Australian state and territory governments, through Lead Agencies, are eligible to submit Applications to NEMA for DRF funding in Round Four 2026-27. However, any entity that satisfies the eligibility criteria in sections 4.2 and 4.3 may develop a Project Proposal and submit that proposal to a Lead Agency for its consideration. Eligible entities who develop Project Proposals are referred to in these guidelines as Applicants.

Lead Agencies will coordinate Project Proposals, provide an indicative rating and priority ranking for each proposal, and submit Applications to NEMA for funding consideration. Lead Agencies can also develop their own DRF Project Proposals.

The details of the Lead Agencies are published on [NEMA's website](#) to enable Applicants to contact the Lead Agency in their state or territory in relation to the development and submission of Project Proposals.

4.2 Who is eligible to submit Project Proposals to Lead Agencies

A Lead Agency may only apply for funding in respect of Project Proposals where the Applicant:

- either:
 - has an Australian Business Number (ABN);
 - is a state, territory or local government body in an eligible jurisdiction; or
 - is a First Nations organisation or a Not-For-Profit organisation (as defined in the Glossary);
- has the capacity to enter into a legally binding agreement; and
- is not an entity listed in section 4.3.

Applications must include evidence of the Applicant's entity type for eligibility and co-contribution purposes as follows:

- Businesses must provide a current ABN as part of the Application form. No additional evidence of ABN status needs to be provided. Prospective Applicants can find out how to register for an ABN by visiting: [Register for an Australian Business Number \(ABN\) | business.gov.au](https://business.gov.au/register-for-an-australian-business-number-abn)
- First Nations organisations must provide evidence that they meet the definition of an 'Aboriginal Community-Controlled Organisation' (ACCO) or other 'Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisation' as set out in the [National Agreement on Closing the Gap](#) – for example, an Indigenous Corporation Number (ICN), evidence of Office of the Registrar of Indigenous Corporations (ORIC) registration and/or a declaration that the Applicant is a Traditional Owner or an organisation that has at least 51% Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander ownership and/or directorship and/or management.
- Not-for-profits must provide evidence of their not-for-profit status – for example, a current Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission's (ACNC) Registration, or Constitutional documents and/or Articles of Association that demonstrate the not-for-profit character of the organisation.
- Local councils in 'very remote' and 'remote' locations and other 'low rate-based councils' will be verified using the Australian Bureau of Statistics' Remoteness Structure and ratio of Financial Assistance Grant to Net Rate Income, as per the lists and methodologies at Appendices A and B, and do not need to provide separate evidence that they qualify for reduced co-contributions.
- State and territory government bodies in smaller jurisdictions (Australian Capital Territory, Northern Territory, South Australia and Tasmania) will be verified by Lead Agencies, and do not need to provide separate evidence that they qualify for reduced co-contributions.

Failure to provide the required evidence may result in an Application being deemed ineligible unless the application is assessed as eligible and meeting the co-contribution requirements against another co-contribution category.

4.3 Who is not eligible to submit Project Proposals to Lead Agencies?

A Lead Agency may not apply for funding in respect of Project Proposals where:

- the Applicant or a delivery partner is an organisation included on the National Redress Scheme's website¹³ on the list of 'Institutions that have not joined or signified their intent to join the Scheme', or
- the Applicant is:
 - an [Australian Government body](#) (including government business enterprises) or other entity that is wholly funded by the Australian Government
 - an individual
 - an overseas resident/organisation, or
 - any entity type not included in section 4.2.

With the exception of organisations included on the National Redress Scheme's list of 'Institutions that have not joined or signified their intent to join the Scheme', any individual or entity may partner on a project led by an eligible Applicant provided minimum co-contribution requirements are not met from Australian Government funding/funded sources (see section 3.1.2).

¹³ <https://www.nationalredress.gov.au/>

5 What the grant money can be used for

5.1 Eligible funding activities

To be eligible projects must:

- have the primary purpose of increasing understanding of natural disaster impacts, building resilience to future natural disasters and/or reducing natural disaster risk, in line with the DRF's objectives (see section 2)
- be risk informed, aligned with plans and priority targeted, in accordance with the DRF's Investment Principles (see section 2)
- target one or more eligible natural hazard types (see section 5.1.1)
- involve one or more eligible activity types in the built, social, natural and/or economic domains (see section 5.1.2)
- deliver 'enduring benefits' (as defined in the Glossary) for a community or communities at risk of being affected by future natural disasters, in an eligible location (see section 5.2)
- meet requirements for eligible expenditure (see section 5.3), minimum project values (see section 3.1), co-contributions (see section 3.1) and maximum project duration (see section 3.2), where applicable

and must not:

- have commenced activities for which Commonwealth funding is being sought, or be completed, before Implementation Plans are endorsed
- have received funding from other sources for the same activities
- be activities that would normally be paid for by a state, territory or local government as part of BAU operations as defined in the Glossary and Appendix C.

Note: Applicants must demonstrate why an activity is not BAU as part of their Application and should consider the guidance at Appendix C when formulating their justifications.

5.1.1 Eligible hazard types

Project activities can target one or a combination of the following Natural Hazards:

- Bushfire
- Earthquake
- Flood (including coastal floods/coastal inundation, riverine floods, and flash floods)
- Storm (including electrical storms, rain downbursts, blizzards, snow and hail)
- Cyclone (including tropical, ex-tropical, and sub-tropical cyclones, and intense low pressure systems such as east coast lows)
- Storm surge (including coastal erosion)
- Landslide (including avalanches, mud flows and rock slides)
- Tsunami
- Tornado
- Terrestrial heatwave (a marked warming of air over a large area when the maximum and minimum temperatures are unusually hot over 3 days, compared to the local climate and past weather).

All other natural and non-natural hazards, including drought,¹⁴ biological and virological (including biosecurity) hazards, and cyber-attacks are ineligible. However, projects which increase resilience in these areas are not excluded if they primarily target eligible Natural Hazards.

5.1.2 Eligible activity types and domains

Projects must fall into at least one of the following activity types and at least one of the domains listed below.

Table 2: Activity types

Activity types	Notional funding allocation
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Investment in grey infrastructure 2. Investment in green-blue infrastructure (including nature-based solutions) 3. Investment in social infrastructure 4. Investment in natural hazard monitoring infrastructure 	\$104.608M
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. Development of business cases and/or feasibility studies for future infrastructure (including investigation, modelling, concept planning and detailed design activities). 6. Capacity and capability building projects that improve the resilience of governments, industries, community sector organisations and/or at-risk communities to the impacts of future disasters. 7. Projects that improve understanding of disaster risks and impacts, including disaster modelling, risk assessments and mitigation plans. 	\$34.869M

¹⁴ The Australian Government's [Future Drought Fund](#) provides funding each year to support initiatives that build drought resilience.

Table 3: Domains

Domains*
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Built domain – Those human-made assets that underpin the functioning of a community. Examples include: buildings and other structures, cities and towns and utility networks. 2. Social domain – The relationships connected by networks of communication. Examples include: individuals, families and common interest groups that form whole communities, health and wellbeing, social welfare services, social capital, emergency services. 3. Natural domain – Encompasses the natural and cultural resources of the community. Examples include: ecosystems, coasts, heritage, water resources and land. 4. Economic domain – The system whereby the affected community’s material and service needs are met through appropriate labour and employment, business development, land use, financial resources, and interaction with the broader economy. Examples include: insurance institutions, private sector, financial institutions, public sector.

* Definitions and examples drawn from the [Community Recovery Handbook](#), [Australian Disaster Recovery Framework](#) and the [National Climate Resilience and Adaptation Strategy 2021-2025](#).

Where a project spans multiple activity types and/or domains, the Application must identify one primary activity type and one primary domain that best describe the project. Applications may also identify one or more secondary activity types and/or domains that describe other project components.

To be eligible for funding in the infrastructure funding stream:

- Applications must nominate activity type 1, 2, 3 or 4 as their primary activity type in the Application form, must ensure that the project meets the corresponding definition in the Glossary, and must meet all other eligibility criteria (including that the project’s primary purpose be aligned with one or more of the DRF’s objectives and that the activity not be BAU as defined in the Glossary and at Appendix C).
- Projects do not have to be construction-ready when applying, but must include a construction component and be able to commence construction within the project period.

Large-scale infrastructure that will deliver enduring disaster risk mitigation, resilience and safety benefits for communities remains a focus for Round Four. This includes projects such as the construction of flood levees, sea walls and drainage basins that seek to significantly reduce natural disaster risk, impacts and costs (including insurance costs) for communities in the long-term. To support this focus and other Australian Government priorities/commitments:

- \$104.608 million has been notionally allocated for infrastructure projects.
- the following project types will be preferenced¹⁵ where Applications are similarly rated by the Assessment Panel:
 - infrastructure projects that will be Construction Ready as defined in the Glossary when projects commence (anticipated from mid-2027)

¹⁵ Preferencing refers to one Application being recommended for funding ahead of other Applications in the same stream where two or more Applications achieve the same ratings against the technical assessment criteria (i.e. “Highly Suitable” or “Suitable”) and overall value criterion (i.e. “Excellent” or “Good”). Preferenced Applications need not achieve identical scores and are not guaranteed funding. Whether a project is construction ready or has insurance benefits and therefore qualifies for preferencing will be determined based on information submitted as part of the Application and any relevant advice received from external experts (sections 8.1.2 and 8.2).

- projects of any type with demonstrated insurance co-benefits (i.e. benefits for insurance affordability or availability that go beyond the intended risk-reduction, resilience or knowledge outcomes of a project).
- Applicants will be required to identify whether projects are led by First Nations organisations and/or stand to benefit First Nations communities.

Examples of projects that may be eligible under Round Four subject to BAU considerations include, but are not limited to:

- Construction of community infrastructure that reduces natural disaster risks, mitigates impacts and/or builds resilience (including, for example, by placing downward pressure on insurance premiums) for communities such as flood levees, sea walls, drainage basins, cyclone shelters, early warning systems, artificial reefs, and culturally appropriate places for First Nations people.
- Building the resilience of governments, industries and communities to future natural disasters through the development and implementation of risk assessments, mitigation plans and capacity/capability building activities.
- Supporting community sector organisations to develop social capital, train staff or have materials in place prior to the impact of a natural hazard, including initiatives to support the most at-risk communities and/or cohorts at disproportionate disaster risk.
- First Nations-led projects that improve community preparedness for and resilience to the impacts of future natural disasters.

Examples of projects that are out of scope for Round Four include, but are not limited to:

- Updates to land use planning instruments and building codes.
- Maintenance, repairs and upgrades to roads, buildings, drainage networks and other existing infrastructure that meet the Glossary definition of BAU.
- Projects that will deliver short-term (i.e. non-enduring) or highly localised (i.e. sub-community level) benefits only, such as for a single or small number of individual/s, household/s or business/es.

5.2 Eligible locations

Projects **must** be delivered:

- within the Lead Agency's respective jurisdiction/s or area of operation, except where agreement to delivery in another Australian jurisdiction is sought and provided (i.e. for multi-jurisdictional projects); or
- within the Indian Ocean Territories (IOTs) of Christmas Island or the Cocos (Keeling) Islands.

5.3 Eligible expenditure

Lead Agencies may only spend, and must ensure that Applicants only spend, Australian Government funds and co-contributions provided under the DRF on eligible expenditure incurred on or associated with approved project activities as defined in Schedules and Implementation Plans.

To be eligible, the expenditure must:

- be incurred between the project start date and end date as nominated in the Implementation Plan, unless otherwise permitted by these Guidelines (see sections 5.4 and 10.5),
- be a direct cost of the project or of DRF program administration (see below and section 3.1.4), and
- not be ineligible expenditure as outlined in section 5.4.

Eligible expenditure could include, for example:

- construction and/or procurement of materials, including supply costs, to deliver the project;
- staff (incl. contractor and consultancy) salaries and on-costs, including administration costs such as training, utilities and travel, that are directly attributed to the provision of the project;

- writing, reporting, consultation and engagement costs insofar as they are directly relevant to the delivery of the project;
- upgrading existing assets so long as the upgrades are not BAU activities as defined in the Glossary and Appendix C, and meet all other eligibility requirements;
- community engagement and communications initiatives directly related to the delivery of the project;
- planning costs;
- reasonable project administration costs incurred by the Applicant
- Program Administration Costs incurred by Lead Agencies to administer the DRF in their region (note: these costs differ from project administration costs and should not be included in budgets or funding figures for individual projects – see section 3.1.4).

Contingencies for inflation and other potential cost increases such as due to changes in labour and supply costs, delays or unforeseen events must be factored into budgets for each project and should be commensurate with the size and complexity of the proposed project¹⁶. Where contingency amounts are not identified as separate line items, NEMA will assume these have been factored into costings for assessment purposes. The \$142.477 million available in 2026-27 is expected to be fully allocated - the Australian Government will not provide further top-up funding or fund project cost overruns.

Project activities for which Commonwealth funding is sought must not commence until the project's Implementation Plan has been endorsed by NEMA and the Lead Agency has an executed funding agreement in place with the Applicant for the project.

5.4 What the funding cannot be used for

Lead Agencies must not spend, and must ensure that Applicants do not spend, Australian Government funds and co-contributions provided under the DRF on ineligible expenditure, including:

- projects that have already received full funding or a commitment of full funding, including projects that have received funding from another source for the same purpose, as articulated in the Application (i.e. 'double-dipping').
- activities that do not have the primary purpose of increasing understanding of disaster impacts, building resilience to future disasters and/or reducing disaster risk
- retrospective costs, with the exception of project costs incurred prior to the Implementation Plan being endorsed, which may be funded using co-contributions at the Lead Agency's and Applicant's discretion and risk (see section 10.5)
- purchase of land or existing infrastructure and essential services, including the costs associated with sub-division of land
- repair or replacement of existing infrastructure where there is no demonstrated significant increase in benefit
- activities that would normally be paid for by a state, territory or local government as part of BAU operations as defined in the Glossary and Appendix C.
- general wage costs not related to the direct delivery of the funded activities
- costs incurred in the preparation of a grant Application or related documentation
- maintenance of existing machinery or infrastructure, including roads
- activities conducted outside of Australia
- subsidy of general ongoing administration of an organisation such as electricity, phone and rent
- overseas travel
- interstate travel, where that interstate travel is not undertaken as part of a multi-jurisdictional project (see section 7.2.3)

¹⁶ Minimum of 10 per cent, but consideration of a higher contingency up to 30 per cent for projects in complex or remote delivery environments is recommended.

- the introduction of plants, animals or other biological agents known to be, or that could become, environmental or agricultural weeds and pests, and
- activities undertaken primarily for commercial (profit-generating) purposes.

This list is not exhaustive. Other costs may be ineligible where the Program Delegate determines they do not directly support the achievement of the planned outcomes for the project or that they are contrary to the objectives of the program. These will be notified to Lead Agencies ahead of Applications closing, where possible.

Following the close of Applications, the Program Delegate will make eligibility decisions (see section 8) and may impose limitations or exclude expenditure through Schedules and Implementation Plans and/or otherwise by notice to the Lead Agency.

NEMA will **not** support Applications that include activities with the potential to adversely impact a matter of national environmental significance, including but not limited to activities that fail to be approved under the [Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999](#)¹⁷.

6 The assessment criteria

Except for criterion four, all of the following assessment criteria must be separately addressed for each Project Proposal submitted as part of an Application.

The Assessment Panel will assess Applications based on the weighting assigned to each technical criterion (criteria one, two and three) and the overall value of each project (criterion four) following the process outlined in section 8.

The amount of detail and supporting evidence provided should be relative to the project size, complexity and funding amount requested, and must satisfy any minimum/mandatory requirements set out below.

Responses to criteria one, two and three are limited to 1000 words (maximum) per criterion. A separate response is not required for criterion four.

To be considered for DRF funding, Applications must:

- meet all eligibility requirements;
- achieve a rating of at least 'Satisfactory' for each of the weighted technical assessment criteria (criteria 1, 2 and 3) – i.e. final scores equivalent to at least 5 out of 10 against the scoring matrix at Appendix E
- achieve a rating of at least 'Suitable' for the combined technical score – i.e. a final weighted total score of 50 or more out of 100 against the rating matrix at Appendix E; and
- achieve a rating of at least 'Good' overall value for the non-weighted assessment criterion (criterion 4) – i.e. a final score of at least 2 out of 3 against the scoring matrix at Appendix F, when rounded to the nearest whole number.

6.1 Criterion One – Contribution to disaster risk reduction, resilience and/or knowledge

Weighted 40 per cent

¹⁷ <https://www.legislation.gov.au/C2004A00485/latest/versions>

The Application and Project Proposal must demonstrate alignment with one or more of the DRF objectives (see section 2) by identifying how and to what extent the project reduces disaster risk, increases resilience, adaptive capacity and/or preparedness for disasters, and/or increases understanding of natural disasters.

This must include, at a minimum:

- the natural hazard/s the project is addressing, current and future risks posed to the target community (including consideration of climate change impacts)¹⁸ and how these have been assessed, or if there is limited or no existing hazard or risk information, how the project funding will contribute to increasing understanding of the hazard, level of risk and potential future disaster impacts;
- the disaster risk, resilience or knowledge benefits the project will deliver for the community during and beyond the term of funding, including the estimated level/s of disaster risk, resilience, and/or understanding prior to and upon conclusion of the proposed project, along with any enduring benefits (as defined in Glossary);
- any other purposes and benefits associated with the project, including but not limited to:
 - information demonstrating that these are secondary objectives or ancillary benefits, rather than the primary purpose of the project.
 - any insurance-related co-benefits (i.e. benefits for insurance affordability or availability that go beyond the intended risk reduction, resilience and knowledge outcomes).
- how the project will avoid and manage the potential for maladaptation including any unintentionally negative social, environmental or economic outcomes; and
- for infrastructure projects, how climate change may impact the investment over its intended lifespan, and how these risks will or may be mitigated.

In addition:

- if the project seeks to improve understanding of natural hazards and disaster risk, the Project Proposal must outline how the new hazard and risk information will be shared with affected communities.

The evidence provided to support this must include, but is not limited to:

- references to and/or extracts from relevant hazard risk assessments
- for projects claiming insurance co-benefits, information that substantiates the claims such as estimates or modelling prepared by an insurer or other relevant professional (e.g. actuary) showing expected insurance impacts, detailed engineering specifications or before-and-after mapping showing that the infrastructure removes or substantially reduces risk from future hazards, and/or comparative case studies showing how similar infrastructure projects in comparable locations successfully lowered insurance premiums or reduced losses.

Note: evidence of insurance benefits will be reviewed by external advisers through the process outlined at section 8.1.2. Projects will only be preferenced by the Assessment Panel where it considers insurance-related claims have been demonstrated, taking into account the external advice.

¹⁸ See, for example, the [National Climate Risk Assessment](#).

6.2 Criterion Two – Alignment with national and state/territory/local disaster resilience and risk reduction plans, strategies and frameworks

Weighted 30 per cent

The Application and Project Proposal must demonstrate this through identifying:

- how the project aligns with one or more of the priorities, outcomes and national actions identified in the [Second National Action Plan](#); and
- how the project aligns with and/or supports delivery of any other relevant national, state, territory or local disaster resilience or risk reduction plans, strategies or frameworks, or how the project will develop or contribute to development of these plans, strategies or frameworks where they do not currently exist.

The evidence provided to support this may include, but is not limited to:

- references to and extracts from relevant parts of national, state, territory or local plans, strategies or frameworks.

6.3 Criterion Three – Capacity, capability and resources to deliver the project

Weighted 30 per cent

The Application and Project Proposal must demonstrate this through identifying:

- the Applicant's track record managing similar projects and access to personnel and/or partners with the right skills and experience
- sound project planning to deliver the project, which addresses scope, implementation methodology, timeframes, budget, community consultation, and risk management
- compliance with relevant legislative requirements, government policies and industry standards, such as:
 - where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people will be impacted by the project, how the project will ensure cultural safety in any service delivery?
 - where the project will affect the particular interests of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, how the project aligns with the National Agreement on Closing the Gap Priority Reforms and/or will contribute to progress against targets?
- readiness to formally commence the project once Implementation Plans are endorsed (anticipated from mid-2027) and ability to complete the project within the maximum project period

In addition, for infrastructure projects, the Application must demonstrate:

- how the infrastructure and benefits of the project will be operated and maintained into the future
- readiness to commence construction (i.e. be Construction Ready as defined in the Glossary) either immediately upon commencement of the project (i.e. once Implementation Plans are endorsed, which is anticipated from mid-2027) or later in the project period. This should include a description of the steps that have been and/or are planned to be taken to prepare for construction including:
 - the status of any required regulatory and/or development approvals
 - project designs and costings
 - authority from the land or infrastructure owner to undertake the project at the nominated site(s)
 - the sources and status (e.g. confirmed, in principle) of all funding contributions.

The evidence provided to support this must include, but is not limited to:

- For all project types:

- a clear business case for the proposal, including a project plan, budget (using the Budget template issued by NEMA unless advised otherwise by your Lead Agency) and risk management plan commensurate with the size and scale of the project.
- evidence of robust consultation with and support from local government(s) and/or affected communities, including First Nations communities where relevant, or compelling reasons for not having consulted, where required under section 7.3.
- cost estimates prepared by a quantity surveyor or other relevant professional (e.g. a qualified actuary, accountant or finance officer who can verify project costs are accurate and realistic, ideally less than 12 months old) for projects valued over \$1 million, or quotes or cost estimates prepared by the Applicant (ideally less than 6 months old) for projects valued under \$1 million. Where a cost estimate has been prepared by a quantity surveyor or other professional, this should be stated along with their qualifications in the cost estimate itself or elsewhere in the application (e.g. as part of the response to assessment criterion three).
- In addition, for infrastructure projects:
 - a cost benefit analysis (note: NEMA will provide a template on its [website](#) and through Lead Agencies that can be used for this purpose. Alternatively, Applicants may submit their own CBA template/report provided all minimum requirements set out at Appendix D are met).
 - evidence that the Applicant either owns the land/infrastructure (e.g. certificate of title) or has the land or infrastructure owner's permission to undertake the project (e.g. official permit, signed lease agreement).
 - copies of any designs and approvals showing construction readiness or progress towards construction readiness (e.g. schematic plans, planning permits, development and building approvals, environmental approvals¹⁹).

All budgets, cost estimates and cost benefit analyses submitted as part of an Application must:

- factor in contingencies for inflation and other potential cost increases such as due to changes in labour and supply costs, delays or unforeseen events, which should be commensurate with the size and complexity of the proposed project²⁰. Where contingency amounts are not identified as separate line items, NEMA will assume these have been factored into costings for assessment purposes.
- be consistent with funding figures entered elsewhere in the Application.

¹⁹ As noted in section 5.4, NEMA will **not** support Applications that include activities with the potential to adversely impact a matter of national environmental significance under the [Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999](#)¹⁹.

²⁰ Minimum of 10 per cent, but consideration of a higher contingency up to 30 per cent for projects in complex or remote delivery environments is recommended.

6.4 Criterion Four – Overall Value of the Project

Non-weighted

Overall value is the extent to which an Application represents value with relevant money²¹, both in its own right and compared with other projects²².

Under the Australian Government grants framework²³, value with relevant money is a prime consideration when committing public resources and a judgement based on an Application representing an efficient, effective, economical and ethical use of public resources, as determined from a variety of considerations. For the purposes of the DRF, these considerations include the relevant financial and non-financial costs and benefits of each Application, having particular regard to:

- the fitness for purpose of the project in contributing to the objectives and any stated priorities for the grant opportunity, and its proportional impact compared with other projects
- the alignment of the project with the DRF investment principles, including that projects are risk informed, aligned with plans and targeted at achieving one or more priorities under the Second National Action Plan
- the appropriateness of the project budget and relative value of the grant sought, including:
 - whether the budget is sufficiently detailed and justified
 - the type/s (new financial and in-kind investments vs historical investments) and amounts of any co-contributions as a proportion of the total project value
- any risks to project delivery (for example, arising from the Applicant's experience and performance history) and the appropriateness of the risk management plan submitted with the Application
- any other sources of funding that may be available, including through other more appropriate grant programs
- whether the proposed activities would normally, and should therefore, be paid for by a state, territory or local government (i.e. is BAU as defined in the Glossary and Appendix C).

Information used to assess this criterion will be drawn from other parts of the Application, including responses to assessment criteria 1 to 3, any supporting evidence submitted, and justifications for why projects are not BAU. As such, no specific response or additional information needs to be provided by Applicants for this criterion.

7 How to apply

It is important that Applicants read and understand these grant opportunity guidelines and any supplementary information or instructions published by NEMA to ensure they understand the requirements for Project Proposals.

²¹ See glossary for an explanation of 'value with money'.

²² Comparison of the costs and benefits of feasible options when selecting grantees is a key step in achieving value with relevant money (see section 12 of the CGRPs). To ensure equity between DRF Applicants, comparisons will only be made with other projects competing in the same funding stream (i.e. infrastructure or other).

²³ This framework consists of several elements including the [Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013](#), the [Commonwealth Grants Rules and Principles 2024](#), relevant Estimates Memorandums and templates issued by the Department of Finance.

These documents may be found at [GrantConnect](#)²⁴ and on [NEMA's website](#). Any alterations and addenda²⁵ will be published on both websites. By registering on the [GrantConnect](#) website, you will be automatically notified of any changes to these grant opportunity guidelines.

Applicants should also ensure they read and understand any information or instructions published by Lead Agencies in relation to the process for submitting Project Proposals. Lead Agencies' websites provide information about the process for submitting Project Proposals in their respective states and territories. A list of Lead Agency contacts for the DRF Program is available on [NEMA's website](#).

Applicants should check these websites regularly for any updates.

7.1 Role of Lead Agencies

Lead Agencies are responsible for coordinating DRF Project Proposals in their respective jurisdictions and will:

- receive DRF Project Proposals from Applicants;
- make a state/territory assessment of the eligibility and merit of DRF Project Proposals;
- seek ministerial endorsement of and submit the most competitive DRF Project Proposals as Applications to NEMA for funding consideration in accordance with these Guidelines; and
- if a Project Proposal is successful, administer funding, including managing delivery of projects, making payments to Project Proponents and reporting to NEMA.

As part of their coordinating role, Lead Agencies are expected to:

- share information about the DRF and their processes for receiving Project Proposals as widely as possible with potential Applicants in their jurisdictions via their websites and, where possible, other channels.
- accept Project Proposal submissions from Applicants up until the closing date and time for submissions to state and territory Lead Agencies, irrespective of whether Applicants have participated in any prior state or territory-run processes (e.g. expression of interest).
- undertake their role in a manner consistent with the probity and privacy requirements set out in section 13 of these Guidelines.
- provide an avenue for Applicants to seek feedback on Project Proposals, including those not submitted to NEMA, noting that NEMA will provide feedback to Lead Agencies on all Applications assessed by the Assessment Panel.

7.2 Submitting Project Proposals to Lead Agencies

All Applicants, including Lead Agencies and other state/territory government bodies intending to seek DRF funding for government led projects, must submit Project Proposals to the relevant Lead Agency in accordance with the processes and timelines set out below.

In most cases, submission will be to the Lead Agency in the state or territory where the project will be delivered (standard Application pathway, see section 7.2.1).

The only exceptions to this are:

²⁴ <https://www.grants.gov.au/>

²⁵ Alterations and addenda include but are not limited to: corrections to currently published documents, changes to close times for Applications, Questions and Answers (Q&A) documents and Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) documents

- Applicants who have developed Project Proposals for delivery in the Indian Ocean Territories must apply through the Lead Agency for Western Australia (see section 7.2.2).
- Applicants who have developed Project Proposals that involve collaboration and delivery across multiple states and territories must apply through one Lead Agency; this will typically, although not always be, the Lead Agency in the jurisdiction that stands to benefit most from the project (see section 7.2.3).

Applicants (other than Lead Agencies) **cannot** submit Project Proposals directly to NEMA.

To submit a Project Proposal, Applicants must:

- complete the Project Proposal form issued by the relevant Lead Agency (note: this will be based on a standard Application form developed by NEMA, but may differ slightly between jurisdictions depending on the application system used by each state or territory Lead Agency).
- provide all the information requested by the Lead Agency.
- address all eligibility criteria and assessment criteria set out in these Guidelines.
- include all necessary attachments, including all mandatory attachments listed in section 7.6.
- submit their Project Proposal/s to the relevant Lead Agency by 5:00pm (local time in their jurisdiction) on 1 July 2026.

Applicants should refer to the website of their relevant Lead Agency (Lead Agencies are listed on [NEMA's website](#)) for further details on the Project Proposal form and submission process, noting that requirements may vary by state and territory.

Applicants are responsible for ensuring that their Project Proposal is complete and accurate. Knowingly giving false or misleading information can be a serious offence under the [Criminal Code Act 1995](#)²⁶. NEMA will investigate any false or misleading information and may exclude an Application from further consideration.

If Applicants find an error in their Project Proposal after submitting it to a Lead Agency, they should contact the relevant Lead Agency immediately. Lead Agencies do not have to accept any additional information, or requests to correct/amend Project Proposals after the closing time.

Late Project Proposals to Lead Agencies will not be accepted unless an Applicant has experienced exceptional circumstances²⁷ that prevent submission by the closing date. Decisions relating to Project Proposal extensions are at the discretion of Lead Agencies, except for jurisdiction-wide extensions, which must be taken in consultation with NEMA. Requests to submit late Project Proposals must be provided to the relevant Lead Agency before the closing date.

Applicants should keep a copy of their Project Proposal and any supporting documents.

If Applicants need further guidance about the submission process they should contact their relevant Lead Agency in the first instance. Where necessary, Lead Agencies will liaise with NEMA to obtain any further information required.

Applicants may submit multiple Project Proposals, including for similar projects tailored for delivery in different states and/or territories, however separate and unique co-contributions must be provided for each project.

²⁶ <https://www.legislation.gov.au/C2004A04868/latest/text>

²⁷ Broadly, exceptional circumstances are events characterised by the following: reasonably unforeseeable; beyond the applicant's control; and unable to be managed or resolved within the application period.

7.2.1 Standard Application pathway

Where a project will be delivered in one state or territory only, Applicants must submit Project Proposals through the Lead Agency in the relevant state or territory. Applicants should refer to the relevant Lead Agency's website for details of their submission process.

Lead Agencies will:

- check that Project Proposals meet co-contribution requirements and are eligible²⁸, accurate and complete.
- determine indicative scores and a rating for each eligible Project Proposal ('Highly Suitable', 'Suitable' or 'Not Suitable') having regard to the DRF technical assessment criteria at section 6 and the rating matrix at Appendix E to these Guidelines, noting that:
 - appropriate mechanisms must be in place to ensure impartiality
 - only proposals rated 'Highly Suitable' or 'Suitable' can be submitted to NEMA for assessment
- consider Project Proposals against state or territory priorities as outlined in any publicly available disaster plans or strategies and assign each 'Highly Suitable' and 'Suitable' project a priority ranking ('High', 'Medium', 'Low'), noting that the Assessment Panel may take this into account in scoring projects, including against assessment criterion 2.
- submit the most competitive (top rated based on indicative scores) 'Highly Suitable' and 'Suitable' Project Proposals, including their respective ratings and priority rankings, to NEMA up to the applicable Application cap (see section 7.7).

The Lead Agency must seek the relevant Minister's²⁹ endorsement (written agreement) of all Project Proposals submitted to NEMA (see section 7.7.1). This should include endorsement of any co-contributions being provided by their state or territory government, except where in-principle agreement will be provided.

7.2.2 Indian Ocean Territories pathway

Applicants wishing to deliver projects in the Indian Ocean Territories (IOTs) must submit Project Proposals to the Lead Agency for Western Australia.

The Lead Agency for Western Australia will:

- following the close of Project Proposals to Lead Agencies, provide these proposals to the Australian Government Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications and the Arts (Department of Infrastructure) for initial assessment
- following receipt of an endorsed list of 'Highly Suitable' and 'Suitable' projects from the Department of Infrastructure, submit these projects and the responsible Australian Government Minister's endorsement to NEMA, noting that IOT projects will not count towards the Application cap for Western Australia

²⁸ Where a Project Proposal is considered eligible by a state or territory and submitted to NEMA for funding consideration, NEMA will conduct its own review and make final eligibility and merit assessments (see section 8), which form the basis for funding recommendations and may differ from state/territory assessments.

²⁹ NEMA considers the relevant Minister to be the minister with portfolio responsibility for the agency charged with coordinating and submitting Applications on behalf of that state or territory (the Lead Agency). For the Indian Ocean Territories this is the Australian Government Minister responsible for Territories.

- receive funding for any successful projects (including Administrative Funding – see section 3.1.4) and be responsible for working with Project Proponents to develop Implementation Plans, establish funding agreements, manage payments and report to NEMA.

The Department of Infrastructure will:

- communicate the Round Four grant opportunity in the IOTs
- following the receipt of IOT Project Proposals from the Lead Agency, vet, rate and rank each project following the same process outlined in section 7.2.1
- identify the most competitive (top rated based on indicative scores) Project Proposals from each IOT up to their respective Application caps, and seek endorsement for these proposals from the Australian Government Minister responsible for Territories
- provide the endorsed list of 'Highly Suitable' and 'Suitable' projects along with the Department of Infrastructure's ratings and rankings for these projects to the Lead Agency for Western Australia to submit to NEMA
- inform IOT Applicants of outcomes and pass on feedback from NEMA following the announcement of outcomes.

Any Indian Ocean Territories Project Proposals will not count as part of the Application cap for Western Australia.

7.2.3 Multi-jurisdictional and national project pathway

Multi-jurisdictional and national projects involve collaboration and delivery across multiple (or all) states and/or territories.

Applicants developing these proposals must submit their Project Proposal to:

- the Lead Agency in the jurisdiction that stands to benefit most from the project (i.e. where most activities are to be conducted and/or most funds are to be expended), or
- where jurisdictions stand to benefit equally from a project:
 - the Lead Agency in the jurisdiction where the Applicant is based provided that jurisdiction is a beneficiary of the project, or
 - if the jurisdiction where the Applicant is based is not a beneficiary, any one of the Lead Agencies in relevant jurisdictions.

The Applicant is responsible for:

- developing the Project Proposal, including a clear business case, and providing any evidence/attachments required as part of the assessment criteria and under sections 4.2 and 7.6.
- obtaining letters of support from all delivery partners who are contributing financially or in-kind to the project, outlining their respective roles, responsibilities and contributions, and submitting these as attachments to the Project Proposal, noting that:
 - Lead Agencies need only be named as partners on a Project Proposal where they will be directly contributing to the project, either financially or in-kind.
 - NEMA will provide a template through Lead Agencies that can be used for this purpose.
- obtaining confirmation in writing from the Lead Agencies in relevant states and territories that they have no objections in principle to the project being implemented in their jurisdictions (i.e. subject to any relevant approvals being obtained), and submitting these as attachments to the Project Proposal, noting that:
 - NEMA will provide a template through Lead Agencies that can be used for this purpose.
 - Applicants should ensure they provide Lead Agencies with sufficient information about the project to support informed decisions – e.g. project purpose, scope, timeframes, locations, partners, community support, etc; and

- the coordinating Lead Agency should be copied into any confirmation requests and responses for their visibility.

The Lead Agency through which the Applicant is applying (the coordinating Lead Agency) will:

- vet, rate and rank the project following the same process as outlined in section 7.2.1.
- submit the Project Proposal to NEMA provided it is rated 'Highly Suitable' or 'Suitable', noting that multijurisdictional and national projects do not count towards Application caps.
- obtain endorsement (i.e. written agreement) of the Project Proposal from its relevant minister and submit this as part of, and in accordance with, the process at section 7.7.1, noting that:
 - other states and territories in which the project is being delivered do not need to provide formal ministerial endorsement, however must confirm that they have no objections to the project being implemented in their jurisdictions as outlined above.
- if the project is successful, receive funding for the project (including Administrative Funding – see section 3.1.4) and be responsible for making payments to the Applicant and reporting to NEMA.

These projects will not contribute to the baseline funding or Application cap of any state or territory (see sections 3.1.3 and 7.7).

7.2.4 Joint Project Proposals

The Australian Government recognises that some organisations may want to join together as a group to deliver a project.

In these circumstances, a lead organisation³⁰ must be appointed as the Applicant in respect of a Project Proposal.

The Project Proposal and Application must identify all delivery partners for the project, their respective contributions to the project and include a letter of support from each delivery partner (see section 7.6). Each named delivery partner must contribute financially and/or in kind to the project.

Lead Agencies must ensure that successful Applicants have binding arrangements in place with all delivery partners prior to projects formally commencing.

7.3 Consultation with affected communities

Unless there are compelling reasons for not doing so,³¹ Applicants must have meaningfully consulted with relevant local governments and affected communities, including any affected First Nations communities, before submitting a Project Proposal with a place-based focus.

In addition and in keeping with commitments under the National Agreement on Closing the Gap (see section 7.4), Applicants must have meaningfully consulted with relevant First Nations communities wherever their particular interests are affected by a proposed project (i.e. in ways not felt by the general population), irrespective of whether the project is place-based.

Evidence of any required consultation, or compelling reasons for not consulting in these cases, must be provided as part of the Application and will be taken into account in scoring Applications against assessment criterion 3. Applicants should consider this in development of their Project Proposal.

³⁰ The lead organisation is responsible for submitting the Project Proposal to the relevant Lead Agency and, if successful, entering into the grant agreement with the Lead Agency.

³¹ For example, an infrastructure upgrade on land owned by the Applicant, where the Applicant is also the relevant Local Council.

7.4 National Agreement on Closing the Gap

The National Agreement on Closing the Gap was developed in a genuine partnership between Australian Governments and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peak organisations. The National Agreement sets out ambitious targets and Priority Reforms that change the way governments work to improve outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. All projects affecting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people must have cultural safety embedded in any service offering.

The DRF contributes to Closing the Gap (CtG) between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians by providing grant funding for activities that address areas of need for Indigenous Australians and align with CtG Priority Reforms. Under Priority Reform Three, governments commit to engaging with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representatives before, during, and after emergencies such as natural hazard events and pandemics to make sure that:

- government decisions take account of the impact of those decisions on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are not disproportionately affected and can recover as quickly as other Australians from social and economic impacts.

Lead Agencies should consider how they will ensure the coordination of the DRF in their jurisdiction will align with the CtG Priority Reforms and/or contribute to CtG Targets. Applicants should consider this in project development.

To support reporting against CtG Targets, Applicants will be required to identify whether projects are led by First Nations organisations and/or stand to benefit First Nations communities.

For more information on CtG go to <https://www.closingthegap.gov.au/>

7.5 Accessibility considerations

The [Australian Government's Multicultural Access and Equity Policy](#) obliges Australian Government agencies to ensure their policies, programs and services - including those provided by contractors and service delivery partners - are accessible to, and deliver equitable outcomes for, people from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) backgrounds.

Lead Agencies should consider how they will ensure the coordination of the DRF in their jurisdiction will be accessible to people from CALD backgrounds, and Applicants should consider this in project development. For example, communications, projects, activities or events may require the use of professional translating or interpreting services in order to communicate with clients who have limited English proficiency. Any costs for translating and interpreting services should be factored into project budgets.

[Australia's Disability Strategy 2021-2031](#) (ADS) is Australia's overarching policy framework that provides national leadership towards an inclusive Australian society that ensures people with disability can fulfil their potential, as equal members of the community. An ADS policy priority is *'disaster preparedness, risk management plans and public emergency responses are inclusive of people with disability, and support their physical and mental health, and wellbeing.'* Lead Agencies and Applicants should consider the ADS and accessibility in development of DRF projects.

7.6 Attachments to the Project Proposal

Applicants must submit the following documents as attachments to their Project Proposals:

- evidence of the Applicant type for eligibility and co-contribution purposes, as detailed in section 4.2.
- a clear business case for the proposal, including a project plan, budget (using the Budget template issued by NEMA unless advised otherwise by your Lead Agency) and risk management plan commensurate with the size and scale of the project.

- evidence of consultation or compelling reasons for not consulting, where required under section 7.3.
- cost estimates prepared by a quantity surveyor or other relevant professional (e.g. a qualified actuary, accountant or finance officer who can verify that project costs are accurate and realistic, ideally less than 12 months old) for projects valued over \$1 million, or quotes or cost estimates prepared by the Applicant (ideally less than 6 months old) for projects valued under \$1 million. Where a cost estimate has been prepared by a quantity surveyor or other professional, this should be stated along with their qualifications in the cost estimate itself or elsewhere in the application (e.g. as part of the response to assessment criterion three) for assurance purposes.
- additionally, for *infrastructure projects*:
 - a cost benefit analysis (note: NEMA will provide a template on its [website](#) and through Lead Agencies that can be used for this purpose. Alternatively, Applicants may submit their own CBA template/report provided all minimum requirements set out at Appendix D are met)
 - evidence that the Applicant either owns the land/infrastructure (e.g. certificate of title) or has the land or infrastructure owner's permission to use the land/infrastructure (e.g. official permit, signed lease agreement)
 - evidence that the project will be ready to commence construction once Implementation Plans are endorsed (anticipated from mid-2027), or a clear outline of planned steps and timelines for commencing construction during the project period, including copies of any existing designs and approvals showing construction readiness (e.g. schematic plans, planning permits, development and building approvals, environmental approvals³²)
- additionally, for *projects with insurance co-benefits*:
 - evidence of any claimed insurance co-benefits (e.g. estimates or modelling prepared by an insurer or other relevant expert showing expected insurance impacts, detailed engineering specifications or before-and-after mapping showing that the infrastructure removes or reduces risk from future hazards, comparative case studies showing how similar infrastructure projects in other locations successfully lowered insurance premiums or reduced losses). Evidence of any other (i.e. non-insurance related) co-benefits should be provided separately as an optional attachment.
- additionally, for *joint Applications* (see section 7.2.4), letters of support from each delivery partner listed in the Application, including:
 - details of the delivery partner
 - an overview of how the delivery partner will work with the Applicant and any other delivery partners in the group to successfully complete the project
 - an outline of the relevant experience and/or expertise the delivery partner will bring to the group
 - the roles/responsibilities the delivery partner will undertake, and the resources (financial or in-kind) that it will contribute

Note: NEMA will provide a template through Lead Agencies that can be used for this purpose.
- additionally, for *multi-jurisdictional and national projects* (see section 7.2.3), confirmation in writing from the Lead Agencies in relevant states and territories that they have no objections in principle to the project being implemented in their jurisdictions

³² As noted in section 5.4, NEMA will **not** support Applications which include activities with the potential to adversely impact a matter of national environmental significance under the [Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999](#)³².

Note: NEMA will provide a template through Lead Agencies that can be used for this purpose.

Failure to provide this information may result in a Project Proposal, and any subsequent Application to NEMA that includes the Project Proposal, being ruled ineligible or scored down as part of merit assessment (see section 8.1.1 for further detail).

Applicants may provide up to eight additional (optional) attachments per project in support of their Project Proposal (e.g. evidence that supports historical co-contributions and claims made against the assessment criteria). Where optional attachments are provided, Applicants must reference these in their responses to the assessment criteria and identify the document name or attachment number.

For all supporting documents (both mandatory and optional), the amount of detail provided should be commensurate with the project size, complexity and grant amount requested (e.g. greater detail would be expected in the business case and budget for a \$5 million project compared with a \$250,000 project). Individual file sizes cannot be greater than 50MB.

7.7 Submitting Applications for funding to NEMA

Lead Agencies must submit Applications to NEMA through NEMA's online application portal by the published closing date for Applications to NEMA. As noted in section 7.2, Applicants (other than Lead Agencies) must apply through Lead Agencies and cannot submit Applications directly to NEMA.

NEMA will provide Lead Agencies with instructions and guidance on how to apply through NEMA's application portal. An offline Application form will also be made available to Lead Agencies and Applicants (through Lead Agencies) to assist with preparing Project Proposals and Applications.

To ensure that only the most competitive Applications are considered by the Australian Government's Assessment Panel, the number of Applications that each jurisdiction may submit to NEMA has been capped in Round Four per the table below.

Table 4: Lead Agency Application caps for Round Four

Jurisdiction	Maximum number of Applications that can be submitted to NEMA*
Cocos (Keeling) Islands	3
Christmas Island	3
Northern Territory	15
Australian Capital Territory	15
Tasmania	20
South Australia	25
Western Australia	25
Queensland	30
Victoria	30
New South Wales	30

* Application caps take into account the relative populations and number of Applications submitted by each state and territory in previous rounds, and have been reduced for Round Four to ensure assessment outcomes can be delivered within the indicative timeframes at Table 5.

Guidance on the approach that Lead Agencies are expected to take in determining which Project Proposals to submit to NEMA within their respective caps is provided in section 7.2.1.

For each Project Proposal that Lead Agencies intend to submit, Lead Agencies must:

- complete the online Application form in NEMA's application portal, ensuring that
 - all information requested in the online form has been entered
 - responses to all eligibility criteria and assessment criteria have been provided
 - all mandatory and any other supporting documents have been attached (see section 7.6)
- submit the online Application to NEMA via the portal by 5:00pm AEST on 25 August 2026.

Lead Agencies are responsible for ensuring that Applications are complete and accurate. Knowingly giving false or misleading information can be a serious offence under the [Criminal Code Act 1995](#)³³. If NEMA considers that false or misleading information has been provided in an Application, the Application may be excluded from further consideration.

If Lead Agencies find an error in an Application after submitting it to NEMA, they should contact NEMA as soon as possible, noting that once the closing time for Applications has passed, the Application is considered final and no changes may be made except in limited circumstances (e.g. correction of an error that does not materially change the Application). The acceptance of any changes after the submission of an Application is at the discretion of the Program Delegate, and may be refused if deemed to be supplementary information, in fairness to other Lead Agencies and Applicants.

Applications may be withdrawn at any time by written notice from the Lead Agency to NEMA at disaster.ready@nema.gov.au.³⁴

Eligibility and merit will be determined based on the information submitted. As such, unless requested by the Program Delegate or Panel, NEMA will not contact Lead Agencies for clarification on any aspect of an Application, including any suspected errors, missing information, or lack of evidence.

If an Application is ruled ineligible by the Program Delegate, NEMA will advise the Lead Agency once round outcomes have been finalised and the Application will be excluded from further consideration.¹⁰ NEMA is unable to provide Applicants or Lead Agencies with advice or rulings on the eligibility of Project Proposals prior to Application submission or during the course of the assessment process.

Lead Agencies should keep a copy of their Application and any supporting documents.

NEMA will acknowledge that it has received Applications upon submission.

If Lead Agencies need further guidance around the Application process or if they are unable to submit an Application online they should contact NEMA at disaster.ready@nema.gov.au in advance of the closing date and time.

7.7.1 Ministerial endorsement

The Lead Agency must provide written endorsement (i.e. agreement in writing) from the relevant minister(s) in that state or territory (ministerial endorsement) of the projects submitted to NEMA, including any multi-jurisdictional and national projects it is submitting.

Ministerial endorsement should include the titles and amounts of each of the projects submitted, for ease of reference. Relevant ministerial endorsements can be submitted at the time of Application, but must be submitted by email to disaster.ready@nema.gov.au by no later than **5:00pm AEST 8 September 2026** (i.e.

³³ <https://www.legislation.gov.au/C2004A04868/latest/text>

³⁴ Lead Agencies are not entitled to submit additional projects in place of projects that are withdrawn or found to be ineligible after the closing date and time.

two weeks after the close of Applications to NEMA). Any extensions or exemptions to this must be sought in writing and the decision to grant extensions or exemptions is at the discretion of the Program Delegate.

Except where an exemption has been granted, any projects that do not receive endorsement from the relevant minister(s) will not be considered further in the assessment process.

7.8 Timing of funding opportunity processes

Applicants may only submit Project Proposals to Lead Agencies, and Lead Agencies can only submit an Application for funding to NEMA, between the published opening and closing dates.

NEMA will only accept a late Application where a Lead Agency can demonstrate exceptional circumstances that will prevent them from submitting the Application by the closing date. Only the Program Delegate may approve the receipt and consideration of a late Application, and will only do so when it would be fair to allow the Application to be received late. Requests to submit a late Application must be provided to NEMA before the closing date.

Expected timing for application, assessment and post-award processes is shown in the table below.

Table 5: Expected timing for this grant opportunity

Activity	Timeframe*
Grant Opportunity Guidelines published on GrantConnect and Project Proposals to Lead Agencies open	29 May 2026
Project Proposals to Lead Agencies close	1 July 2026
Review of Project Proposals by Lead Agencies commences and Applications to NEMA open	2 July 2026
Review of Project Proposals by Lead Agencies concludes and Applications to NEMA close	25 August 2026
Assessment of Lead Agency Applications by the Australian Government	Late August to October 2026
Outcome announcements	From late October 2026
Schedules signed and funding delivered to Lead Agencies	January to March 2027
Implementation Plans endorsed and payments to Applicants from Lead Agencies. Projects formally commence [^]	From mid-2027
End date of grant activities	As specified in endorsed Implementation Plans

* This timeline is provided as a guide only and subject to change. While every care will be taken to expedite the time from announcement to payment, Applicants should be aware that they may not receive funding for several months or more after announcement.

[^] NEMA expects that Lead Agencies will be able to formally commence projects as soon as Implementation Plans are endorsed, or as otherwise agreed through those Plans.

7.9 Questions during the application process

Applicants developing Project Proposals should direct their enquiries to the Lead Agency in their state or territory.

Lead Agencies should direct questions to NEMA through: disaster.ready@nema.gov.au. NEMA aims to provide responses to questions within five (5) working days. If applicable, answers to questions will be posted in the Frequently Asked Questions on NEMA's website: www.nema.gov.au.

Please note that questions related to Round Four Applications should be submitted early in the application process to ensure they can be appropriately actioned prior to the Application deadline.

8 The grant selection process

8.1 Overview

8.1.1 Initial checks by NEMA

NEMA will review all Applications submitted by Lead Agencies against the co-contribution requirements and eligibility criteria set out in sections 3, 4 and 5, except for the following criteria, which will be checked by expert members of the Assessment Panel as part of the merit assessment process outlined at sections 8.1.3 and 8.2 below:

- Whether the primary purpose of the project aligns with one or more DRF objectives
- Whether the project is risk informed, aligned with plans and priority targeted, in accordance with the DRF's Investment Principles
- Whether the project will deliver enduring benefits for a community
- Whether the activity would normally be paid for by a state, territory or local government as part of BAU operations.

If issues are identified or as checks are completed, Applications will be referred to the Program Delegate for eligibility rulings. The Program Delegate will be the final decision maker on eligibility, and may:

- seek further advice from Australian Government agencies and/or the Assessment Panel where that advice is needed to reach a determination (e.g. in relation to BAU)
- review and make eligibility rulings at any point in the assessment process up to the signing of Schedules.

Applications that are ruled ineligible will not be considered further.

Artificial intelligence (AI) tools such as Microsoft 365 Copilot may be trialed by NEMA to assist with administrative steps outlined in sections 8.1.1, 8.1.2 and 8.1.3, including identifying potential eligibility issues for verification by NEMA staff, synthesising data generated across these stages, and assigning Applications to the most relevant/suitable departments, external experts and Panel members for review. Any such uses of AI will occur within NEMA's PROTECTED environment and comply with Australian Government standards including the Information Security Manual, the Australian Privacy Principles and the Protective Security Policy Framework to ensure they pose no risks to Applicants' or NEMA's data. No decisions will be made by AI or in reliance on AI analyses as part of any trial, nor will AI be used by the Assessment Panel as part of its assessment.

8.1.2 Interdepartmental and external advice

Concurrent with NEMA's initial checks, relevant Australian Government agencies and business areas within NEMA will be engaged to provide advice on:

- any other Commonwealth funding that has been provided or sought for each project (i.e. double-dipping), to inform eligibility decisions;

- whether projects could potentially be funded through other more appropriate sources, to inform merit assessment against criterion 4; and
- any other information (i.e. sensitivities or advice related to eligibility) that would support the Panel in its deliberations.

Where needed, NEMA may also seek advice on any claimed co-benefits (e.g. insurance cost benefits) or other matters related to Applications from external sources, including other Commonwealth entities and non-government entities, such as insurance industry representatives.

All parties who provide advice in this process will be required to perform their duties in accordance with relevant probity principles set out in the CGRPs and the DRF probity plan, including the completion of conflict of interest and confidentiality forms before receiving Application details and adherence to any management strategies determined by the Program Delegate.

Advice received through these processes will be provided to the Program Delegate and the Panel, during its meeting, to inform eligibility decisions, merit assessment and funding recommendations.

8.1.3 Expert eligibility checks, merit assessment and funding recommendations

Concurrent with NEMA's initial checks, Applications will be assigned to members of a DRF Assessment Panel (the Panel) for preliminary review (section 8.2.1) against:

- eligibility criteria that require expert advice to inform eligibility rulings by the Program Delegate. These will include, but not necessarily be limited to:
 - whether the primary purpose of the project aligns with one or more DRF objectives
 - whether the project is risk informed, aligned with plans and priority targeted, in accordance with the DRF's Investment Principles
 - whether the project will deliver enduring benefits for a community
 - whether the activity would normally be paid for by a state, territory or local government as part of BAU operations
- the published merit assessment criteria (see section 6), including consideration of:
 - DRF Investment Principles 1 to 3 as part of assessment criteria 1 and 2
 - whether projects provide value with relevant money³⁵ as part of assessment criterion 4
 - whether evidence, including all mandatory attachments, has been provided for claims made as part of scoring against relevant criteria (e.g. failure to provide the required cost estimates for an infrastructure project will be factored into scoring against assessment criterion 3).

The Panel as a whole will then meet to finalise its assessment (section 8.2.1) and make funding recommendations (see section 8.2.2) for NEMA and in turn the Minister to consider.

8.1.4 Value with relevant money

When assessing the extent to which an Application represents value with relevant money, the Panel will have regard to the Glossary definition, the considerations set out in section 6.4 and the rating matrix at Appendix F.

As noted in section 6, Applications must receive an overall value rating of at least 'Good' in order to be considered for funding. Overall value ratings will also be considered by the Panel when developing funding

³⁵ See glossary for an explanation of 'value with relevant money'.

recommendations (section 8.2.2) and in determining whether to award baseline funding to states and territories (section 3.1.3).

8.2 Who will assess Applications?

NEMA will establish and chair a Panel, comprising members agreed by the Program Delegate, to advise on eligibility matters as required, assess Applications against the published assessment criteria, and make funding recommendations.

The Chair of the Panel will be responsible for chairing panel meetings, overseeing the operation of the panel and supporting the established standards of probity, including management of conflicts of interest.

Panel members may be drawn from relevant Australian Government agencies and advisory bodies with expertise in disaster risk reduction and resilience across the four domains. The Panel may also include First Nations representatives and other experts to provide specialist advice in relevant areas (e.g. infrastructure) not covered by other Panel members, where needed.

An independent probity advisor will be appointed by NEMA to provide probity advice, briefings and support to the Program Delegate and Panel.

Prior to Panel assessment commencing, NEMA will provide the Panel with background information, a probity briefing including the DRF probity plan and forms, and details of the assessment process including an assessment framework.

Panel Members will be required to read all briefing material before commencing their assessment and to perform their duties in accordance with relevant probity principles set out in the CGRPs and the DRF probity plan, including the completion of conflict of interest and confidentiality forms before receiving Application details and adherence to any management strategies determined by the Program Delegate.

8.2.1 Panel assessment

The Panel will assess applications in two stages as follows.

1. Preliminary (independent) assessment:

- a) Each Panel member including the Chair will be assigned a subset of Applications to advise on eligibility matters requiring expert advice (including those listed at section 8.1.3) and to independently score against the four merit assessment criteria. In undertaking this step:
 - NEMA will take into account Panel members' disclosed conflicts and respective areas of expertise and availabilities when assigning Applications and endeavour to obtain at least two independent assessments for each Application. However, where this is not possible (due, for example, to timing, workload, conflict of interest or other constraints), NEMA will flag those Applications for the Panel to score as a whole during the Panel meeting.
 - Panel members will provide:
 - a raw score out of 10 for each of the weighted technical assessment criteria (criteria 1, 2 and 3) in accordance with the scoring matrix at Appendix E, which will be adjusted for each criterion's weighting to give weighted scores for each technical criterion and a total weighted score out of 100.
 - a raw score out of 3 for the non-weighted assessment criterion (criterion 4) in accordance with the scoring and rating matrix at Appendix F.
 - brief comments justifying scoring, and
 - advice on any eligibility matters requiring their expertise, including whether proposed activities amount to BAU having regard to the glossary definition, the justifications provided by Applicants and the additional guidance at Appendix C.

- Panel members may take into account the priority rankings ('High', 'Medium' or 'Low') assigned by Lead Agencies in scoring projects against assessment criterion 2.
 - Panel members may ask NEMA to seek clarification or additional information in order to resolve an ambiguity or inconsistency within an Application provided it will not materially change the nature of the Application or cause unfairness to other Applicants.
- b) The weighted scores for each technical criterion will then be standardised and averaged to generate preliminary technical criterion scores, total scores and ratings in accordance with the rating matrix at Appendix E. The raw overall value scores for each Application will also be averaged to generate preliminary overall value scores and ratings in accordance with the rating matrix at Appendix F.
- c) Based on these preliminary scores, a preliminary ranked list sorted by value for money and then total technical scores will be generated by NEMA for the Panel to consider in stage 2. In preparing this list, NEMA will:
- check that the minimum number of assessments per Application have been provided and, if the minimum hasn't been reached, seek to identify alternative Panel members to review and score those Applications ahead of the Panel meeting or flag those Applications for the Panel to score as a whole during the Panel meeting.
 - identify any outlier scores (i.e. where the weighted and standardised total scores given by individual Panel members' against assessment criteria 1 to 3 for an Application differ by 30 points or more or where their raw scores against criterion 4 for an Application differ by 2 points) and any unresolved matters raised by Panel members during preliminary assessment, and flag these for discussion during the Panel meeting.
 - identify the least-competitive Applications (those that received a preliminary criterion score equivalent to less than 6 out of 10 against any of the technical assessment criteria or a preliminary score of 1 out of 3 against the overall value criterion, when rounded to the nearest whole number³⁶) and move these to a separate Not For Further Consideration (NFFC) list.

2. Final (whole of Panel) assessment:

Following the completion of preliminary assessment, the Program Delegate and Panel will meet to finalise Application eligibility decisions and scores as follows:

- a) Conflicts of interest – the Chair will identify any Panel members who have previously identified conflicts of interest with Applications, and invite panel members to disclose any further interests. The Program Delegate will provide advice on the management of any conflicts (e.g. members with high conflicts of interest may be asked to leave the room during the Panel's discussion of conflicted Applications).
- b) Eligibility discussions – The Program Delegate will provide an overview of eligibility decisions made prior to the Panel meeting and may seek the Panel's advice on any outstanding eligibility

³⁶ For NFFC purposes, scores less than 'x.5' (e.g. 11.47) will be rounded down, whereas scores of 'x.5' (e.g. 11.52) and above will be rounded up.

matters, including where Panel Members differed in their views through preliminary assessment and any unresolved issues identified through the interdepartmental review process, to inform eligibility rulings. Any applications ruled ineligible at this point will be removed from further consideration.

- c) Scoring quorum – the Chair will confirm that all eligible Applications have received at least two Panel member assessments per Application. Any eligible projects that have not achieved a scoring quorum will be reviewed and scored by the Panel as a whole during the meeting.
- d) Least competitive Applications – the NFFC list (excluding any applications ruled ineligible at stage 2b above) will be presented to the Panel. Panel Members will be given the opportunity to discuss Applications on the NFFC list by exception (i.e. those with outlier scores, those that Panel members have specifically requested be discussed and those where merit-related advice was received through the interdepartmental review process) and to agree on final scores and ratings for assessment criteria 1 to 4. Following this process, NFFC-listed Applications with final scores of less than 6 out of 10 against any of the technical assessment criteria or of 1 out of 3, when rounded to the nearest whole number, against the overall value criterion will not be considered further in the assessment process, unless notional funding allocations (e.g. \$104.608 million for infrastructure projects), baseline funding thresholds or equity and diversity requirements (Investment Principle 4) under the DRF Guidelines cannot be met. Should this occur, the Panel may select and recommend Applications from the NFFC list to meet these allocations, thresholds and requirements, but only where projects satisfy all eligibility requirements and achieve minimum ratings of 'Suitable' for criteria 1 to 3 and 'Good' for criterion 4 through the Panel assessment process.
- e) Most competitive Applications – a preliminary ranked list of the most competitive Applications (i.e. those with preliminary scores of 5 or more out of 10 against all of the technical assessment criteria and 2 or more out of 3 against the overall value criterion) will be presented to the Panel. Members will be given the opportunity to discuss and adjust technical scores for these Applications by exception (i.e. those with outlier scores, those that Panel members have specifically requested be discussed and those where merit-related advice was received through the interdepartmental review process). Members will also review and may adjust overall value scores and ratings for the most competitive Applications having regard to the relative value of other Applications in the same funding stream. Following this, criterion scores, total scores and ratings against all assessment criteria will be taken to be final for all Applications.

8.2.2 Funding recommendations

At the end of Panel assessment, NEMA will prepare a provisional set of funding recommendations based on overall value with money scores out of 3 (primary sort order) and final technical scores out of 100 (secondary sort order), with the highest ranked Applications (based on the aforementioned sort order) within each funding stream provisionally 'recommended for funding' up to the notional funding amount for each stream. The Panel will then review and may adjust these recommendations taking into account relevant considerations and requirements as follows:

- baseline funding allocations to which states and territories are entitled provided the criteria at sections 3.1.3 and 3.1.4 are met.
- any priority areas to be preferenced in accordance with section 5.1.2 and the approach outlined at footnote 15.
- Investment Principle 4, which requires the Panel to consider equity with respect to the types of projects, the appropriateness of the geographic and thematic split of projects, and relative

benefit per capita (population impact), in acknowledgement that the DRF is national in scope with a variety of project activity types. 'Equity' does not mean an equal split of funding.

- any national interest, financial, legal, regulatory, governance or other issue or risk that is identified during any due diligence processes conducted in respect of each project.
- state and territory priority rankings assigned by Lead Agencies.
- the notional funding allocations for each stream and the total project funding available (\$139.477 million).

Once funding recommendations have been agreed by the Panel, NEMA:

- will prepare a Panel Assessment Report, which will make funding recommendations to the Coordinator-General (or their delegate) in accordance with these Guidelines, for endorsement by Panel Members.
- may seek further advice from the Panel out-of-session in relation to any outstanding matters or related matters that subsequently arise.

Based on the endorsed Panel Assessment Report, NEMA's Coordinator-General (or their delegate) will recommend projects to the Minister for funding approval. The Coordinator-General may delegate to an Australian Government official the responsibility to make recommendations to the Minister regarding any funding allocations to projects under the DRF, in accordance with the DRF Act. This includes delegating decisions to the Program Delegate.

8.2.3 Panel operating arrangements

In undertaking its assessment and developing funding recommendations, the Panel:

- may group Applications, including by funding stream, activity type, hazard type or by Lead Agency.
- may recommend partial funding for projects following discussion with the Lead Agency (through NEMA) to determine whether the project is capable of proceeding without full funding. In this case, NEMA will negotiate project and funding details with the Lead Agency through the Schedule negotiation process.
- may recommend more or less money than the notional funding allocations be awarded to projects in either stream, provided a clear justification exists (e.g. insufficient suitable Applications in a particular stream or there is a need to fund additional projects from one stream in order to meet baseline funding amounts) and the total of all funding recommendations and associated Administrative Funding does not exceed the funding envelope for Round Four (\$142.477 million).
- may, in developing funding recommendations, recommend that any residual funds across the two streams be combined and used to partially or fully fund one or more other suitable projects in either stream, taking into account their final scores, Investment Principle 4 and any stated focus areas for the round.
- will aim to reach a consensus on final scores and funding recommendations. Where this is not possible, the Chair (or acting Chair) of the Panel will have the final say, but dissenting views will be recorded in the reasons for the relevant recommendations.

A quorum of more than 50 per cent of Panel members, including the Chair (or acting Chair), must be present for the final assessment meeting. For Applications where the Chair is conflicted or otherwise unavailable, the Assistant Chair will act in the role. Where multiple conflicts arise, other Panel members may be called on to act as Chair.

Throughout the Panel meeting, minutes capturing key discussion points, decisions (including reasons) and recommendations will be recorded.

8.3 Who will approve DRF funding?

In accordance with the DRF Act, the Minister for Emergency Management is responsible for deciding which projects to fund. In making these decisions, the Minister:

- may take into account the findings of the Panel, in conjunction with any other advice or recommendations provided by NEMA,
- is not bound by the notional funding allocations set out in these Guidelines and may decide to award more or less funding to projects in either stream, within the total funding envelope for the Round, and
- will exercise their responsibilities under the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013* (PGPA Act) to confirm the expenditure would be a proper use of relevant money.

The Minister's decision is final in all matters, including:

- the approval of the funding;
- the funding amount to be awarded; and
- the terms and conditions of the Schedule.

Projects may be approved for full or partial funding from the DRF. Any funding shortfall either due to the funding approved or by the budget being exceeded during the life of the project is the responsibility of the Lead Agency. Successful Lead Agencies may request in writing a reduction in scope for a project in the event only partial funding is approved.

If funds become available prior to the signing of Schedules, for example due to project withdrawals or changes, NEMA may recommend to the Minister that any available funds be reallocated to other projects assessed within the round as competitive.³⁷ Matters that may be taken into account in recommending other projects include, but are not limited to, their suitability and value with relevant money as determined by the Assessment Panel, Investment Principle 4 and any stated focus/priority areas for the round.

If Applications are assessed as fundable³⁸ through NEMA merit assessment, but not initially funded under Round Four due to insufficient funds being available when Schedules are signed, NEMA may subsequently consider and recommend these Applications for funding under DRF Round Four Schedules, other DRF rounds or through other NEMA programs if and when excess funds become available (e.g. due to funds not being fully allocated through application rounds, efficiencies in project delivery or the recovery of unspent funds). NEMA will consult relevant Lead Agencies in all such cases before making recommendations to the Minister to confirm Applicant support for any reallocation proposal and to ensure that all relevant requirements governing the reallocation of funds are met in accordance with the DRF Act, program guidelines, FFA Schedules and NEMA policies (e.g. project alignment with program eligibility criteria and objectives, ability to deliver the project in substantially the same form as was originally proposed and assessed).

The Minister will be the final decision maker on these matters.

9 Notification of Application outcomes

NEMA will advise Lead Agencies and the Department of Infrastructure of Application outcomes in writing. Where possible, these notifications will occur prior to the Minister's announcement and will be communicated to successful applicants by Lead Agencies and the Department of Infrastructure under embargo. All other Applicants will be notified of outcomes through Lead Agencies and the Department of Infrastructure following the Minister's announcement.

Any specific conditions attached to funding will be recorded in Schedules.

³⁷ Recommended projects may not be in the same state or territory as withdrawn projects.

³⁸ Rated at least 'suitable' against the technical assessment criteria and at least 'good' for overall value.

9.1 Feedback on Applications

Written feedback on Applications will be provided by NEMA to Lead Agencies.

Lead Agencies are responsible for passing feedback from NEMA to Applicants except for the IOTs.

IOT Applicants will be provided feedback through the Department of Infrastructure.

10 Successful grant applications

10.1 Schedules (funding agreements)

Following the Minister's decision, and after Lead Agencies have been notified of the Minister's decision on projects to be funded and the quantum of funding allocated, Schedules will be developed under the [Federation Funding Agreement – Environment](#) (FFA-Environment) between the Australian Government and each relevant state or territory government (the **Schedule**).

The Schedule and associated Audit and Reporting Framework will detail the project delivery, reporting and milestone requirements, and other relevant considerations.

The Schedule between Western Australia and the Australian Government will cover any successful projects that are to be delivered in the Indian Ocean Territories (Project Proponents of projects to be delivered in the Indian Ocean Territories will be required to enter into a separate funding agreement with the Lead Agency for Western Australia).

The Schedule will include any funds being provided for Lead Agency administration of DRF projects in a state or territory (see section 3.1.44).

The Schedule will state:

- the total funding amount to be paid by the Commonwealth, exclusive of GST
- any contributions state or territory government sources will make per project
- any contributions other parties (i.e. non-state or territory government sources) will make per project, and
- any Administrative Funding being provided to/by Lead Agencies.

The Schedule must be finalised before any payments of Commonwealth funds are made. NEMA is not responsible for any expenditure incurred until the Schedule is finalised and executed and the Implementation Plan is endorsed. If Lead Agencies choose to start projects, or give Applicants permission to start projects, before they have an executed Schedule and endorsed Implementation Plan, they do so at their own cost and risk.

Once Schedules are finalised (co-signed), the Minister has the authority to agree amendments to Schedules, project scope and project timeframes, where requested in writing by the responsible state or territory minister. Lead Agencies should discuss any required amendments with NEMA in the first instance (see section 12.4.2).

This may include agreement to extending project timeframes beyond the maximum project duration where the Minister considers that there are reasonable grounds, or costs unexpectedly exceed the indicative budget at the time of application. The Minister may choose to delegate authority to amend project scope and project timeframes (including to the Program Delegate) where the matter/s have no financial impacts. The Minister will have complete discretion to accept or refuse amendments to the Schedule.

10.2 How we pay the funding

Once the Schedule has been finalised, the Australian Government Treasury will transfer the funding allocation to each successful Lead Agency as a single payment through the legislated and normal monthly payment mechanisms.

Lead Agencies are responsible for making payments to Project Proponents in accordance with endorsed Implementation Plans, and must ensure that binding agreements that enable Lead Agencies to meet their obligations under these Guidelines and the Schedules are in place with Project Proponents prior to paying them DRF funds.

Successful Lead Agencies will be required to report how the funding has been spent in accordance with the reporting milestones outlined in the Schedule.

The Government of Western Australia will receive funding for any successful projects that are to be delivered in the Indian Ocean Territories, and will be required to transfer these funds to the Applicant.

10.3 Payments and GST

All payments to states and territories under FFA-Environment Schedules are Goods and Services Tax (GST) exclusive.

Grants are assessable income for taxation purposes, unless exempted by a taxation law. NEMA recommends Applicants seek independent professional advice on their taxation obligations or seek assistance from the [Australian Taxation Office](https://www.ato.gov.au/).³⁹ NEMA does not provide advice on the taxation circumstances of particular Applicants.

10.4 Implementation Plans

Implementation Plans must be provided by Lead Agencies to NEMA as soon as possible in a template provided by NEMA, but no later than two months after the commencement of the relevant Schedule. A Lead Agency should discuss with NEMA as soon as possible if it is likely to require additional time to complete an Implementation Plan, and seek agreement to an extension. The Minister reserves the right to withdraw Commonwealth funding if Implementation Plans are not provided within these periods.

Templates pre-populated with project details will be provided as soon as possible after successful projects are announced so that development of Implementation Plans can commence. Where necessary, templates will be reissued by NEMA after Schedules have been co-signed with any amended project details included, as agreed in the relevant Schedule.

A separate Implementation Plan must be submitted for all projects under the Schedule and outline how each project will be managed (for Western Australia this includes any successful projects that are to be delivered in the Indian Ocean Territories).

10.5 Project commencement

Project activities funded by the Commonwealth cannot formally commence until NEMA has endorsed the relevant Implementation Plan in writing. The commencement of other project activities (i.e. parts of a project funded from other sources) is at the discretion of Lead Agencies, noting that they do so at their own cost and risk (see section 10.1).

The Australian Government is not responsible or liable for any activities undertaken before an Implementation Plan covering that project is endorsed. This includes the use of Australian Government funds (when provided) to cover retrospective costs, or costs incurred by the Lead Agency, Applicant and/or delivery partners prior to NEMA's endorsement of the Implementation Plan. If in doubt, Lead Agencies should discuss with NEMA before expenditure is incurred on a project.

³⁹ <https://www.ato.gov.au/>

The Minister may withdraw an offer of funding if project activities for which Commonwealth funding was sought/awarded are commenced or completed before Schedules are co-signed or the relevant Implementation Plan is endorsed.

11 Announcement of grants

The Minister for Emergency Management will make the first announcement about successful projects. A Lead Agency may request to be involved in a joint announcement with the Australian Government.

The Minister may undertake announcements in a staged approach across states and territories, recognising that certain Applications may be more technical in nature and require more comprehensive validation as part of the assessment process.

Once round outcomes have been publicly announced, successful projects will be listed on the NEMA website (www.nema.gov.au).

Successful projects will also be listed in Schedules, which are published on the [Federal Financial Relations website](#)⁴⁰ and the [GrantConnect website](#)⁴¹ once finalised.

12 How we monitor your grant activity

12.1 Keeping NEMA informed

Lead Agencies **must** let NEMA know if anything is likely to affect their funded projects as soon as possible.

NEMA needs to know of any key changes to organisations or business activities, particularly if they affect the successful Lead Agency's ability to fulfil the terms of the Schedule, carry on business and pay debts due.

If Lead Agencies become aware of a breach of terms and conditions under the Schedule, they **must** contact NEMA immediately.

Lead Agencies **must** notify NEMA in a timely manner of any public or notable events relating to their projects and provide an opportunity for the Minister or their representative to attend.

12.2 Reporting

NEMA has established an Audit and Reporting Framework for DRF projects, which is published on NEMA's website.

The objectives of the Audit and Reporting Framework are to:

- support Lead Agencies in monitoring the progress and impact of DRF funded projects in their jurisdictions, and in meeting their reporting obligations under the DRF
- direct Lead Agencies to engage the services of an appointed auditor to undertake the assurance activities, and
- inform NEMA's monitoring, reporting and evaluation activities, including providing the Australian Government with reasonable assurance regarding the implementation and expenditure of DRF funded projects and budgets, and the performance of the program overall.

⁴⁰ <https://federalfinancialrelations.gov.au/>

⁴¹ <https://www.grants.gov.au/>

12.2.1 Reporting responsibilities of state and territory Governments

State and territory governments must have systems such as monitoring and evaluation frameworks in place to meet their data collection and reporting obligations outlined in schedules developed under the Federation *Funding Agreement – Environment* (Agreement) between the Australian Government and each relevant state or territory government (Schedule), as summarised below.

Lead Agencies must, and must ensure that Project Proponents, keep detailed and accurate records related to DRF funded projects in accordance with any applicable regulatory or statutory requirements, and in any event for a period of at least five (5) years after the end of the funding period consistent with financial and other record keeping obligations under Australian Government legislation including the [Archives Act 1983](#)⁴², the [Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013](#)⁴³ and the [Criminal Code Act 1995](#)⁴⁴. State and territory governments are encouraged to give consideration to fraud risk, detection and mitigation.

Lead Agencies are expected to submit reports in the manner, within the timeframes, in the format, and containing the information outlined in the Schedule and the Audit and Reporting Framework, as published and updated on NEMA's website, or as otherwise specified by NEMA. Indicative information to be provided in these reports is summarised in this document.

The Australian Government reserves the right to amend or adjust reporting requirements from time to time, as necessary.

If there are any changes proposed to projects or other significant events related to projects during the project period (including but not limited to changes in scope, budget and timeframe), Lead Agencies must notify NEMA noting that Australian Government approval is required for project variations (see section 12.4).

State and territory governments receiving funding for projects under Round Four of the DRF 2026-27 are required to provide the below plans and reports. With the exception of Ad Hoc Reports, timeframes for each deliverable will be stated in each state and territory's Schedule. The Program Delegate will be responsible for approving all reports.

1. **Performance Reports** – quarterly reports provided following the formal commencement of projects and encompassing all projects under the Schedule that set out progress against agreed milestones, outcomes and budgets as outlined in the Implementation Plan. Indicative content requirements are included in the Audit and Reporting Framework and a template will be provided by NEMA.
2. **Final Reports** – reports provided following the completion of projects under the Schedule that set out what outcomes have been achieved and total expenditure incurred for each completed project. A template will be provided by NEMA.
3. **Financial Acquittals and Audit Reports** – declarations and reports provided following the completion of projects under the Schedule that confirm the expenditure of funds and provide assurance that the funds were used in accordance with Schedule terms.
4. **Ad Hoc Reports and meetings** – the use of regular reporting is intended to minimise the need for and burden of, ad hoc reporting on Lead Agencies and Project Proponents. However, NEMA may need to ask for updates that are not addressed through regular reporting. These may include detail on how any Administrative Funding provided is being used, interim status reports, reports on any underspends, details of media events, and information requests from the Australian Government Minister. NEMA may

⁴² <https://www.legislation.gov.au/C2004A02796/latest/text>

⁴³ <https://www.legislation.gov.au/C2013A00123/latest/text>

⁴⁴ <https://www.legislation.gov.au/C2004A04868/latest/text>

also need to organise meetings to discuss aspects of project implementation – for example any significant delays or difficulties in completing the project; events and announcements related to the project; or assumptions and objectives of the project(s).

12.3 Financial declaration and underspends

Lead Agencies are required to provide declarations that funding is spent in accordance with the Schedule (see section 12.2.1) and may be asked to report on any underspends of the funding.

Where underspends (including due to efficiencies in project delivery) are identified, NEMA will determine whether an amount should be repaid, and if so, how much should be repaid with regard to the circumstances of each individual matter, in accordance with the Schedule terms and subsection 21(4) of the DRF Act.

Where repayment is not required, NEMA will work with Lead Agencies to reallocate funds to other projects, where possible, in accordance with the Schedule terms and any supplementary guidance issued by NEMA. All such proposals are subject to Australian Government agreement.

Lead Agencies can contact erf.drf.implementation@nema.gov.au for further advice on reallocation and repayment processes.

12.4 Project withdrawals and variations

12.4.1 Prior to signing of Schedules

Projects may need to be withdrawn by Lead Agencies prior to the signing of Schedules – for example if they cannot proceed due to changed circumstances, have already been completed, or they received funding from an alternative source. Lead Agencies **must** notify NEMA at disaster.ready@nema.gov.au of any withdrawals as soon as possible.

NEMA will only consider changes to awarded projects prior to the signing of Schedules in limited circumstances. These include, but are not limited to:

- minor editorial changes to a project's title or description for media or other purposes
- where the removal or replacement of a delivery partner is necessary due to unforeseen circumstances
- where one or more project components have already been or will be delivered with other funding (e.g. grants awarded since the DRF Application was submitted), requiring a reduction in the DRF project's scope and budget.

NEMA will not normally consider:

- requests to replace a Project Proponent
- changes in scope or budget that would have the effect of either reducing or broadening the project activities and/or outcomes outlined in the original Application to NEMA and assessed by the Panel.

For all such requests, the Lead Agency must:

- detail any proposed change in Project Proponent, delivery partner/s, funding amounts and project scope
- clearly outline the circumstances that have led to and necessitate the change, as well the impacts of the change
- demonstrate how it is feasible for the original objectives and outcomes of the project to be achieved, and that the project still represents value with relevant money, and
- put the request (including all information listed above) in writing to NEMA at disaster.ready@nema.gov.au within 20 business days of Application outcomes being announced by the Minister. Change requests received after 20 business days will be treated as project

withdrawals (section 8.3) unless an extension to submit the request has been made and approved by the Program Delegate, which will only be considered in exceptional circumstances.

The Program Delegate will consider all change requests from an eligibility perspective. The Minister will be the final decision maker on whether to approve eligible project changes in accordance Division Two of the DRF Act, unless otherwise delegated by the Minister.

12.4.2 After Schedules have been signed

NEMA recognises that unexpected events may affect a Project Proponent's progress in delivering a project. In these circumstances, Lead Agencies should contact erf.drf.implementation@nema.gov.au regarding post-award variations which will be managed in accordance with NEMA's variation policy, noting that requests to change the scope of a project will not normally be considered by NEMA except in limited circumstances.

12.5 Compliance

12.5.1 Compliance with laws and NEMA policies

In carrying out projects, Lead Agencies must comply, and require Project Proponents to comply, with:

- the provisions of any applicable statutes, regulations, by-laws, and requirements of the Commonwealth and any State, Territory or local authority; and
- these Guidelines, Schedule terms, any project-specific funding conditions and any applicable NEMA policies.

This includes, but is not limited to, ensuring that, where applicable to projects outlined in Schedules and in accordance with the [Federal Safety Commissioner Act 2022](#)⁴⁵, financial contributions to a building project or projects are only made where a builder or builders accredited under the Australian Government Work Health and Safety Accreditation Scheme are contracted.

12.5.2 Compliance visits

NEMA may visit project sites during or upon completion of projects to review progress and compliance with Implementation Plans and Schedules. NEMA will provide Lead Agencies with reasonable notice of any visit.

12.6 Evaluation

NEMA has established a Monitoring and Evaluation Plan to evaluate the DRF to measure how well the outcomes and objectives of the projects have been achieved to ensure iterative and adaptive learning, informing future Australian Government actions. NEMA will also evaluate the design of the program to ensure experiences and outcomes from earlier rounds inform the development of future rounds and that the program remains fit-for-purpose.

As part of the Monitoring and Evaluation Plan, NEMA will periodically evaluate past rounds. As part of the internal evaluation, NEMA may:

- use information from Applications and reporting (see section 12.2); and
- interview successful Lead Agencies, including downstream partners and local governments.

⁴⁵ <https://www.legislation.gov.au/C2016A00087/latest/text>

The Australia-New Zealand Emergency Management Committee (ANZEMC), as the peak government committee responsible for emergency management will be given the opportunity to participate in the internal evaluation process.

12.7 Acknowledgement

Successful Lead Agencies and/or Project Proponents must acknowledge Australian Government funding in all public materials relating to projects funded under the DRF and funding agreements.

For the purposes of these Guidelines, public materials include, but are not limited to, publications, reports, signage, media releases, public statements, promotional materials, digital content, social media, websites, presentations, signage, and event materials.

12.7.1 Mandatory use of the NEMA logo

The NEMA logo must be used on all public materials related to projects funded under the DRF in accordance with branding, style and [logo usage guidelines issued by NEMA](#), and must not be altered, distorted or used in a misleading manner.

12.7.2 Approved acknowledgement statements

Where a project funded under the DRF is referred to in public materials, the relevant Lead Agency and/or Project Proponent must include one of the below acknowledgement statements or the examples available on the [NEMA website](#) as applicable:

“This project received funding from the Australian Government, in partnership with other funding contributors.”

or

“This project received funding from the Australian Government, in partnership with *[insert name of state/territory/organisation]*.”

12.7.3 Media and public communications

Successful Lead Agencies must nominate a point of contact to liaise with NEMA in relation to any media engagement, public statements or announcements concerning the DRF.

Successful Project Proponents via the relevant state/territory Lead Agency must notify [NEMA's Media team](#) in advance of any proposed media activity (excluding social media), public announcement, or public communication relating to the project. NEMA will in turn liaise with the Office of the Minister for Emergency Management where necessary.

The Minister for Emergency Management will be given the opportunity to make the initial public announcement of successful projects funded by NEMA.

Subject to the prior agreement of the Australian Government, successful Lead Agencies or Project Proponents may request to participate in joint public announcements with the Australian Government.

Lead Agencies should refer and must adhere to any additional cross-government media and communications protocols issued by NEMA from time to time.

12.7.4 Social media

NEMA should be tagged (NEMA's account is @nemagovau on Facebook, LinkedIn, and Instagram) when creating social media content related to DRF funded projects.

12.7.5 Questions about acknowledging funding

Any further questions about acknowledging funding provided through NEMA can be sent to digital@nema.gov.au; logos, design guidance, and additional information is also available on the [NEMA website](#).

12.8 Intellectual property

Lead Agencies must, and must ensure that relevant third parties (including Project Proponents):

- grant the Commonwealth an irrevocable, royalty-free, non-exclusive licence of Intellectual Property rights to the Commonwealth to use, modify, communicate, reproduce, publish, and adapt the Activity Material of funded projects for Commonwealth purposes, except where projects involve Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property (ICIP) or another exception has been agreed with NEMA (see process below).
- provide the Commonwealth with a copy of any Activity Material that the Commonwealth needs to use under the licence in the format reasonably requested by the Commonwealth.

These arrangements do not affect ownership of Intellectual Property rights in Existing Material.

Intellectual property rights in Activity Material will generally vest in the Project Proponent.

The Commonwealth may use Reporting Material provided by Lead Agencies as required under the Guidelines for any purpose, including to inform the monitoring and evaluation of the Disaster Ready Fund.

ICIP rights will be respected as Indigenous owned and controlled knowledge, and Activity Material containing ICIP will not be used, modified, communicated, reproduced, published or adapted without express permission from the knowledge-holders.

Other exceptions to the above arrangements may be agreed on a case-by-case basis. These must be requested in writing (including a detailed justification and alternative Intellectual Property proposal) through NEMA no later than two weeks after outcome announcements and, where agreed by the Commonwealth, will be recorded in Implementation Plans.

13 Probity

NEMA is committed to ensuring that Application assessment and selection processes under the DRF are fair and impartial, conducted according to the published grant opportunity guidelines, incorporate appropriate safeguards against fraud and corruption, unlawful activities and other inappropriate conduct and are otherwise consistent with relevant legislation.

These grant opportunity guidelines may be changed from time-to-time by NEMA. When this happens, the changes will be published as an addendum on [GrantConnect](#)⁴⁶ (where possible) and as a revised version of the grant opportunity guidelines on [NEMA's website](#). Lead Agencies will be advised in writing of changes to the grant opportunity guidelines within 10 business days of the changes having been approved by the Minister and, where possible, before they are published on GrantConnect.

⁴⁶ <https://www.grants.gov.au/>

Lead Agencies, Applicants and Project Proponents should be aware of obligations under the [National Anti-Corruption Commission Act 2022](#)⁴⁷, noting that under the Act the conduct of Commonwealth grant recipients may fall within the Commission's jurisdiction [see [NACC Fact Sheets](#)⁴⁸].

13.1 Enquiries and feedback

All complaints and any questions from Applicants must be directed to the relevant Lead Agency in the first instance.

Lead Agencies may raise questions and complaints about decisions on Applications with NEMA in writing by email to disaster.ready@nema.gov.au.

If Lead Agencies or Applicants do not agree with the way a complaint is handled by NEMA, they may take the complaint to the [Commonwealth Ombudsman](#)⁴⁹. The Ombudsman will not usually consider a complaint unless the matter has first been raised directly with NEMA.

The Commonwealth Ombudsman can be contacted on:

Phone (Toll free): 1300 362 072

Website: www.ombudsman.gov.au

13.2 Conflict of interest

Any conflicts of interest could affect the performance or integrity of the DRF. There may be a conflict of interest, or perceived conflict of interest, if, for example, a person has a:

- professional, commercial or personal relationship with a party who is able to influence the Application selection process, such as an Australian Government official or member of an external committee (including the Panel)
- relationship with, or interest in, an organisation which is likely to interfere with or restrict a Lead Agency from carrying out the proposed activities fairly and independently, or
- relationship with, or interest in, an organisation from which they will receive personal gain because the organisation receives some form of benefit (for example, funding) under the DRF.

Lead Agencies will be asked to declare, as part of each Application, any actual, apparent or perceived conflicts of interests and how these will be managed, or that, to the best of their knowledge, there is no conflict of interest. If Lead Agencies later identify an actual, apparent or perceived conflict of interest, they must inform NEMA in writing immediately at disaster.ready@nema.gov.au, including any existing or proposed management strategies. Lead Agencies are responsible for managing conflicts involving their staff, contractors, Applicants or delivery partners in compliance with their relevant state or territory legislation and rules regarding probity, privacy and confidentiality.

Conflicts of interest for Australian Government staff and contractors involved with the design, assessment and implementation of the DRF, including Panel members, must be declared in accordance with the [Australian Public Service Code of Conduct](#) (Section 13(7)⁵⁰ of the [Public Service Act 1999](#)⁵¹) and section 29

⁴⁷ <https://www.legislation.gov.au/C2022A00088/latest/text>

⁴⁸ <https://www.nacc.gov.au/resource-centre/nacc-fact-sheets>

⁴⁹ <https://www.ombudsman.gov.au/>

⁵⁰ <https://www.apsc.gov.au/working-aps/integrity/integrity-resources/code-of-conduct>

⁵¹ <https://www.legislation.gov.au/C2004A00538/latest/versions>

(duty to disclose interests) of the [Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013](#)⁵². Any such conflicts will be handled in accordance with the *DRF Probity Plan*.

With respect to probity matters, the Minister for Emergency Management and their staff must comply with the [Australian Government's Code of Conduct for Ministers](#)⁵³ and [Ministerial Staff Code of Conduct](#)⁵⁴.

13.3 Fraud and corruption

Lead Agencies and Project Proponents must have appropriate frameworks in place to manage the risk of Fraud and Corruption in relation to DRF funded projects. These safeguards must contain appropriate Fraud and Corruption prevention, detection, investigation and reporting processes and procedures.

If Lead Agencies or Project Proponents become aware of:

- (a) any Fraud or Corruption in relation to the performance of DRF funded projects; or
- (b) any other Fraud or Corruption that has had or may have an effect on the performance of DRF funded projects,

they must report the matter to NEMA and all appropriate law enforcement and regulatory agencies.

NEMA may, at its discretion, investigate any Fraud or Corruption, or claims of Fraud or Corruption, in relation to any project in line with NEMA's *Fraud and Corruption Control Framework*. By entering into funding agreements Lead Agencies agree to co-operate and provide all reasonable assistance at their own cost with any such investigation.

13.4 Privacy

NEMA treats personal information according to the [Privacy Act 1988](#)⁵⁵ (Privacy Act) and the [Australian Privacy Principles](#)⁵⁶. This includes letting individuals know:

- what personal information we collect
- why we collect personal information
- how we use personal information, and
- who we give personal information to and why.

'Personal information' means information or an opinion about an identified individual, or an individual who is reasonably identifiable:

- (a) whether the information or opinion is true or not and
- (b) whether the information or opinion is recorded in a material form or not.

Personal information can only be used or disclosed to someone else for the primary purpose for which it was collected, unless an exemption under the Australian Privacy Principles applies.

⁵² <https://www.legislation.gov.au/C2013A00123/latest/text>

⁵³ <https://www.pmc.gov.au/resources/code-conduct-ministers>

⁵⁴ <https://ministers.finance.gov.au/smos/publication/2022/07/07/ministerial-staff-code-conduct>

⁵⁵ <https://www.legislation.gov.au/C2004A03712/latest/text>

⁵⁶ <https://www.oaic.gov.au/privacy/australian-privacy-principles>

The types of personal information that NEMA may collect and the purposes for which NEMA may hold, use and disclose personal information are set out in NEMA's [Privacy Policy](#)⁵⁷.

The Australian Government may also use and disclose personal information that it obtains in connection with the DRF and an Application for funding as part of any other Australian Government business or function. This includes:

- disclosing grant information including details about Lead Agencies, Applicants, Project Proponents and delivery partners on GrantConnect and NEMA's website as required for reporting purposes and giving information to the Australian Taxation Office for compliance purposes.
- sharing information with other Australian Government entities for purposes including government administration, research or service delivery, according to Australian laws.
- sharing project information with government and non-government bodies for the purpose of seeking expert advice to inform the assessment of projects.

By submitting an Application, Lead Agencies warrant that they have obtained privacy consents from relevant individuals for the use of their personal information in a manner consistent with these Guidelines.

In accordance with section 26A of the DRF Act, NEMA will publish an annual report that details financial decisions made in the previous financial year. The annual report will include, but not be limited to, amounts paid and payable under grants and/or other arrangements as well as the details of successful and unsuccessful Applications (where written agreement to the latter is provided by Lead Agencies).

As part of the Application, Lead Agencies must declare that they will comply with the Privacy Act and the Australian Privacy Principles, as if they were an agency for the purposes of that Act and impose the same privacy obligations on officers, employees, agents and subcontractors that they engage to assist with the activity, in respect of personal information collected, used, stored, or disclosed in connection with the activity. Accordingly, Lead Agencies must not do anything, which if done by NEMA would breach an Australian Privacy Principle as defined in the Privacy Act.

13.5 Confidential information

Other than any information available in the public domain, Lead Agencies agree not to disclose to any person, other than NEMA, any confidential information relating to the DRF, without NEMA's prior written approval. The obligation will not be breached where Lead Agencies are required by law or Parliament to disclose the relevant information or where the relevant information is publicly available (other than through breach of a confidentiality or non-disclosure obligation).

NEMA may, at any time, require a Lead Agency to arrange for a Lead Agency's employees, agents or subcontractors to give a written undertaking relating to non-disclosure of our confidential information in a form considered acceptable by NEMA.

NEMA will keep any information in connection with the Schedule confidential to the extent that NEMA is satisfied it meets all of the three conditions below:

1. the Lead Agency has clearly identified the information as confidential in the Application and explain why NEMA should treat it as confidential;
2. the information is commercially sensitive; and
3. revealing the information would cause unreasonable harm to the Lead Agency or someone else (including an Applicant).

⁵⁷ <https://www.nema.gov.au/about-us/privacy-disclosures>

NEMA will not be in breach of any confidentiality obligation if the information is disclosed to:

- the Panel, other expert advisors engaged by NEMA and Australian Government employees and contractors to help NEMA administer or manage the DRF effectively;
- employees and contractors of NEMA so NEMA can research, assess, monitor and analyse programs and activities;
- employees and contractors of other Australian Government agencies for any purpose, including government administration, research or service delivery;
- other Australian Government, state, territory or local government agencies in DRF reports and consultations;
- the Auditor-General, Ombudsman, Privacy Commissioner, or National Anti-Corruption Commission;
- the responsible Minister or Parliamentary Secretary; or
- a House or a Committee of the Australian Parliament.

13.6 Freedom of information

All documents in the possession of the Australian Government, including those about the DRF, may be subject to the [Freedom of Information Act 1982](#)⁵⁸ (FOI Act).

The purpose of the FOI Act is to give members of the public rights of access to information held by the Australian Government and its entities. Under the FOI Act, members of the public can seek access to documents held by the Australian Government. This right of access is limited only by the exceptions and exemptions necessary to protect essential public interests and private and business affairs of persons in respect of whom the information relates.

All Freedom of Information requests must be referred to the Freedom of Information Coordinator in writing.

By mail: Freedom of Information Coordinator
National Emergency Management Agency
PO Box 6500
Canberra ACT 2602

By email: FOI@nema.gov.au

14 Glossary

Term	Definition
Activity Material	Any Material, other than Reporting Material, created or developed by Lead Agencies, Project Proponents or a third party as a result of funded project activities and includes any Existing Material that is incorporated in or supplied with the Activity Material.
Adaptation	The process of adjustment to actual or expected climate change and its effects. In human systems, adaptation seeks to moderate or avoid harm or exploit beneficial opportunities. In some natural systems, human intervention may facilitate adjustment to expected climate and its effects. Includes adaptation for natural hazards, vulnerability, exposure risk and capacity to respond to natural hazards.

⁵⁸ <https://www.legislation.gov.au/C2004A02562/latest/versions>

Administrative Funding	Funding provided by the Australian Government to Lead Agencies to support Program Administration Costs. This funding cannot be used for project administration costs incurred by Project Proponents or for costs related to the preparation or facilitation of DRF Applications.
Applicant	An eligible entity that develops and submits a DRF Project Proposal to a Lead Agency for consideration and possible submission to NEMA. A Lead Agency may also be an Applicant.
Application	A Project Proposal submitted by a Lead Agency to NEMA.
Assessment criteria	The specified principles or standards that Project Proposals must address and against which Applications will be judged.
Assessment Panel	The expert panel established by NEMA to ensure the success of the DRF through impartial assessment of Applications against the assessment criteria and development of evidence-based recommendations for the Minister.
Assessment process	The method used to select projects to fund under the DRF in accordance with these Guidelines.
Audit Report	The audit report required to be undertaken by Lead Agencies upon completion of certain projects in accordance with the <i>DRF Audit and Reporting Framework</i> .
Business as usual (BAU) activities	Standard capital works or recurrent essential services of Commonwealth, state, territory or local government bodies that the responsible body would ordinarily be expected to undertake with internal funding. See Appendix C for related guidance and examples.
Co-contributions	The co-contribution (either financial or in-kind) provided by the Lead Agency, Applicant and/or delivery partners to match or supplement funding sought from the Australian Government under the DRF.
Cohorts at disproportionate disaster risk	Includes but is not limited to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • children and young people; • culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) communities; • First Nations communities; • LGBTQIA+ community; • migrant and refugee communities; • people over the age of 65; • people with a disability; • those experiencing homelessness, unemployment or poverty; • women.
Construction ready	All planning, design, regulatory approvals, and resource requirements are in place for construction to begin.
Coordinator-General	The accountable authority of the National Emergency Management Agency.

Corruption	Any conduct that affects an official's honesty or impartiality in their role, involves a breach of public trust, abuses a person's office or involves the misuse of information acquired in an official capacity.
Decision maker	The person who makes a decision to award Australian Government funding. The DRF Act mandates the decision maker for funding as the Australian Government Minister responsible for emergency management.
Delivery partner	A third-party entity that will collaborate with an Applicant or Project Proponent to deliver, or deliver aspects of, successful DRF projects.
Department of Infrastructure	The Australian Government Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications and the Arts which facilitates the delivery of state-type services to Australia's non-self-government territories (including the Indian Ocean Territories).
Disaster Ready Fund	<p>The Disaster Ready Fund (DRF) is provided for under the DRF Act, with operational guidance provided in the Disaster Ready Fund Program Guidelines (DRF Guidelines).</p> <p>The DRF provides annual funding over five years from 1 July 2023 to build resilience to, prepare for, or reduce the risk of future disasters, or build the long-term sustainability of communities that are at risk of being affected by a future disaster.</p>
<u>Disaster Ready Fund Act 2019</u> ⁵⁹ (the DRF Act)	The legislation that established the Disaster Ready Fund.
Disaster	For the purposes of these Guidelines, Disaster is defined as a serious disruption of the functioning of a community or a society at any scale due to natural hazards interacting with conditions of exposure, vulnerability and capacity, leading to one or more of the following: human, material, economic and environmental losses and impacts. The terms Disaster and Natural Disaster are used interchangeably throughout the Guidelines.
Disaster risk	The potential loss of life, injury, or destroyed or damaged assets caused by a disaster, which could occur to a system, society or a community.
Disaster risk reduction	Disaster risk reduction is aimed at preventing new disasters, reducing existing disaster risk and managing residual disaster risk, all of which contribute to strengthening resilience and therefore work toward the achievement of sustainable development.
Eligibility criteria	The mandatory criteria which must be met to qualify for funding under the DRF. Assessment criteria apply in addition to eligibility criteria.
End date	The expected date that the project must be completed, within the maximum project delivery timeframe (from date Implementation Plan is

⁵⁹ <https://www.legislation.gov.au/C2019A00090/latest/text>

endorsed) and when all performance reporting and final milestone payments for all projects funded within a state or territory have been satisfied.

Endorsement	Written agreement from the relevant minister in a state or territory to the projects to be submitted by a Lead Agency to NEMA, including any multi-jurisdictional projects the Lead Agency is coordinating. This should include agreement to any co-contributions being provided by the state or territory government.
Enduring benefits	Outcomes that are tangible, sustainable, and build resilience or reduce disaster risk in the long-term. Unlike short-term gains, these benefits persist over extended periods – e.g. for the life of grey infrastructure.
Existing Material	Material developed independently of the DRF funded activity that is incorporated in or supplied as part of Reporting Material or Activity Material.
Federation Funding Agreement – Environment	An agreement between the Australian Government and the states and territory governments under the Federation Funding Agreements (FFA) Framework.
First Nations organisation	<p>An ‘Aboriginal Community-Controlled Organisation’ (ACCO) or other ‘Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisation’ as defined in the National Agreement on Closing the Gap. To be eligible for DRF funding, organisations must provide evidence demonstrating that they meet one of these definitions.</p> <p>Note: For the purposes of the DRF, Aboriginal shire councils are not considered to fall within the above definitions, but may be eligible to apply in another co-contribution category – e.g. as a ‘very remote’, ‘remote’ or low-rate base council with an ABN.</p>
Fraud	Fraud means dishonestly obtaining a benefit, or causing a loss, by deception or other means, and includes alleged, attempted, suspected or detected fraud.
Funding Shortfall	Project funding required that exceeds the funding allocated to a project under the Program. A funding shortfall will not be met by the Australian Government and is the responsibility of the Lead Agency
GrantConnect ⁶⁰	The Australian Government’s whole-of-government grants information system, which centralises the publication and reporting of Commonwealth grants.
Green-Blue Infrastructure	For the purposes of this Program, Green-Blue Infrastructure is infrastructure that reduces risk of hazards for a particular community or communities, by delivering a strategically planned network of natural and semi-natural areas with other environmental features designed and

⁶⁰ <https://www.grants.gov.au/>

managed to deliver a wide range of ecosystem services. It incorporates green spaces (or blue if aquatic ecosystems are concerned) and other physical features in terrestrial (including coastal) and marine areas. This includes, for example, mangrove reforestation, greenways along floodplains, urban reforestation, green firebreaks and cultural burning.

Grey Infrastructure

For the purposes of this Program, Grey Infrastructure refers to engineered assets that reduce the risk or impact of natural hazards for a community or communities. This includes, for example, built structures such as flood levees, sea walls, drainage systems and cyclone shelters that provide physical defences against natural hazards.

Implementation Plan

Lead Agencies must develop Implementation Plans in discussion with Project Proponents for all projects under the Schedule and outline how each project will be managed (for Western Australia this includes any successful projects that are to be delivered in the Indian Ocean Territories).

Indian Ocean Territories (IOTs)

The external territories of Christmas Island and the Cocos (Keeling) Islands, collectively known as the Indian Ocean Territories. The Australian Government, through the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications and the Arts, facilitates the delivery of state-type services to Australia's non-self-government territories.

Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property or ICIP

Refers to the rights of Australia's First Nations (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander) peoples to their heritage and incorporates traditional knowledge, traditional cultural expression, performances, cultural objects, human remains and tissues, the secret and sacred material and information, and documentation of First Nations peoples' heritage in all forms of media.

In-kind co-contribution

A non-financial co-contribution to project costs.

In-principle co-contributions

Co-contributions which are pending formal approval from the internal governmental or organisation approval process for securing funding.

Intellectual property

All copyright, patents, registered and unregistered trademarks (including service marks), registered designs, and other rights resulting from intellectual activity (other than moral rights under the Copyright Act 1968). Intellectual Property covers the wide range of intangible property that is the result of the creative and intellectual effort of individuals and organisations. This includes but is not limited to inventions, computer programs, databases, data, broadcasts, trade marks and designs.

Jurisdictions

The six states and two mainland territories of Australia.

Lead Agency

One government agency in each state and territory (jurisdiction) that has been nominated to coordinate and vet Project Proposals, submit Applications to NEMA and administer funded projects, on behalf of its jurisdiction. The Lead Agency may also develop DRF projects, and for these projects is also considered the Applicant.

A list of [Lead Agencies](#) is published on NEMA's website.

Local council	The decision-making body of a local government established by or under a law of a state or territory of Australia.
Maladaptation	An adaptation that does not succeed in reducing vulnerability but increases it instead, including where intervention in one location or sector could increase the vulnerability of another location or sector.
Material	Includes documents, equipment, software (including source code and object code versions), goods, information and data stored by any means including all copies and extracts of them.
Mitigation	The lessening or minimising of the adverse impacts of a hazardous event.
Multi-jurisdictional project (or national project)	A project that involves collaboration and delivery across two or more Australian states and territories (including national projects).
National Disaster Risk Reduction Framework (NDRRF)	Developed by the Australian Government and endorsed at the Council of Australian Governments meeting held on 13 March 2020, the Framework outlines the strategic priorities, drivers for action and guiding principles for national disaster risk reduction activities. It sets out the foundational work required nationally across all sectors, to reduce disaster risk, minimise new disaster risk, and deliver better climate and disaster risk information.
National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA)	Referred to in this Program Guidelines as 'NEMA'. NEMA is the Australian Government agency with responsibility for preparing for and coordinating the Australian Government's response to disasters, across all hazards.
Natural hazard	A natural process or phenomenon that may or may not cause loss of life, injury or other health impacts, property damage, social and economic disruption or environmental degradation.
Natural hazard monitoring infrastructure	For the purposes of these Guidelines, natural hazard monitoring infrastructure refers to infrastructure assets and networks for detecting, monitoring and reporting on natural hazards that better prepare a particular community or communities for future disasters. Examples include, but are not limited to, early warning systems that improve the safety of communities.
Nature-based solutions	Actions to protect, sustainably manage and restore natural or modified ecosystems that address societal challenges effectively and adaptively, simultaneously providing human well-being and biodiversity benefits. In the context of this Program, nature-based solutions refers to actions to protect, sustainably manage, conserve and restore natural or modified ecosystems to reduce disaster risk, with the aim to achieve sustainable and resilient development.
Not-for-profit organisation	An organisation that is prohibited under its governing rules or documents from distributing profits or assets to its members, owners or manager. Examples include, but are not limited to, charities and a range of community service organisations that are conducted neither for the profit nor the gain of their individual members.

Per capita	By or for each person. The Panel may consider a project's relative benefit per-capita.
Place-based	Place-based approaches focus on addressing the needs of a particular location by leveraging existing programs and/or filling gaps in service delivery.
Preparedness	Measures to ensure that, should an emergency occur, communities, resources and services are capable of coping with the effects; the state of being prepared.
Prevention	Measures to eliminate or reduce the incidence or severity of emergencies (including disasters).
Program (or DRF)	The 'Program' is the Disaster Ready Fund (DRF), administered by NEMA.
Program Administration Costs	The direct costs incurred by Lead Agencies in administering funded DRF projects, including but not limited to coordinating and submitting the monitoring, reporting and auditing of funded projects.
Program Delegate	A manager within NEMA with the responsibility for the program. The Program Delegate for the Program is NEMA's Assistant Coordinator-General, Resilience and Community Programs Branch.
Project Proponent	An Applicant that has been successful in securing DRF funding.
Project Proposals	Proposals for potential DRF projects that are submitted to Lead Agencies by Applicants for consideration and possible submission to NEMA.
Relevant minister	A minister with portfolio responsibility for a Lead Agency charged with coordinating and submitting Applications on behalf of that state or territory. The relevant minister must endorse projects in their jurisdiction that will be submitted to NEMA. For the Indian Ocean Territories the relevant minister is the Australian Government Minister responsible for Territories.
Reporting Material	All performance, final and ad hoc reports which Lead Agencies are required to provide to the Commonwealth for the purposes of keeping the Commonwealth up-to-date with the performance of funded project activities, and includes any Existing Material that is incorporated in or supplied with the Reporting Material. Reporting Material does not include any reports on the outcomes of the project, or reports that are the key outputs of the project, which are instead Activity Material.
Resilience	The ability of a system, community or society exposed to hazards to resist, absorb, accommodate, adapt to, transform and recover from the effects of a hazard in a timely and efficient manner, including through the preservation and restoration of its essential basic structures and functions through risk management.
Schedules	A bilateral agreement or funding agreement between the Australian Government and state and territory governments under the Federation Funding Agreement – Environment.

Second National Action Plan	The Second National Action Plan to implement the National Disaster Risk Reduction Framework as released by the National Emergency Management Agency in August 2023.
Sector/s	All sectors of society including government, industries, business, not-for-profit, communities and individuals.
Social infrastructure	For the purposes of this Program, social infrastructure is comprised of the buildings and physical spaces that facilitate the delivery of social services and support the quality of life and wellbeing of communities. These include, for example, places for community support such as hubs for volunteer training/coordination.
Start date	The expected start date for the project, once the Implementation Plan has been endorsed by NEMA.
The Minister / The Minister for Emergency Management	The Australian Government Minister whose title includes 'Emergency Management', their authorised delegate, and/or the Minister declared by the Prime Minister, by notifiable instrument, to be the Emergency Management Minister for the purposes of the DRF Act. Note: Decision-making responsibilities may be split between these roles in the event of a conflict of duties/interests.
The Minister responsible for Territories.	The Australian Government Minister whose title includes 'Territories' or, in the event of a conflict of duties/interests, the Australian Government Minister whose overall portfolio responsibilities include Australia's non-self-governing territories.
Underspend	Funds remaining from the actual cost of a project under the Program, which, at project completion as per the relevant Schedule have not been expended.
Value with money	Value with money in this document refers to 'value with relevant money' which is a judgement based on the Application representing an efficient, effective, economical and ethical use of public resources and determined from a variety of considerations. In this context: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • efficient relates to the achievement of the maximum value for the resources used • effective relates to the extent to which intended outcomes or results are achieved • economical relates to minimising cost, and • ethical relates to honesty, integrity, probity, diligence, fairness and consistency in the selection and performance of projects. When administering a grant opportunity, an official should consider the relevant financial and non-financial costs and benefits of each proposal including, but not limited to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the quality of the project proposal and activities

- fitness for purpose of the proposal in contributing to government objectives
- that the absence of a grant is likely to prevent the grantee and government's outcomes being achieved, and
- the potential grantee's relevant experience and performance history.

Appendix A – Councils in ‘very remote’ and ‘remote’ locations

The following list of Councils is based on ABS remoteness classification data.

State	Council
New South Wales	Bogan Shire Council
	Bourke Shire Council
	Brewarrina Shire Council
	Carrathool Shire Council
	Central Darling Shire Council
	Cobar Shire Council
	Coonamble Shire Council
	Lachlan Council
	NSW Crown Lands (as the local council equivalent for Unincorporated NSW (Far Western Region))
	Walgett Shire Council
Northern Territory	Alice Springs Town Council
	Barkly Regional Council
	Belyuen Community Government Council
	Central Desert Regional Council
	Coomalie Community Government Council
	East Arnhem Regional Council
	Katherine Town Council
	MacDonnell Regional Council
	Roper Gulf Regional Council
	Tiwi Islands Regional Council
	Local Government Association of the Northern Territory Inc (as the local council equivalent for Unincorporated NT)
	Victoria Daly Regional Council
	Wagait Shire Council
	West Arnhem Regional Council
West Daly Regional Council	
Queensland	Aurukun Shire Council
	Balonne Shire Council
	Barcaldine Regional Council

State	Council
	Barcoo Shire Council
	Blackall-Tambo Regional Council
	Boulia Shire Council
	Bulloo Shire Council
	Burke Shire Council
	Carpentaria Shire Council
	Cloncurry Shire Council
	Cook Shire Council
	Croydon Shire Council
	Diamantina Shire Council
	Doomadgee Aboriginal Community Council
	Etheridge Shire Council
	Flinders Shire Council
	Hope Vale Aboriginal Shire Council
	Kowanyama Aboriginal Shire Council
	Lockhart River Aboriginal Shire Council
	Longreach Regional Council
	Mapoon Aboriginal Council
	Mckinlay Shire Council
	Mornington Shire Council
	Mount Isa City Council
	Murweh Shire Council
	Napranum Aboriginal Shire Council
	Northern Peninsula Area Regional Council
	Palm Island Aboriginal Council
	Paroo Shire Council
	Pormpuraaw Aboriginal Shire Council
	Quilpie Shire Council
	Richmond Shire Council
	Torres Shire Council
	Torres Strait Island Regional Council
	Weipa Town Authority
	Winton Shire Council
	Woorabinda Aboriginal Council

State	Council
	Wujal Wujal Aboriginal Council
South Australia	<p>Anangu Pitjantjatjara Inc</p> <p>District Council of Ceduna</p> <p>District Council of Cleve</p> <p>District Council of Coober Pedy</p> <p>District Council of Elliston</p> <p>District Council of Franklin Harbour</p> <p>Kangaroo Island Council</p> <p>District Council of Kimba</p> <p>District Council of Lower Eyre Peninsula</p> <p>Maralinga Tjarutja</p> <p>City of Port Lincoln</p> <p>Municipal Council of Roxby Downs</p> <p>Southern Mallee District Council</p> <p>District Council of Streaky Bay</p> <p>District Council of Tumby Bay</p> <p>Outback Communities Authority (as the local council equivalent for Unincorporated SA)</p> <p>Wudinna District Council</p>
Tasmania	<p>Flinders Council</p> <p>Glamorgan Spring Bay Council</p> <p>King Island Council</p> <p>West Coast Council</p>
Western Australia	<p>Shire of Ashburton</p> <p>Shire of Broome</p> <p>Shire of Bruce Rock</p> <p>Shire of Carnamah</p> <p>Shire of Carnarvon</p> <p>Shire of Coorow</p> <p>Shire of Corrigin</p> <p>Shire of Cue</p> <p>Shire of Dalwallinu</p> <p>Shire of Derby West Kimberley</p> <p>Shire of Dumbleyung</p>

State	Council
	Shire of Dundas
	Shire of East Pilbara
	Shire of Esperance
	Shire of Exmouth
	Shire of Gnowangerup
	Shire of Halls Creek
	Shire of Jerramungup
	City of Karratha
	Shire of Kent
	Shire of Kondinin
	Shire of Koorda
	Shire of Kulin
	Shire of Lake Grace
	Shire of Laverton
	Shire of Leonora
	Shire of Meekatharra
	Shire of Menzies
	Shire of Morawa
	Shire of Mount Magnet
	Shire of Mount Marshall
	Shire of Mukinbudin
	Shire of Murchison
	Shire of Narembeen
	Shire of Ngaanyatjarraku
	Shire of Northampton
	Shire of Nungarin
	Shire of Perenjori
	Town of Port Hedland
	Shire of Ravensthorpe
	Shire of Sandstone
	Shire of Shark Bay
	Shire of Three Springs
	Shire of Trayning
	Shire of Upper Gascoyne

State	Council
	Shire of Westonia Shire of Wiluna Shire of Wyndham East Kimberley Shire of Yalgoo Shire of Yilgarn
Indian Ocean Territories	Shire of Christmas Island Shire of Cocos (Keeling) Islands

Appendix B – Other councils with low rate bases

The following list of Councils has been determined using the ratio of Financial Assistance Grant to Net Rate Income, based on an average ratio across LGAs of 75 per cent. The higher the ratio the more reliant a council is on a Financial Assistant Grant.

State	Council
New South Wales	Balranald Shire Council
	Berrigan Shire Council
	Bland Shire Council
	Coolamon Shire Council
	Cowra Shire Council
	Edward River Council
	Federation Council
	Forbes Shire Council
	Gilgandra Council
	Glen Innes Severn Council
	Greater Hume Shire Council
	Gwydir Shire Council
	Hay Shire Council
	Junee Shire Council
	Kyogle Council
	Leeton Shire Council
	Lockhart Shire Council
	Murray River Council
	Murrumbidgee Council
	Narrandera Shire Council
	Narromine Shire Council
	Oberon Council
	Temora Shire Council
	Tenterfield Shire Council
	Upper Lachlan Shire Council
	Uralla Shire Council
	Walcha Council
	Warren Shire Council
	Warrumbungle Shire Council
	Weddin Shire Council

State	Council
	Wentworth Shire Council
Queensland	Cherbourg Aboriginal Shire Council Yarrabah Aboriginal Shire Council
South Australia	The Flinders Ranges Council District Council of Karoonda East Murray District Council of Orroroo Carrieton District Council of Peterborough
Tasmania	Central Highlands Council Southern Midlands Council
Victoria	Loddon Shire Council West Wimmera Shire Council
Western Australia	Shire of Beverley Shire of Boyup Brook Shire of Cuballing Shire of Cunderdin Shire of Dowerin Shire of Kellerberrin Shire of Nannup Shire of Pingelly Shire of Quairading Shire of Tammin Shire of Wagin Shire of West Arthur Shire of Wickepin Shire of Wongan-Ballidu Shire of Woodanilling Shire of Wyalkatchem

Appendix C – Guidance on ‘business as usual’ requirements

Projects applying for funding under Round Four of the DRF must not be ‘business as usual’ (BAU) as defined in the Glossary to the Guidelines.

In line with the Glossary definition, whether activities are BAU depends on whether they are standard works or services that the responsible Commonwealth, state, territory or local government body or bodies would ordinarily be expected to undertake with internal funding, and **is therefore case and context dependent** – i.e. turns on the precise nature of the proposed works or services and any expectations that exist of the particular body or bodies that are responsible for their delivery.

Factors that may be considered by the Assessment Panel and Program Delegate in advising on and determining the BAU status of Applications include, but are not limited to:

- any justification provided by the Applicant as to why the activity is not BAU (note: Applicants should consider the factors listed below when formulating their justifications).
- whether the proposed activity involves the renewal or expansion of existing assets or essential services,⁶¹ which would typically be regarded as standard works or services, or is an investment in upgrading existing assets/service or new assets/services, which may amount to non-standard works or services, where:
 - ‘**renewal**’ means expenditure on an existing asset that returns the service potential or the life of the asset up to that which it had originally (e.g. standard maintenance, repairs, restoration or replacement).
 - ‘**expansion**’ means expenditure that extends an existing asset or service to a new group of users (e.g. connecting a new suburb to existing drainage infrastructure).
 - ‘**upgrade**’ means expenditure that enhances an existing asset or service to provide a higher level of service.
 - ‘**new**’ assets and services means expenditure that does not have any element of renewal, expansion or upgrade of existing assets.
- the extent to which any upgraded or new asset/service differs from existing assets or services in nature, scale and benefit – e.g. whether they are substantially the same, involve a novel approach, or represent a significant uplift or addition.
- any frameworks, commitments, standards, codes or practices that establish a requirement or give rise to a reasonable expectation for the responsible body/ies to undertake the proposed activity as part of their normal operating arrangements or with funding from other (non-DRF) sources – e.g. where an Applicant is under a legal obligation to undertake the activity, where they have previously committed to undertake the activity, or where an activity is standard practice for similar bodies.
- the operating environment of the Applicant, including its capacity to self-fund the activity, any unique or extenuating circumstances, and any other potential funding sources (e.g. whether other levels of government have capacity and/or responsibility for funding the activity).
- where a project involves a mix of BAU and non-BAU activities, the cost ratio of BAU components to non-BAU components and whether the BAU components are integral to (i.e. could be separated from) delivery of the non-BAU activities. As a general rule, majority BAU projects will not be funded.

⁶¹ For example, roads, buildings, water/gas/electricity/drainage networks, public transport, education, healthcare, telecommunications and open spaces.

Examples of activities that would typically, though not necessarily, be considered BAU depending on the particular circumstances of the project (including the case and context-specific factors listed above) include:

- preventative maintenance and/or repairs to an existing dam to maintain or reinstate its original state.
- repairing flood damage to existing road or rail networks to return them to their original state.
- establishment and maintenance of firebreaks or undertaking fuel reduction activities where these are an existing legal requirement
- continued delivery of existing social or healthcare services that provide essential support to communities in times of crisis, including natural disasters.
- replacing or expanding existing drainage systems to meet the needs of a growing population
- provision of critical infrastructure and essential services (e.g. roads, drainage networks, telecommunications and electricity, fire stations, etc) to new suburbs and towns.
- installation of bathroom facilities at emergency service buildings
- routine training exercises to test emergency preparedness, interoperability and collaboration between government agencies, industry and communities.
- projects with the sole purpose of translating emergency services warning messages for CALD communities.
- preparation and reviews of natural hazard risk assessments, management plans and associated strategies that are required under legislation or as a result of other obligations (e.g. legal duty of care) or commitments (actions that an entity has already committed to undertake in response to inquiries or reviews).
- purchase of machinery to build firebreaks as part of an organisation's larger and general purpose earthmoving machinery fleet.
- core training for an emergency management workforce.

Examples of activities that would typically not be considered BAU include:

- a pilot program that trials a novel approach to building community resilience.
- construction of a new flood levee or other major piece of emergency infrastructure (e.g. cyclone shelter) to protect a town or community.
- construction of a new, secondary exit road for a "one-road town" with the specific purpose of providing a safe evacuation route and allowing access for emergency services during disasters.

Additional examples from DRF Round Three (i.e. projects that were deemed not to be BAU and funded under the Round Three Guidelines) are listed on the [DRF website](#), noting that these are indicative only (i.e. do not take into account the specific circumstances of future project proposals or the updated guidance provided in this Appendix, which may result in different determinations being made) and are not exhaustive.

Final determinations will be made by the Program Delegate on a case-by-case basis, taking into account the Glossary definition of BAU, the guidance in this Appendix, information provided in the Application and expert advice from the Assessment Panel.

The Program Delegate may issue additional guidance on BAU activities if required.

Appendix D – Guidance on cost-benefit analysis

Cost-Benefit Analysis (CBA) is an evaluation method used to estimate and compare the total costs and benefits of a project, expressed in dollars, from the perspective of the relevant community. This helps determine if the project offers value with relevant money as part of assessment criteria 3 and 4 and is a mandatory attachment for infrastructure funding stream projects as per sections 6.3 and 7.6 of the DRF Round Four Guidelines.

To conduct a CBA that effectively supports your DRF Project Proposal, all CBAs should at a **minimum**:

- involve a level of rigor and detail that is proportionate to the project's value, size and complexity. For example, a simplified CBA approach that focuses on major costs and benefits only and relies on general assumptions (e.g. benchmark costs for similar projects) may be appropriate for lower value projects, whereas a detailed CBA approach that considers all economic, social and environmental costs and benefits and calculates costs and benefits using parameters and inputs specific to the project location and to a higher degree of accuracy would be expected for multi-million dollar projects.
- identify and describe project impacts as costs (any loss in societal wellbeing) and benefits (any gain in wellbeing), and then value them in dollar terms, to the extent possible. Various methods for estimating the value of non-market goods and accounting for uncertainty in CBAs are outlined in the 'Dealing with costs and benefits that are difficult to value' section of the [Cost Benefit Analysis guidance note](#) published by The Office of Impact Analysis. Where impacts cannot be valued, the reasons why that is the case should be set out clearly.
- ensure both direct and indirect costs and benefits are accounted for. These may include, but are not limited to:
 - Direct costs of the project such as capital and operating costs, as well as indirect costs that accrue to the relevant community as a whole, such as environmental impacts, disruptions to businesses and services while the project is being delivered, rate increases to support ongoing maintenance of an asset, etc.
 - direct benefits such as disaster risk reduction, improved community resilience, and avoided disaster losses, as well as indirect benefits such as employment opportunities and co-benefits such as reduced insurance premiums.
- discount costs and benefits over the life of the project to determine their present value⁶² and if there are net benefits (that is, benefits greater than costs) for the proposal.

Recommended steps in the CBA process are as follows:

1. Define problems and opportunities:

- a. Clearly state the issues and opportunities the project aims to address, with reference to the objectives of the DRF.

2. Establish the base case and project options:

⁶² Net present values should be calculated at an annual real discount rate of 7 per cent. As with any uncertain variable, sensitivity analysis should be conducted, so in addition to the 7 per cent discount rate, the net present values should also be calculated with real discount rates of 3 per cent and 10 per cent. Box 1 in the [Cost Benefit Analysis guidance note](#) published by The Office of Impact Analysis provides an example of how to calculate net present values.

- a. Compare the current scenario without the project (base case) to the proposed interventions (project options).
- b. Make sure the base case reflects a 'do nothing' or 'business as usual' approach.

3. Identify costs and benefits over the life of the project:

- a. Include all relevant societal costs and benefits, such as avoided disaster-related losses and improved resilience.

4. Monetise (attach dollar values to) costs and benefits:

- a. Convert all costs and benefits into monetary terms, to the extent possible, for effective comparison.
- b. Use real prices and exclude inflation.

5. Account for non-monetised impacts:

- a. Identify impacts that cannot be monetised, such as environmental and social outcomes.

6. Discount future costs and benefits to obtain net present value (NPV):

- a. Use a standard discount rate of 7% (with sensitivity analyses at 3% and 10%) to calculate the NPV (the present value of benefits minus the present value of costs).

7. Analyse risks and sensitivity:

- a. Assess uncertainties and test different assumptions to ensure robust outcomes.

8. Report results clearly:

- a. Summarise the results of the CBA, including whether the NPV is positive (i.e. improves efficiency) or negative (i.e. project is inefficient).

NEMA has developed a template, which will be made available on [NEMA's website](#), that can be used to assist with CBA calculations and reporting results. Applicants are encouraged to use this template, however may use different tools and/or a different format for presenting results (e.g. if a CBA has previously been commissioned) so long as the minimum requirements outlined above are met.

For further guidance and examples of cost-benefit methodologies refer to Chapters 2 and 3 of the [Guide to economic appraisal](#) published by Infrastructure Australia and the [Cost Benefit Analysis guidance note](#) published by The Office of Impact Analysis.

Appendix E – DRF Scoring and Rating Matrices for the Technical Assessment Criteria 1 to 3

The scoring and rating matrices below provide assessors and NEMA with benchmarks for appropriately scoring and rating each project application against each of the three (3) weighted technical Assessment Criteria (see the DRF Guidelines sections 6.1, 6.2 and 6.3).

When referring to the matrices, Applicants and assessors should be aware that:

- it is not essential that all descriptors relating to a given score are met. The scoring matrix employs a “best fit” approach.
- Initial scores for each criterion will be provided out of 10 (raw score) in whole numbers. These raw scores will then be automatically adjusted by NEMA as set out in section 8.2 of the Guidelines.
- Assessor comments justifying their scores will be recorded against each criterion and may be shared with Applicants as part of feedback.
- Scores and comments will take into account the applicant’s responses, any supporting documentation provided, and the project size, complexity and amount of funding sought (e.g. a larger, more complex project would be expected to provide more detail and evidence against each of criterion). Material external to an application will not be referred to, except when comparing value for money with other Applications.

Application scoring matrix for the weighted technical assessment criteria (criteria 1, 2 and 3).

Scoring Category	Raw Score (out of 10)	CRITERION ONE: Contribution to disaster risk reduction, resilience and/or knowledge (40 per cent weighting)	CRITERION TWO: Alignment with national and state/territory/local disaster resilience and risk reduction plans, strategies and frameworks (30 per cent weighting)	CRITERION THREE: Capacity, capability and resources to deliver the project (30 per cent weighting)
Excellent	9-10	<p>The applicant, and delivery partners (where relevant), have clearly and comprehensively demonstrated how the project aligns with one or more of the DRF objectives by identifying how and to what extent the project reduces disaster risk, increases resilience and/or increases understanding of natural disasters, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a description of the natural hazard(s) the project is addressing, current and future risks posed to the target community (including consideration of climate change impacts) and how these have been assessed, or if there is limited or no existing hazard or risk information, how the project funding will contribute to increasing understanding of the hazard, level of risk and potential future disaster impacts; a description of the benefits and any co-benefits the project will deliver for the community during and beyond the term of funding, including the estimated level(s) of disaster risk, resilience, and/or understanding prior to and upon conclusion of the proposed project, along with any enduring benefits; how the project will avoid and manage the potential for maladaptation (including any unintentionally negative social, environmental or economic outcomes); for infrastructure projects, how climate change may impact the investment over its intended life span and how these risks will or may be mitigated; and for projects that seek to improve understanding of natural hazards and disaster risk, how the new hazard and risk information will be shared with affected communities. <p>Indicators and evidence consistent with an excellent response to this criterion may include:</p>	<p>The applicant, and delivery partners (where relevant), have clearly and comprehensively demonstrated how the project:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> aligns with one or more of the priorities, outcomes and/or national actions identified in the Second National Action Plan; and aligns with and/or supports delivery of any other relevant national, state, territory or local disaster risk reduction or adaptation plans, policies or frameworks, or how the project will develop or contribute to development of these policies, plans or frameworks where they do not currently exist. <p>Indicators and evidence consistent with an excellent response to this criterion may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a case that includes specific references to the Second National Action Plan, and clearly articulates how the project is consistent with and supports one or more of those actions; and a case that includes specific references to any other relevant national, state, territory or local disaster risk reduction or resilience plans, and clearly articulates how the project is consistent with and supports the delivery or development of those plans. 	<p>The applicant, and delivery partners (where relevant), have clearly and comprehensively demonstrated that they have the capacity, capability and support to successfully deliver the project outcomes, in a manner that represents value with relevant money, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a track record managing similar projects and access to personnel and/or partners with the right skills and experience; sound project planning to manage and complete the project, which addresses scope, implementation methodology, timeframes, budget, community consultation, and risk management; robust consultation with and support from local government(s) and/or affected communities, including First Nations communities where relevant, or compelling reasons for not having consulted; compliance with relevant legislative requirements, government policies and industry standards – for example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> where the particular interests of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people will be affected by the project, will the project ensure cultural safety in any service delivery and does it align with the National Agreement on Closing the Gap Priority Reforms or will it contribute to progress against targets? readiness to commence the project once Implementation Plans are endorsed and ability to deliver the project within the maximum project period. additionally, for infrastructure projects: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> how the infrastructure and benefits of the project will be operated and maintained into the future; and steps taken to get the project ready including the status of required regulatory and/or development approvals; project designs and costings; authority from the land or infrastructure owner to undertake the project at the nominated site(s); funding contributions from all sources. <p>Indicators and evidence consistent with an excellent response to this criterion may include:</p>

Scoring Category	Raw Score (out of 10)	CRITERION ONE: Contribution to disaster risk reduction, resilience and/or knowledge (40 per cent weighting)	CRITERION TWO: Alignment with national and state/territory/local disaster resilience and risk reduction plans, strategies and frameworks (30 per cent weighting)	CRITERION THREE: Capacity, capability and resources to deliver the project (30 per cent weighting)
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a highly detailed and convincing explanation of how and to what extent the project activities and intended outcome/s address one or more of the DRF's Objectives, namely to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ increase the understanding of natural disaster impacts, as a first step towards reducing the risk of future natural disaster impacts; ○ increase the resilience, adaptive capacity and/or preparedness of governments, community service organisations and affected communities to future natural disasters to minimise the potential impact of natural hazards and reduce the risk of future natural disasters; and ○ reduce the exposure to risk, harm and/or severity of a future natural disaster's impacts, including reducing the recovery burden for governments, cohorts at disproportionate risk and/or affected communities. • well-defined and highly relevant project objectives (problem and solution), inputs (resources), outputs (activities) and outcomes; • a detailed and credible description of how project funds will be used to deliver enduring outcomes that are tangible, sustainable and build resilience or reduce disaster risk in the long-term; • a detailed outline and comparison of level(s) of exposure and vulnerability to natural hazards prior to and upon conclusion of the project; • a clearly articulated and compelling case that shows the potential impact of the project on the identified target area or group/s in terms of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. increased understanding of natural hazard disaster impacts, 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a track record that includes extensive experience successfully managing multiple projects of a similar size and scope; • a team (applicant plus any delivery partners) that possesses all the required skills and expertise to successfully achieve the target outcomes; • a highly detailed business case, including a project plan, budget and risk management plan commensurate with the size and scale of the project, that is highly feasible and highly likely to achieve the intended outcomes taking into account the project inputs, outputs, duration, risks and any assumptions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ the project timeline/schedule provides a very high level of confidence that the project can commence quickly and be completed within the maximum project duration (3 years); ○ the budget is well justified by evidence as per the requirements listed below and appropriate to the size and scope of the project, with no significant gaps or other concerns (e.g. excessive claims): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Infrastructure projects > \$1m: cost estimates prepared by a quantity surveyor; ▪ Other projects > \$1m: cost estimates prepared by relevant professionals (e.g. actuaries or accountants); or ▪ Other projects < \$1m: quotes or cost estimates prepared by the Applicant (ideally less than 6 months old). ○ some risks may be present, but any concerns or reservations are minor and can be managed; and ○ assumptions are relevant, clear and reasonably detailed. • a co-contribution above the minimum required co-contribution that leverages additional funds (e.g. cash and in-kind contributions) and partnerships (See the DRF Guidelines section 3.1.1);

Scoring Category	Raw Score (out of 10)	CRITERION ONE: Contribution to disaster risk reduction, resilience and/or knowledge (40 per cent weighting)	CRITERION TWO: Alignment with national and state/territory/local disaster resilience and risk reduction plans, strategies and frameworks (30 per cent weighting)	CRITERION THREE: Capacity, capability and resources to deliver the project (30 per cent weighting)
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ii. increased resilience, adaptive capacity and/or preparedness, and/or iii. reduced exposure to risk, harm and/or severity of a natural hazard's impacts. • multiple sources of high quality evidence (e.g. references to peer reviewed research data, government risk assessments such as the National Climate Risk Assessment, expert advice, detailed building specifications and/or impact estimates from relevant professionals, peak bodies and/or industry representatives) to support claims related to levels of disaster risk and expected project benefits/co-benefits; • a strong commitment to maintain the project benefits beyond the duration of program funding, and a highly credible explanation of how they will do this is; • comprehensive strategies for avoiding and managing potential maladaptation; • comprehensively considers diversity and disproportionately at risk communities or cohorts. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • for projects with a place-based focus (i.e. a project focused on addressing the needs of a particular location) or that will affect the particular interests of First Nations communities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ a highly detailed description of stakeholder engagement activities that shows broad consultation and support and how that support will be maintained throughout the project; ○ multiple sources of reliable evidence (e.g. endorsement from community group(s) or local council; outcomes from a community survey; community contributions to the project such as cash or in kind contributions; collaboration with other organisations within the area; community participation in the project); and ○ Where a project indicates benefits for cohorts at disproportionate risk (as defined in the DRF guidelines) there is evidence of consultation with these communities. • additionally, for infrastructure projects: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ a highly detailed cost benefit analysis which clearly identifies all economic, environmental and social impacts of the proposed intervention and shows a net overall benefit; ○ copies of relevant designs and permits that show the project has all necessary planning and building approvals to proceed; and ○ clear evidence of ownership or permission to use the land/infrastructure.
Very Good	7-8	<p>The applicant, and delivery partners (where relevant), have clearly demonstrated how the project aligns with one or more of the DRF objectives by identifying how and to what extent the project reduces disaster risk, increases resilience and/or increases understanding of natural disasters, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a description of the natural hazard(s) the project is addressing, current and future risks posed to the target community (including consideration of climate change impacts) and how these have been assessed, or if there is limited or no existing 	<p>The applicant, and delivery partners (where relevant), have clearly demonstrated how the project:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • aligns with one or more of the priorities, outcome and/or national actions identified in the Second National Action Plan; and • aligns with and/or supports delivery of any other relevant national state, territory or local disaster risk reduction or adaptation plans, policies or frameworks, or how the project will develop or contribute to 	<p>The applicant, and delivery partners (where relevant), have clearly demonstrated that they have the capacity, capability and support to successfully deliver the project outcomes, in a manner that represents value with relevant money, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a track record managing similar projects and access to personnel and/or partners with the right skills and experience; • sound project planning to manage and complete the project, which addresses scope, implementation methodology, timeframes, budget, community consultation, and risk management;

Scoring Category	Raw Score (out of 10)	CRITERION ONE: Contribution to disaster risk reduction, resilience and/or knowledge (40 per cent weighting)	CRITERION TWO: Alignment with national and state/territory/local disaster resilience and risk reduction plans, strategies and frameworks (30 per cent weighting)	CRITERION THREE: Capacity, capability and resources to deliver the project (30 per cent weighting)
		<p>hazard or risk information, how the project funding will contribute to increasing understanding of the hazard, level of risk and potential future disaster impacts;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a description of the benefits and any co-benefits the project will deliver for the community during and beyond the term of funding, including the estimated level(s) of disaster risk, resilience, and/or understanding prior to and upon conclusion of the proposed project, along with any enduring benefits; how the project will avoid and manage the potential for maladaptation (including any unintentionally negative social, environmental or economic outcomes); for infrastructure projects, how climate change may impact the investment over its intended life span and how these risks will or may be mitigated; and for projects that seek to improve understanding of natural hazards and disaster risk, how the new hazard and risk information will be shared with affected communities. <p>Indicators and evidence consistent with a highly satisfactory response to this criterion may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a convincing explanation including key details regarding how and to what extent the project activities and intended outcome/s address one or more of the DRF's Objectives, namely to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> increase the understanding of natural disaster impacts, as a first step towards reducing the risk of future natural disaster impacts; increase the resilience, adaptive capacity and/or preparedness of governments, community service organisations and affected communities to future natural disasters to minimise the potential impact of 	<p>development of these policies, plans or frameworks where they do not currently exist.</p> <p>Indicators and evidence consistent with a highly satisfactory response to this criterion may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a case that references and outlines in general terms how the project is consistent with and supports the Second National Action Plan; and a case that references and outlines in general terms how the project is consistent with and supports any other relevant national, state, territory and/or local disaster risk reduction or resilience plans. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> robust consultation with and support from local government(s) and/or affected communities, including First Nations communities where relevant, or compelling reasons for not having consulted; compliance with relevant legislative requirements, government policies and industry standards – for example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> where the particular interests of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people will be affected by the project, will the project ensure cultural safety in any service delivery and does it align with the National Agreement on Closing the Gap Priority Reforms or will it contribute to progress against targets? readiness to commence the project once Implementation Plans are endorsed and ability to deliver the project within the maximum project period; additionally, for infrastructure projects: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> how the infrastructure and benefits of the project will be operated and maintained into the future; and steps taken to get the project ready including the status of required regulatory and/or development approvals; project designs and costings; authority from the land or infrastructure owner to undertake the project at the nominated site(s); funding contributions from all sources. <p>Indicators and evidence consistent with a highly satisfactory response to this criterion may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a track record that includes demonstrated experience successfully managing multiple projects of a similar size and scope; a team (applicant plus any delivery partners) that possesses all the required skills and expertise to successfully achieve the target outcomes; a moderately detailed business case, including a project plan, budget and risk management plan commensurate with the size and scale of the project, that is feasible and likely to achieve the intended outcomes taking into account the project inputs, outputs, duration, risks and any assumptions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the project timeline/schedule provides a high level of confidence that the project can commence quickly and

Scoring Category	Raw Score (out of 10)	CRITERION ONE: Contribution to disaster risk reduction, resilience and/or knowledge (40 per cent weighting)	CRITERION TWO: Alignment with national and state/territory/local disaster resilience and risk reduction plans, strategies and frameworks (30 per cent weighting)	CRITERION THREE: Capacity, capability and resources to deliver the project (30 per cent weighting)
		<p>natural hazards and reduce the risk of future natural disasters; and</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ reduce the exposure to risk, harm and/or severity of a future natural disaster's impacts, including reducing the recovery burden for governments, cohorts at disproportionate risk and/or affected communities. ● clear and relevant project objectives (problem and solution), inputs (resources), outputs (activities) and outcomes (short, medium and long-term); ● a clear description of how project funds will be used to deliver enduring outcomes that are tangible, sustainable, and build resilience or reduce disaster risk in the long-term; ● a somewhat detailed analysis of level(s) of exposure and vulnerability to natural hazards in the geographic area that the project relates to, both prior to and upon conclusion of the project; ● a clear and well-reasoned case that shows the potential impact of the project on the identified target area or group(s) in terms of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. increased understanding of natural hazard disaster impacts, ii. increased resilience, adaptive capacity and/or preparedness, and/or iii. reduced exposure to risk, harm and/or severity of a natural hazard's impacts. ● multiple sources of evidence of varying quality (e.g. anecdotal reports combined with references to research data, government risk assessments such as the National Climate Risk Assessment, expert advice, detailed building specifications and/or impact estimates from relevant professionals, peak bodies and/or industry representatives) to support claims related to levels 		<p>be completed within the maximum project duration (3 years);</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ the budget is justified by evidence as per the requirements listed below and appropriate to the size and scope of the project, with no significant gaps or other concerns (e.g. excessive claims): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Infrastructure projects > \$1m: cost estimates prepared by a quantity surveyor; ▪ Other projects > \$1m: cost estimates prepared by relevant professionals (e.g. actuaries or accountants); or ▪ Other projects < \$1m: quotes or cost estimates prepared by the Applicant (ideally less than 6 months old). ○ some risks, concerns or reservations may exist, but are minor and can be managed; and ○ assumptions are relevant, clear and reasonably detailed. ● for projects with a place-based focus (i.e. a project focused on addressing the needs of a particular location) or that will affect the particular interests of First Nations communities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ a detailed description of stakeholder engagement activities that shows a reasonable breadth of consultation and support and how that support will be maintained throughout the project; ○ at least one source of reliable evidence (e.g. endorsement from community group(s) or local council; outcomes from a community survey; community contributions to the project such as cash or in kind contributions; collaboration with other organisations within the area; community participation in the project); and ○ Where a project indicates benefits for cohorts at disproportionate risk (as defined in the DRF guidelines) there is evidence of consultation with these communities. ● additionally, for infrastructure projects:

Scoring Category	Raw Score (out of 10)	CRITERION ONE: Contribution to disaster risk reduction, resilience and/or knowledge (40 per cent weighting)	CRITERION TWO: Alignment with national and state/territory/local disaster resilience and risk reduction plans, strategies and frameworks (30 per cent weighting)	CRITERION THREE: Capacity, capability and resources to deliver the project (30 per cent weighting)
		of disaster risk and expected project benefits/co-benefits; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a strong commitment to maintain the project benefits beyond the duration of program funding, and detailed information on how they will do this; well-developed strategies for avoiding and managing potential maladaptation; significant consideration of diversity and disproportionately at risk communities or cohorts. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a moderately detailed cost benefit analysis that details most economic, environmental and social impacts of the proposed intervention and shows a net overall benefit; copies of relevant designs and permits that show the project has all necessary planning and building approvals to proceed; and clear evidence of ownership or permission to use the land/infrastructure.
Satisfactory	5-6	The applicant, and delivery partners (where relevant), have adequately demonstrated how the project aligns with one or more of the DRF objectives by identifying how and to what extent the project reduces disaster risk, increases resilience and/or increases understanding of natural disasters, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a description of the natural hazard/s the project is addressing, current and future risks posed to the target community (including consideration of climate change impacts) and how these have been assessed, or if there is limited or no existing hazard or risk information, how the project funding will contribute to increasing understanding of the hazard, level of risk and potential future disaster impacts; a description of the benefits and any co-benefits the project will deliver for the community during and beyond the term of funding, including the estimated level/s of disaster risk, resilience, and/or understanding prior to and upon conclusion of the proposed project, along with any enduring benefits; how the project will avoid and manage the potential for maladaptation (including any unintentionally negative social, environmental or economic outcomes); 	The applicant, and delivery partners (where relevant), have adequately demonstrated how the project: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> aligns with one or more of the priorities, outcomes and/or national actions identified in the Second National Action Plan; and aligns with and/or supports delivery of any other relevant national, state, territory or local disaster risk reduction or adaptation plans, policies or frameworks, or how the project will develop or contribute to development of these policies, plans or frameworks where they do not currently exist. Indicators and evidence consistent with a satisfactory response to this criterion may include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a case that references the Second National Action Plan and other relevant national, state, territory or local disaster risk reduction strategies and frameworks, and provides some but limited detail as to how the project is consistent with or supports those plans and strategies. 	The applicant, and delivery partners (where relevant), have adequately demonstrated that they have the capacity, capability and support to successfully deliver the project outcomes, in a manner that represents value with relevant money, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a track record managing similar projects and access to personnel and/or partners with the right skills and experience; sound project planning to manage and complete the project, which addresses scope, implementation methodology, timeframes, budget, community consultation, and risk management; robust consultation with and support from local government(s) and/or affected communities, including First Nations communities where relevant, or compelling reasons for not having consulted; compliance with relevant legislative requirements, government policies and industry standards – for example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> where the particular interests of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people will be affected by the project, will the project ensure cultural safety in any service delivery and does it align with the National Agreement on Closing the Gap Priority Reforms or will it contribute to progress against targets? readiness to commence the project once Implementation Plans are endorsed and ability to deliver the project within the maximum project period;

Scoring Category	Raw Score (out of 10)	CRITERION ONE: Contribution to disaster risk reduction, resilience and/or knowledge (40 per cent weighting)	CRITERION TWO: Alignment with national and state/territory/local disaster resilience and risk reduction plans, strategies and frameworks (30 per cent weighting)	CRITERION THREE: Capacity, capability and resources to deliver the project (30 per cent weighting)
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • for infrastructure projects, how climate change may impact the investment over its intended life span and how these risks will or may be mitigated; and • for projects that seek to improve understanding of natural hazards and disaster risk, how the new hazard and risk information will be shared with affected communities. <p>Indicators and evidence consistent with a satisfactory response to this criterion may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a basic but logical explanation of how and to what extent the project activities and intended outcome/s address one or more of the DRF's Objectives, namely to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ increase the understanding of natural disaster impacts, as a first step towards reducing the risk of future natural disaster impacts; ○ increase the resilience, adaptive capacity and/or preparedness of governments, community service organisations and affected communities to future natural disasters to minimise the potential impact of natural hazards and reduce the risk of future natural disasters; and ○ reduce the exposure to risk, harm and/or severity of a future natural disaster's impacts, including reducing the recovery burden for governments, cohorts at disproportionate risk and/or affected communities. • mostly clear and somewhat relevant project objectives (problem and solution), inputs (resources), outputs (activities) and outcomes (short, medium and long-term), but lacking some relevant detail; • a basic outline of how project funds will be used to deliver enduring outcomes that are tangible, 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • additionally, for infrastructure projects: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ how the infrastructure and benefits of the project will be operated and maintained into the future; and ○ steps taken to get the project ready including the status of required regulatory and/or development approvals; project designs and costings; authority from the land or infrastructure owner to undertake the project at the nominated site(s); funding contributions from all sources. <p>Indicators and evidence consistent with a satisfactory response to this criterion may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a track record that includes involvement in successful projects of a similar size and scope, but with limited detail; • a team that possesses most of the required skills and experience to successfully achieve the target outcome; • a basic but adequate business case, including a project plan, budget and risk management plan commensurate with the size and scale of the project, that appears feasible and shows moderate potential to achieve the intended outcomes taking into account the project inputs, outputs, duration, risks and any assumptions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ the project timeline/schedule provides a reasonable level of confidence that the project can commence and be completed within the maximum project duration (3 years); ○ the budget is justified by evidence as per the requirements listed below and appropriate to the size and scope of the project; any gaps or concerns (e.g. excessive claims) are minor: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Infrastructure projects > \$1m: cost estimates prepared by a quantity surveyor; ▪ Other projects > \$1m: cost estimates prepared by relevant professionals (e.g. actuaries or accountants); or ▪ Other projects < \$1m: quotes or cost estimates prepared by the Applicant (ideally less than 6 months old).

Scoring Category	Raw Score (out of 10)	CRITERION ONE: Contribution to disaster risk reduction, resilience and/or knowledge (40 per cent weighting)	CRITERION TWO: Alignment with national and state/territory/local disaster resilience and risk reduction plans, strategies and frameworks (30 per cent weighting)	CRITERION THREE: Capacity, capability and resources to deliver the project (30 per cent weighting)
		<p>sustainable, and build resilience or reduce disaster risk in the long-term;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a basic analysis of level(s) of exposure and vulnerability to natural hazards in the geographic area that the project relates to, both prior to and upon conclusion of the project; • logical reasons for how the project could potentially impact the identified target area or group(s) in terms of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. increased understanding of natural hazard disaster impacts, ii. increased resilience, adaptive capacity and/or preparedness, and/or iii. reduced exposure to risk, harm and/or severity of a natural hazard's impacts. • at least one reliable source of evidence (e.g. research data, government risk assessments such as the National Climate Risk Assessment, expert advice, detailed building specifications or impact estimates from relevant professionals, peak bodies and/or industry representatives) to support claims related to levels of disaster risk and expected project benefits/co-benefits; • a commitment to maintain the project benefits beyond the duration of program funding, and some details on how they will do this; • partially developed strategies for avoiding and managing potential maladaptation; • some consideration of diversity and disproportionately at risk communities or cohorts. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ some risks, concerns or weaknesses may exist, but none are major and all are manageable; and ○ assumptions are generally relevant, clear and reasonably detailed. • for projects with a place-based focus (i.e. a project focused on addressing the needs of a particular location) or that will affect the particular interests of First Nations communities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ a brief mention of stakeholder engagement activities that shows some consultation and support from key stakeholders; ○ at least one source of reliable evidence (e.g. endorsement from community group(s) or local council; outcomes from a community survey; community contributions to the project such as cash or in kind contributions; collaboration with other organisations within the area; community participation in the project); and ○ Where a project indicates benefits for cohorts at disproportionate risk (as defined in the DRF guidelines) there is evidence of consultation with these communities. • additionally, for infrastructure projects: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ a basic cost benefit analysis which outlines the main economic, environmental and social impacts of the proposed intervention and shows a net overall benefit; ○ copies of relevant designs and permits that show the project has some of the necessary planning and building approvals to proceed, with other required approvals to be obtained post-award, as appropriate for the stage of the project; and ○ clear evidence of ownership or permission to use the land/infrastructure.
Marginal	3-4	<p>Limited information and detail have been provided to demonstrate how the project contributes to the DRF objectives of reducing disaster risk, increasing resilience, and/or increasing understanding of natural disasters, including:</p>	<p>The applicant, and delivery partners (where relevant), have demonstrated to a limited degree how the project aligns with existing plans and strategies, including how the project:</p>	<p>The applicant, and delivery partners (where relevant), have demonstrated to a limited degree that they have the capacity, capability and support to successfully deliver the project outcomes, in a manner that represents value with relevant money, including:</p>

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a description of the natural hazard(s) the project is addressing, current and future risks posed to the target community (including consideration of climate change impacts) and how these have been assessed, or if there is limited or no existing hazard or risk information, how the project funding will contribute to increasing understanding of the hazard, level of risk and potential future disaster impacts; a description of the benefits and any co-benefits the project will deliver for the community during and beyond the term of funding, including the estimated level(s) of disaster risk, resilience, and/or understanding prior to and upon conclusion of the proposed project, along with any enduring benefits; how the project will avoid and manage the potential for maladaptation (including any unintentionally negative social, environmental or economic outcomes); for infrastructure projects, how climate change may impact the investment over its intended life span and how these risks will or may be mitigated; and for projects that seek to improve understanding of natural hazards and disaster risk, how the new hazard and risk information will be shared with affected communities. <p>Indicators and evidence consistent with a marginal response to this criterion may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> an unclear explanation of how and to what extent the project activities and intended outcome/s address one or more of the DRF's Objectives, namely to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> increase the understanding of natural disaster impacts, as a first step towards reducing the risk of future natural disaster impacts; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> aligns with one or more of the priorities, outcomes and/or national actions identified in the Second National Action Plan; and aligns with and/or supports delivery of any other relevant national, state, territory or local disaster risk reduction or adaptation plans, policies or frameworks, or how the project will develop or contribute to development of these policies, plans or frameworks where they do not currently exist. <p>Indicators and evidence consistent with a marginal response to this criterion may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> limited detail about the Second National Action Plan and any other relevant national, state, territory or local disaster risk reduction strategies and frameworks, making it uncertain whether the project aligns with them or not. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a track record managing similar projects and access to personnel and/or partners with the right skills and experience; sound project planning to manage and complete the project, which addresses scope, implementation methodology, timeframes, budget, community consultation, and risk management; robust consultation with and support from local government(s) and/or affected communities, including First Nations communities where relevant, or compelling reasons for not having consulted; compliance with relevant legislative requirements, government policies and industry standards – for example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> where the particular interests of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people will be affected by the project, will the project ensure cultural safety in any service delivery and does it align with the National Agreement on Closing the Gap Priority Reforms or will it contribute to progress against targets? readiness to commence the project once Implementation Plans are endorsed and ability to deliver the project within the maximum project period; additionally, for infrastructure projects: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> how the infrastructure and benefits of the project will be operated and maintained into the future; and steps taken to get the project ready including the status of required regulatory and/or development approvals; project designs and costings; authority from the land or infrastructure owner to undertake the project at the nominated site(s); funding contributions from all sources. <p>Indicators and evidence consistent with a marginal response to this criterion may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a track record that includes limited involvement in successful projects of a similar size and scope; a team (applicant plus any delivery partners) that has minimal skills and expertise to successfully achieve the target outcomes, and

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ increase the resilience, adaptive capacity and/or preparedness of governments, community service organisations and affected communities to future natural disasters to minimise the potential impact of natural hazards and reduce the risk of future natural disasters; and ○ reduce the exposure to risk, harm and/or severity of a future natural disaster's impacts, including reducing the recovery burden for governments, cohorts at disproportionate risk and/or affected communities. ● somewhat unclear and not particularly relevant project objectives (problem and solution), inputs (resources), outputs (activities) and outcomes (short, medium and long-term), lacking relevant detail; ● a brief mention of how project funds will be used to deliver enduring outcomes that are tangible, sustainable, and build resilience or reduce disaster risk in the long-term, but with no real detail; ● limited analysis of level(s) of exposure and vulnerability to natural hazards in the geographic area that the project relates to, both prior to and upon conclusion of the project; ● some gaps in reasoning as to how the project could potentially impact the identified target area or group/s in terms of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. increased understanding of natural hazard disaster impacts, ii. increased resilience, adaptive capacity and/or preparedness, and/or iii. reduced exposure to risk, harm and/or severity of a natural hazard's impacts. ● unreliable (e.g. anecdotal only), inconsistent and/or ambiguous evidence to support claims 		<p>limited explanation of how they will acquire the necessary capability to deliver the project;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● an inadequate business case, including a project plan, budget and risk management plan commensurate with the size and scale of the project, that leaves considerable uncertainty as to feasibility and likelihood of achieving the intended outcomes taking into account the project inputs, outputs, duration, risks and any assumptions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ information regarding the project timeframe and schedule is provided, but insufficient to determine with confidence that the project can commence and be completed within the maximum project duration (3 years); ○ the budget is supported by limited evidence and/or lacks sufficient detail to determine its appropriateness: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Infrastructure projects > \$1m: cost estimates prepared by a quantity surveyor; ▪ Other projects > \$1m: cost estimates prepared by relevant professionals (e.g. actuaries or accountants); or ▪ Other projects < \$1m: quotes or cost estimates prepared by the Applicant (ideally less than 6 months old). ○ some significant risks, concerns or weaknesses exist, and it is unlikely that they could be managed; and ○ assumptions are irrelevant, unclear or lack detail. ● for projects with a place-based focus (i.e. a project focused on addressing the needs of a particular location) or that will affect the particular interests of First Nations communities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ the proposal demonstrates inadequate consultation and support from local government(s) and or/affected communities, including First Nations communities where relevant, or insufficient reasons for not having consulted. ● additionally, for infrastructure projects:

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		related to levels of disaster risk and expected project benefits/co-benefits; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a commitment to maintain the project benefits beyond the duration of program funding, but no details on how they will do this; • insufficient information to clearly determine how the potential for maladaptation will be avoided or managed; • limited consideration of diversity and disproportionately at risk communities or cohorts. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ a very basic cost benefit analysis which outlines some economic, environmental and social impacts, but which has significant gaps and shows only a marginal net benefit; ○ copies of some relevant designs and permits, but with no indication or confidence that other necessary designs and approvals will be obtained; and ○ evidence of ownership or permission to use the land/infrastructure is unclear.
Poor	1-2	Some information related to disaster risk, resilience and/or knowledge may be provided, however it fails to address and/or provide evidence of : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a description of the natural hazard/s the project is addressing, current and future risks posed to the target community (including consideration of climate change impacts) and how these have been assessed, or if there is limited or no existing hazard or risk information, how the project funding will contribute to increasing understanding of the hazard, level of risk and potential future disaster impacts; • a description of the benefits and any co-benefits the project will deliver for the community during and beyond the term of funding, including the estimated level(s) of disaster risk, resilience, and/or understanding prior to and upon conclusion of the proposed project, along with any enduring benefits; • how the project will avoid and manage the potential for maladaptation (including any unintentionally negative social, environmental or economic outcomes); • for infrastructure projects, how climate change may impact the investment over its intended life 	The applicant, and delivery partners (where relevant), have failed to demonstrate how the project: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • aligns with one or more of the priorities, outcomes and/or national actions identified in the Second National Action Plan; and • aligns with and/or supports delivery of any other relevant national, state, territory or local disaster risk reduction or adaptation plans, policies or frameworks, or how the project will develop or contribute to development of these policies, plans or frameworks where they do not currently exist. Indicators and evidence consistent with a poor response to this criterion may include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No reference in the response to the Second National Action Plan or other relevant national, state, territory or local disaster risk reduction strategies and/or frameworks. 	The applicant, and delivery partners (where relevant), have failed to demonstrate that they have the capacity, capability and support to successfully deliver the project outcomes, in a manner that represents value with relevant money, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a track record managing similar projects and access to personnel and/or partners with the right skills and experience; • sound project planning to manage and complete the project, which addresses scope, implementation methodology, timeframes, budget, community consultation, and risk management; • robust consultation with and support from local government(s) and/or affected communities, including First Nations communities where relevant, or compelling reasons for not having consulted; • compliance with relevant legislative requirements, government policies and industry standards – for example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ where the particular interests of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people will be affected by the project, will the project ensure cultural safety in any service delivery and does it align with the National Agreement on Closing the Gap Priority Reforms or will it contribute to progress against targets? • readiness to commence the project once Implementation Plans are endorsed and ability to deliver the project within the maximum project period;

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		<p>span and how these risks will or may be mitigated; and</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> for projects that seek to improve understanding of natural hazards and disaster risk, how the new hazard and risk information will be shared with affected communities. <p>Indicators and evidence consistent with a poor response to this criterion may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> no or a poor explanation of how and to what extent the project activities and intended outcome(s) address one or more of the DRF's Objectives, namely to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> increase the understanding of natural disaster impacts, as a first step towards reducing the risk of future natural disaster impacts; increase the resilience, adaptive capacity and/or preparedness of governments, community service organisations and affected communities to future natural disasters to minimise the potential impact of natural hazards and reduce the risk of future natural disasters; and reduce the exposure to risk, harm and/or severity of a future natural disaster's impacts, including reducing the recovery burden for governments, cohorts at disproportionate risk and/or affected communities. very unclear and/or irrelevant project objectives (problem and solution), inputs (resources), outputs (activities) and outcomes (short, medium and long-term); no outline or mention of how project funds will be used to deliver enduring outcomes that are tangible, sustainable, and build resilience or reduce disaster risk in the long-term; 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> additionally, for infrastructure projects: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> how the infrastructure and benefits of the project will be operated and maintained into the future; and steps taken to get the project ready including the status of required regulatory and/or development approvals; project designs and costings; authority from the land or infrastructure owner to undertake the project at the nominated site(s); funding contributions from all sources. <p>Indicators and evidence consistent with a poor response to this criterion may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a track record that indicates no previous involvement in projects of a similar size and scope; a team that is deficient in many of the required skills and expertise to successfully achieve the target outcomes; a weak business case, including a project plan, budget and risk management plan, that appears unfeasible and unlikely to achieve the intended outcomes taking into account the project inputs, outputs, duration, risks and any assumptions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> little or no confidence that the project can commence and be completed within the maximum project duration (3 years); the budget is supported by no evidence (see requirements below), is not commensurate with the size and scope of the project, and/or includes major concerns (e.g. excessive claims) or gaps: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Infrastructure projects > \$1m: cost estimates prepared by a quantity surveyor; Other projects > \$1m: cost estimates prepared by relevant professionals (e.g. actuaries or accountants); or Other projects < \$1m: quotes or cost estimates prepared by the Applicant (ideally less than 6 months old). multiple major flaws, risks or concerns that would prevent the project from succeeding if not addressed; and

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • no analysis of level(s) of exposure and vulnerability to natural hazards in the geographic area that the project relates to, both prior to and upon conclusion of the project; • no case or reasons as to how the project could potentially impact the identified target area or group/s in terms of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. increased understanding of natural hazard disaster impacts, ii. increased resilience, adaptive capacity and/or preparedness, and/or iii. reduced exposure to risk, harm and/or severity of a natural hazard's impacts. • no appropriate or convincing evidence to support claims related to levels of disaster risk and expected project benefits/co-benefits; • no commitment to maintain the project benefits beyond the duration of program funding; • no information addressing how the potential for maladaptation will be avoided or managed; • no consideration of diversity and disproportionately at risk communities or cohorts. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ assumptions are irrelevant, unclear or lack detail. • for projects with a place-based focus (i.e. a project focused on addressing the needs of a particular location) or that will affect the particular interests of First Nations communities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ community engagement does not appear to have occurred, is not supported by appropriate evidence and/or indicates no/insufficient support for the project from key stakeholders, and no compelling reasons are given for not having consulted. • additionally, for infrastructure projects: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ no cost benefit analysis has been undertaken; ○ no designs or permits have been provided, and there is no clear plan for obtaining these post-award; and ○ no evidence of ownership or permission to use the land/infrastructure has been provided.

Application rating matrix for the weighted technical assessment criteria (criteria 1, 2 and 3).

Rating Category	Description
<p>Highly Suitable (score equivalent to at least 5 out of 10 for each technical assessment criterion, with a total weighted score of 80 or more out of 100)</p>	<p>An Application that demonstrates very good to excellent alignment with the technical assessment criteria.</p> <p>The project has clearly articulated with well-defined objectives and scope, and is supported by strong evidence (qualitative and/or quantitative) to demonstrate the project will achieve its aims. Risks to project success may be present, but the Application has identified mitigation strategies and controls to manage the risk.</p>
<p>Suitable (score equivalent to at least 5 out of 10 for each technical assessment criterion, with a total weighted score of between 50 and 79 out of 100)</p>	<p>An Application that demonstrates satisfactory to good alignment with the technical assessment criteria.</p> <p>The project has sound objectives and is supported by evidence (qualitative and/or quantitative) to demonstrate its positive impact. Risks to project success may be present, but the Application has identified mitigation strategies and controls to manage the risk.</p>
<p>Not Suitable/ Not Recommended (score equivalent to less than 5 out of 10 for any of the technical assessment criteria, irrespective of total score)</p>	<p>An unsatisfactory Application when assessed against the technical criteria, with uncertainty as to the project’s relevance, feasibility and/or likely impact. May contain significant risks that prevent the project from succeeding.</p>

Appendix F – DRF Scoring and Rating Matrix for Overall Value of the Project

The scoring and rating matrix below provides assessors and NEMA with benchmarks for appropriately scoring and rating each project application against the value with relevant money assessment criterion (criterion 4).

When referring to the matrix, Applicants and assessors should be aware that:

- it is not essential that all descriptors relating to a given score are met. The scoring matrix employs a “best fit” approach.
- Initial scores for each criterion will be provided out of 3 (raw score) in whole numbers. These raw scores will then be adjusted by NEMA as set out in section 8.2 of the Guidelines. Final value with money ratings will be determined based on final scores rounded to the nearest whole number.
- Assessor comments justifying their scores will be recorded against each criterion and may be shared with Applicants as part of feedback.
- Scores and comments will take into account the applicant’s responses, any supporting documentation provided, and the project size, complexity and amount of funding sought (e.g. a larger, more complex project would be expected to provide more detail and evidence against each of criterion). Material external to an application may be referred to when comparing value for money with other Applications.

Application scoring and rating matrix for overall value of the project (criterion 4).

Rating Category	Description
<p>Excellent (score of 3)</p>	<p>The application provides excellent overall value with relevant money, both in its own right and when compared with other projects in the same funding stream:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The investment represents a highly efficient, effective, economical and ethical use of public resources • The project activities will make a substantial contribution to DRF objectives and any relevant priorities, and are strongly aligned with the DRF investment principles. • The proposed budget is highly detailed, aligns very well with the scope and scale of the proposed project, and is well justified and suited to undertake all components of the proposed work. • Combined financial and in-kind contributions will almost certainly support completion of the project, and meet or exceed expected investment levels from the Applicant and delivery partners. • The applicant's risk management plan is well considered and appropriate to the project, with no significant risks that cannot be managed. • The DRF is an appropriate funding source for the project, with no concerns about cost shifting.
<p>Good (score of 2)</p>	<p>The application provides good overall value with relevant money, both in its own right and when compared with other projects in the same funding stream:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The investment represents an efficient, effective, economical and ethical use of public resources. • The project activities will make a contribution to the DRF objectives and any relevant priorities, and are aligned with the DRF investment principles. • The proposed budget is sufficiently detailed, aligns well with the scope and scale of the proposed project, and is adequately justified and suited to undertake all components of the proposed work, with some minor shortcomings. • Combined financial and in-kind contributions are likely to support completion of the project, and meet expected investment levels from the Applicant and delivery partners. • The applicant's risk management plan is appropriate to the project, with some minor residual risks that are unlikely to prevent the project from succeeding. • The DRF is an appropriate funding source for the project, with no concerns about cost shifting.
<p>Marginal to Poor / Not Recommended (score of 1)</p>	<p>The application provides marginal to poor overall value with relevant money in its own right and/or when compared with other projects in the same funding stream:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The project activities would amount to a relatively poor investment measured in terms of the efficient, effective, economical and ethical use of public resources. • The project activities would make a limited contribution to the DRF objectives, and/or their alignment with the DRF investment principles is relatively weak. • The proposed budget is higher than expected for a project of similar scale and scope, with some questionable cost or funding figures. • Combined financial and in-kind contributions from the Applicant and delivery partners meet minimum requirements, but may be insufficient to support completion of the project. • The applicant's risk management plan identifies or omits significant risks that cannot be easily mitigated and/or that place the project at real/greater risk of not succeeding. • Other more appropriate funding sources exist.