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Image courtesy of Tourism and Events Queensland

Growing Future Tourism – Round 2

Program Guidelines

March 2024



Queensland
Government



The Department of Tourism and Sport (the department) will provide and pay for qualified interpreting services for customers who are hearing impaired or have difficulties communicating in English. Please [contact the department](#) if you require interpreting services.

Acknowledge of Country

The Department of Tourism and Sport respectfully acknowledges and recognises Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the Traditional Owners and Custodians of the lands, winds and waters where we live, learn and work.

We pay our respects to the Elders past, present and emerging for they hold the memories, the traditions and the cultures of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people across the nation.

We will walk together with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, communities and organisations in our journey to enrich lives and strengthen community connections.

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1. Program overview

The Queensland Government is delivering the Growing Future Tourism (GFT) Program (to support the Queensland Government's *Towards Tourism 2032: Transforming Queensland's visitor economy future* (TT32)).

TT32 recognises private sector investment is vital to deliver new visitor infrastructure and experiences, with government the critical enabler for investment and industry development.

The objective of GFT is to enable and leverage private sector investment for the development and delivery of new and enhanced tourism-related projects in the priority areas of coastal and marine tourism, heritage and cultural tourism, and ecotourism and sustainability.

Eligible tourism businesses/organisations planning significant infrastructure or experience projects in these areas are invited to apply.

The program is being delivered by the Department of Tourism and Sport (DTS).

The program will be offered under a two-stage application process. An Expression of Interest (EOI) will be open to eligible applicants for a five (5) week period. After review and assessment, selected applicants may be invited to submit a Full Business Case (FBC) detailing the project. Applicants will then have up to six (6) weeks to prepare and submit the FBC application.

The announcement of successful projects is expected to occur in September 2024 and projects are required to reach practical completion by **31 March 2027**.

2. Available funding

Matched funding of between \$1 million and \$4 million (GST exclusive) is available under the program to eligible applicants for eligible projects.

Funding is on a 1:1 co-contribution basis with applicants to contribute at least 50 percent of total eligible project costs (GST exclusive). For example, the award of a minimum grant of \$1 million (GST exclusive) would deliver an infrastructure/experience project of \$2 million (GST exclusive) in eligible project costs and a maximum grant of \$4 million (GST exclusive) would deliver an infrastructure/experience project with a total minimum value of \$8 million (GST exclusive) of eligible costs.

Preference will be given to projects where an applicant's ratio of private investment exceeds the matched funding component for eligible project costs. Ineligible costs will be borne by the applicant.

If other government funding has been received for this project, GFT funding cannot be used for staged development, i.e. Stage 2, Stage 3, or for a project that has already commenced, and must be used for different and distinct elements.

The applicant must be the legal owner of assets purchased or created using the funding.

Applications are subject to competitive assessment on the criteria set out in these guidelines and submitting an EOI or FBC application is no guarantee of funding being approved.

3. Eligibility

3.1 Applicant eligibility

To be eligible for funding consideration an applicant must:

- be an established tourism operator in Queensland **or**
- a new operator, or an operator from another Australian jurisdiction, who can demonstrate active establishment of tourism operations in Queensland with significant tourism benefits to Queensland **and**
- hold an Australian Business Number (ABN) **and**
- be registered for GST.

Not-for-profit organisations and Queensland Local Government Authorities that provide a tourism service or experience are eligible to apply for funding under the program.

Bodies not eligible for funding under the program include:

- State, Territory and Australian Government agencies or associated agencies such as statutory bodies or government owned corporations **and**
- community groups and regional tourism organisations.

If a consortium submits an application, the lead partner must be an eligible organisation and be responsible for executing the Funding Agreement, managing project delivery, including progress and financial acquittal reports, if successful.

Documented evidence of involvement and support of consortium partners should be provided as part of the application.

Applicants that do not meet eligibility requirements will be deemed ineligible and their application not assessed.

3.2 Project eligibility and funding priorities

To be eligible for funding consideration, a project must:

- be situated on freehold or leasehold land and have owner's consent to develop and operate tourism infrastructure or experience **and**
- have relevant zoning that allows tourism infrastructure or experience **and**
- already have in-principle support from local government and Traditional Owners, where required **and**
- be substantially progressed towards gaining, or having gained, all relevant Local, State and Australian Government approvals, if applicable **and**
- be substantially advanced towards gaining, or have gained Development Approval, if applicable **and**
- be substantially advanced towards Detailed Design for new tourism infrastructure **and**
- be investment ready, with access to or secured funding **and**
- commence within six (6) months of funding approval and reach practical completion by **31 March 2027**.

The types of projects to be supported under GFT will be the development of new or improved tourism infrastructure products and experiences directly related to the priority areas of:

- **coastal and marine tourism**
- **heritage and cultural tourism**
- **ecotourism and sustainability.**

For the avoidance of doubt, the below definitions are used.

DEFINITIONS:

Coastal and Marine tourism

Coastal tourism refers to land-based tourism activities including coastal walks and wildlife watching and other coastal recreation activities taking place on the coast for which the proximity to the sea is a condition including their respective supporting infrastructure and services.

Marine tourism refers to sea-based activities such as boating, yachting, cruising, nautical sports (e.g. scuba diving) including their land-based supporting infrastructure and services.

Heritage and Cultural tourism

Heritage tourism refers to places, landmarks, artefacts, buildings, monuments, and activities that authentically represent the stories and people of the past and present, including historic and natural resources.

Cultural tourism refers to tangible and intangible cultural attractions / products, places, artefacts, landmarks. These attractions / products relate to a set of distinctive material, intellectual, spiritual and emotional features of a society.

Ecotourism and Sustainability

Ecotourism (and nature-based tourism) infrastructure refers to infrastructure developed and operated in a sustainable manner, and which provides an engaging, meaningful ecotourism or nature-based experience, showcasing Queensland's outstanding natural landscape and rich cultural heritage.

Sustainability refers to sustainable practices in and by the tourism industry and aims to minimise the negative impacts and maximise the positive ones, during construction and operation, while considering the needs of visitors, current and future economic, social and environmental impacts, and contributing to the wellbeing of the environment and local community where operating.

Examples within the themes of coastal and marine tourism, heritage and cultural tourism, and ecotourism and sustainability include:

- Marine tourism terminals / pontoons / jetties
- Tourism / resort accommodation specifically related to the priority areas
- Paleo tourism infrastructure product / experience specifically related to the priority areas
- First Nations operated tourism infrastructure product / experience specifically related to the priority areas
- Ecotourism infrastructure and products that develop new or enhance an existing tourism experience
- Nature-based tourism infrastructure or experience
- Agritourism infrastructure product / experience specifically related to the priority areas.

The above list is not exhaustive and is provided as a guide only.

3.3 Eligible and ineligible project costs

Costs usually include a combination of eligible and ineligible expenditure. Applicants will be responsible for **all** ineligible costs and eligible costs above the approved funding amount; and must ensure they have adequate funds and resources to meet these costs.

Eligible project costs may include:

- offsite construction of approved tourism infrastructure, including transportation costs to project location
- tech overlay – online, digital, virtual and or augmented reality capability enhancement of an experience or tourism built attraction
- capital construction costs (including all site works required as part of the construction)
- production of final ‘for construction’ designs or equivalent
- construction-related labour (external contractors), materials, equipment hire that is directly related to developing and delivering the project
- project management costs (external contractors) for time directly related to managing the construction of approved works but **excluding** executive duties and overhead charges
- recording of project implementation progress, such as photography, time-lapse video
- vehicle leasing or hiring directly associated with construction of the project (such as excavators).

Ineligible costs may include:

Note this list is not exhaustive. Other costs may be ineligible where it is determined they do not directly support project outcomes or the objectives of the program.

- works that are deemed as maintenance for existing infrastructure or experience
- activities that have commenced or been completed prior to approval of funding
- all preparatory work, such as planning, feasibility studies, conceptual design, obtaining regulatory approvals, community and Traditional Owner consultation, cultural heritage management plans, compliance processes, insurances, and /or tender processes
- environmental offset costs
- marketing, advertising and promotional activities including websites
- engagement or hiring permanent or temporary employees (such as, remuneration and entitlements), whether or not associated with the project
- buying or leasing real estate, including the land on which the project is located
- costs relating to the delivery of major, local and/or regional **events**
- soft infrastructure such as décor, furniture, linen, removable fixtures, fittings, and equipment
- equipment hires, vehicle leasing, purchasing or hiring not directly associated with the project for the purpose of construction
- infrastructure that is **temporary in nature** and/or with a limited installation period
- any asset not approved by DTS, or where the applicant will not be the legal owner of assets purchased
- general business administration, legal or operating costs.

4. Application and assessment process

To be considered, eligible applicants with eligible projects that can commence within six (6) months of funding approval are invited to submit an Expression of Interest (EOI).

The EOI will be available for completion in SmartyGrants which can be accessed on DTS' SmartyGrants portal ditidtourism.smartygrants.com.au.

The application process framework will include the following stages:

- EOI
- EOI assessment
- FBC by Invitation
- Economic assessment and Due diligence assessment
- Assessment Panel consideration
- Final decision.

All decisions made in relation to applications are final.

4.1 Expression of Interest (EOI)

All projects that meet these guidelines must submit an EOI via the SmartyGrants portal.

To be considered, projects must meet the criteria as noted in **Section 3.1 Applicant eligibility** and **Section 3.2 Project eligibility and funding priorities**, and:

- provide a new or improved tourism infrastructure product or experience in the priority areas of coastal and marine tourism, or heritage and cultural tourism, or ecotourism and sustainability **and**
- create new Full-Time equivalent (FTE) jobs in implementation/construction and ongoing operational phases **and**
- increase overnight visitor numbers and expenditure **and**
- extend length of visitor stay within the region **and**
- assist in improving the dispersal of visitors within Queensland.

The EOI will need to include:

- total cost of the project **and**
- investment readiness with strong evidence of the applicants ability to access or secure funding to meet applicant contribution of at least 50 percent of project's eligible costs and all ineligible costs **and**
- project's implementation/construction readiness – status of current stage **and**
- statement of benefit to Queensland – projected direct tourism benefits.

Evidence of co-funding that will be accepted include:

- Bank statements/balance or financial statements in the name of the applicable entity showing ability to fund the project, with a letter of commitment from an Authorised company representative committing those funds to the project. Examples of an Authorised representative include:
 - A Company Director or Chief Executive Officer
 - A Chief Financial Officer who is a Chartered Practising Accountant (CPA)
 - A representative company accounting firm with CPA membership.
- Bank letter committing to funding the project. This may include an approved bank loan or debt facility; however, evidence must be provided on Bank letterhead.
- A Parent Company Guarantee committing funds to the project that are equal to the 1:1 co-contribution or more, signed by an authorised company representative.
- Evidence of secured third-party funding including relationships and conditions.
- Evidence of awarded grant funding from a level of Government other than the State of Queensland.

Evidence that will **not** be accepted for co-funding.

- A company letterhead committing to the funds but with no supporting evidence of the ability to co-fund the project.
- Unsecured grant funding from other levels of government (i.e., co-funding is not considered to be confirmed if the outcome of a grant from another level of Government has not been awarded at the time of EOI or FBC application).

NOTE: The project is to create genuine **new** FTE jobs during implementation/construction and ongoing operational once completed. Creation of **new** FTE refers to the number of hours considered as equal to a full-time position. That is, if an FTE position in your organisation is considered 40 hours per week and two (2) employees work 20 hours each per week, then the two (2) employees are considered one (1) FTE.

Example: If a project creates employment for 20 new people during implementation/construction at a total of 600 hours, then divided by 40 hours = 15 FTEs.

If a project once operational creates employment for six (6) new people (not existing employed staff) with a combined 160 hours worked per week, then divided by 40 hours = 4 FTEs.

The submission of an EOI does not guarantee invitation to submit a FBC.

4.2 Full Business Case (FBC)

Following assessment and shortlisting, eligible applicants with EOI registered projects that meet GFT priorities may be invited to complete and submit an FBC application via the SmartyGrants portal.

All FBC applicants and projects will be subject to appropriate due diligence and economic assessments.

FBC applications will need to include:

- a detailed Project Plan which includes:
 - the project's objectives and opportunities including economic, tourism, environmental and social benefits i.e., construction and ongoing jobs creation, increased visitation/overnight visitor expenditure
 - financial cost benefit analysis on how the project will deliver a return on investment, including key metrics such as the Net Present Value, Internal Rate of Return and payback period
 - Gantt chart or detailed delivery/works schedule showing timeframes for all project stages up to and including project completion and implementation
 - cash flow forecast (capital and operating costs, and expected project revenue)
 - risk assessment and mitigation actions
 - procurement plans including if there is intention to contract First Nations businesses and/or startups
 - obligations under the Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander cultural Heritage Acts and have an appropriate plan that is endorsed by the Traditional Owners, if applicable
 - asset maintenance/management plans (where applicable) including how the infrastructure will be maintained in a viable and operational state for at least five (5) years after construction completion
 - evidence of capability to deliver projects of a similar value and scale
- company financials for the past three (3) years, signed by an approved auditor
- strong evidence of applicant's funding contribution towards project's eligible (at least 50 percent) and ineligible costs towards the delivery of the project evidence confirming financial contributions from other parties, if applicable
- evidence project will be ready to implement/construct within six (6) months of funding approval and reach practical completion **by 31 March 2027**
- evidence of land ownership or landowner's consent and, where applicable, Native Title status. Applicants must disclose any land ownership/access issues including Native Title to be resolved
- any further identified documentation that supports statements made in the application as per mandatory eligibility criteria.

NOTE: Should the applicant be a new operator in the Queensland tourism industry and is unable to provide audited company financials for the past three (3) years for a tourism operation in Australia or overseas, the applicant will still need to submit audited financials of the applying company or individual to indicate financial viability.

4.3 Assessment panel consideration

Projects will be assessed by an appropriate Assessment Panel chaired by DTS, against the eligibility criteria, due diligence and economic assessment, and alignment with the Government's strategic objectives.

The Assessment Panel will have regard to the balance of risks and costs proposed between the Government and the applicant, in determining whether the project presents an acceptable proposition to the State.

The Assessment Panel may seek expert advice from other government agencies, regional tourism organisations or First Nations partners during the assessment process.

Consideration will be given to alignment with Queensland Government strategies and plans.

DTS may also consult with key industry stakeholders as part of the assessment of the application.

5. Decision

The Assessment Panel will consider projects for funding and will make recommendations to the Director-General of DTS for final funding decision. All proponents will be notified in writing of the decision.

6. Full business case assessment criteria

Criteria 1: Strategic alignment to government priorities (40 percent weighting)

All FBC applications will be assessed against the objectives and following assessment criteria:

The applicant must demonstrate that the proposed project is strategically aligned to government priorities for tourism, such as:

- priorities identified in the Queensland Government's [Towards Tourism 2032](#) strategy that aligns to fund objectives
- alignment with the Queensland Government's [Ecotourism Plan for Queensland's Protected Areas 2023 – 2028](#) strategy
- alignment with the Tourism and Events Queensland's [Nature-based Tourism Strategy 2021-2024](#)
- alignment with relevant region's regional tourism organisation Destination Tourism Plan
- demonstrates innovative and enhanced tourism products and experiences in the priority areas of coastal and marine tourism, heritage and cultural tourism, and ecotourism and sustainability
- is technically, commercially and practically feasible and viable.

Criteria 2: Economic value (40 percent weighting)

The application must demonstrate the proposed project:

- leverages private sector and other investment that attracts, grows and sustains visitation to Queensland
- delivers a value-for-money outcome to the State
- delivers regional and Queensland economic benefits and supports resilience or growth of the visitor economy
- increases overnight visitation and expenditure
- will extend visitor's length of stay in the regions
- will improve the dispersal of visitors within Queensland
- number of jobs created or supported in planning/construction and ongoing operation
- has the ability to be booked online and can be potentially included in travel itineraries.

Criteria 3: Risk and cost allocation (20 percent weighting)

The application must demonstrate significant benefits, in proportion to the level of risk and cost. Proposals which present a lower risk proposition to the Government will have a greater likelihood of successfully satisfying this criterion.

The degree of risk, planning and preparedness that can be demonstrated and considered acceptable, include:

- feasibility study/ies
- extensive plans (including for infrastructure projects, any sections and elevations of each element of the proposal in the context of a functional layout of the overall facility)
- quantity surveyor quote/s (if applicable)
- land tenure for proposed activity location
- architectural sketches and/or detailed design drawings or substantially advanced towards gaining
- engineer design (if applicable)
- development approval or substantially advanced towards gaining
- environmental impacts, including approvals where applicable to the project
- compliance with cultural heritage duty of care where applicable
- Native Title agreement with relevant stakeholders, as required
- evidence of local authority economic development support for the project
- all other relevant approvals
- have a letter of 'in principle' support from Local Government and Traditional Owners, if required.

Note:

- a) payments will be made on a reimbursement of eligible expenditure incurred and aligned with negotiated and agreed milestones inclusive of GST
- b) paid on the basis that any agreed cash amount has been contributed by the applicant at the time of milestone payment claim

If full expenditure on eligible expenses has not occurred, the instalment amount in the agreement is reduced accordingly by the dollar amount not acquitted.

An example of the terms and conditions of a standard DTS contract is available at publications.qld.gov.au/dataset.

Successful recipients are required to commence no later than six (6) months from the date of funding approval and reach practical completion no later than **31 March 2027**.

7. Key dates

The following dates are indicative only and subject to change as required by DTS*. All applications at EOI and FBC stages must be submitted by **11.59pm** on the closing date.

Activity	Date
Program announcement	Wednesday 20 March 2024
Expression of Interest (EOI) open	Friday 22 March 2024
Expression of Interest (EOI) close	Monday 29 April 2024
Full Business Case (FBC) invitations	From Monday 27 May 2024
Full Business Case (FBC) submissions close	Monday 8 July 2024
Funding Announcement	Early September 2024

* Key dates - changes to these dates are found on the DTS website.

8. Privacy

The Queensland Government, via its online application portal (Smartygrants), collects and collates information from the EOI and FBC application forms to assess applications for the GFT. DTS recognises that some of this information may be personal information as defined in the *Information Privacy Act 2009* (the IP Act). Only authorised DTS officers and approved grant assessors have immediate access to this information.

DTS may also consult with key industry stakeholders as part of the assessment of the application which requires DTS disclosing some or all of the information obtained to the key industry stakeholders. Where possible, DTS will discuss this information with key industry stakeholders without disclosing personal information. Personal information will not be disclosed to any other third party without consent, unless required by law or for the purposes of IP Act.

The Assessment Panel will consider projects for funding and will make recommendations to the delegate for final funding decision. All applicants will be notified in writing of the decision.

Applicants should note that broad details of successful projects, agreed outcomes, project progress and the level of funding awarded may be disclosed to our Minister/Minister's Office or published by the Queensland Government. Some information may be used to promote the funded project(s) or other funding programs administered by DTS.

For audit purposes, the Queensland Government is required to retain the applications and other supplied supporting material.

Applicants are reminded that the provisions of the *Right to Information Act 2009* may also apply to information provided to or created in the course of assessing the GFT.

9. Complaints

All decisions made in relation to applications are final. Under the department's Complaints Management Policy, DTS has established processes for dealing with complaints and is committed to effectively managing concerns in a fair, transparent and timely manner. If an applicant has any concerns in relation to the application or assessment process, a formal complaint may be submitted to the department by emailing tourismgrants@dtis.qld.gov.au.

10. Further information

If you require further information about the program or clarification of these guidelines, please contact the department by emailing tourismgrants@dtis.qld.gov.au.