

DRIVING THE NATION PROGRAM

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

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Australian Government
Australian Renewable
Energy Agency

ARENA

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FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

This document contains frequently asked questions (FAQ) regarding the Driving the Nation Program (the Program). ARENA will update this FAQ list as the Driving the Nation Program progresses. Please refer to the Driving the Nation Program Guidelines and Driving the Nation Program webpage at arena.gov.au/funding/driving-the-nation-program for further details.

Applicants can submit questions to ARENA relating to the Program by emailing transport@arena.gov.au. Please note, ARENA reserves the right to publish any general questions and answers around the assessment process, information requirements and timetable in this FAQ document.

APPLYING FOR THE PROGRAM

WHEN CAN I APPLY? IS THERE A DEADLINE FOR SUBMITTING AN APPLICATION?

The Driving the Nation Program is an ongoing Program. Applicants can submit an Expression of Interest for the current Focus Areas at any time. The Program Focus Areas are updated periodically and Applicants should check arena.gov.au/funding/driving-the-nation-program to confirm the status of the current Focus Areas.

The Program will remain open until all funds available under the Program are exhausted or the Program Guidelines are revoked. ARENA will review and assess applications on an ongoing basis. ARENA expects assessment to occur on a bi-monthly basis however this timing may be shortened or extended as required by ARENA.

WHO IS ELIGIBLE TO APPLY FOR FUNDING UNDER THE PROGRAM?

To be eligible for funding, your organisation must hold an Australian Business Number (ABN) and be either:

- a) an Australian entity incorporated under the *Corporation Act 2001 (Cth)* or
- b) an Australian State or Territory owned corporation or a subsidiary of an Australian state or territory owned corporation; or
- c) an Australian local government or council or an Australian organisation that is purposed with representing and supporting local governments or councils.

Research institutions such as Universities are not eligible to apply for funding however may partner with an eligible Applicant.

HOW DO I ASK QUESTIONS IN RELATION TO THE PROGRAM? CAN ARENA ASSIST ME WITH MY APPLICATION?

As this is an open funding program, ARENA can provide general guidance and advice to Applicants seeking to prepare an application. ARENA may also request additional information, documentation or clarification from the Applicant in relation to their application. Applicants are strongly encouraged to contact ARENA at transport@arena.gov.au to discuss a Proposal prior to the submission of an EOI.

The exception to this is under Targeted Rounds where the level of collaboration with Applicants may vary.

CAN AN ORGANISATION OR INDIVIDUAL SUBMIT MORE THAN ONE APPLICATION OR BE A MEMBER OF MORE THAN ONE PROJECT TEAM?

Yes, there is no limit to the number of applications that can be submitted by an individual or organisation. However, if you or an organisation intend to be part of more than one application you must be able to justify that you will have, or be able to allocate, sufficient time and resources to all of the projects should they be successful. Each application must meet the requirements set out in the Program Guidelines.

AM I ABLE TO SUBMIT AN APPLICATION AS PART OF A CONSORTIUM?

Yes, Projects are able to be undertaken by multiple entities, however the consortium will need to nominate a Lead Applicant which, if successful, will become the party that enters into the Funding Agreement with ARENA. Details of any partner organisations can be included within the Application form.

ARENA may, in its discretion, elect to facilitate collaboration between any Applicants with similar or complementary Proposals or between Applicants and other organisations or funding bodies, to develop consortia to finance and carry out Projects. Any such facilitation of collaboration, including the release of confidential information to another Applicant or person, will be subject to the Applicant's prior consent

PROJECTS

WHAT ARE THE OBJECTIVES OF THE PROGRAM?

The Driving the Nation Program is targeting Projects which:

- a) Overcome barriers to accelerate uptake of ZEVs by fleets.
- b) Optimise the integration of BEVs into the grid (including smart chargers) to ensure cost effective outcomes.
- c) Demonstrate new use cases for ZEVs, and highlight opportunities for ZEVs to provide value.
- d) Increase skills, capacity and knowledge relevant to ZEV technologies

In addition to these objectives, applicants should read the Driving the Nation Program focus areas (Program Focus Areas) that outlines the targeted Projects being sought by ARENA. These Program Focus Areas can be found on the Program webpage at arena.gov.au/funding/driving-the-nation-program.

DO I NEED TO ADDRESS ALL OBJECTIVES IN MY APPLICATION?

While it is not mandatory to address all objectives, Projects that can address multiple objectives may be considered of higher merit. Merit Criterion A is focused on assessing how Projects meet the Funding Round objectives and align with the Program Focus Areas. Please refer to the Driving the Nation Program Guidelines for further details.

CAN PROJECT PARTNERS BE FROM OVERSEAS?

Yes. However, consistent with the eligibility criteria, only 10% of ARENA funds can be spent overseas except if being used to purchase equipment.

WHAT TYPE OF PROJECTS ARE ELIGIBLE?

This Round is open to Projects that meet all of the following requirements:

- › Involves a Renewable Energy Technology that has the potential to contribute to the Program Objectives;
- › Sources Renewable Energy or Green Certificates to cover the energy usage for ZEVs or uses sustainable biofuels or renewable hydrogen; and
- › Includes the demonstration or deployment of equipment and/or technology solutions.

Renewable Energy Technology means technology that utilises Renewable Energy and includes hybrid technologies and technologies that are related to Renewable Energy Technologies including ZEVs, charging infrastructure and other enabling technologies relevant to the Program.

Renewable Energy includes solar PV, wind, hydroelectricity, geothermal, bioenergy and ocean energy. Green Certificates include large-scale generation certificates (LGC) traded through the Clean Energy Regulator's REC Registry or an alternative approved by ARENA.

WILL VEHICLES NEED TO BE INCLUDED AS PART OF A PROJECT?

While not necessary under the Program Guidelines, applicants should also read the Program Focus Areas for any additional requirements.

CAN I APPLY FOR FUNDING ON BEHALF OF MULTIPLE FLEETS?

Yes. businesses are able to apply for funding on behalf of multiple fleets if they are looking to install infrastructure for multiple customers.

ASSESSMENT PROCESS

HOW DO I APPLY FOR FUNDING?

The Program is a two-stage application process consisting of an Expression of Interest and Full Application. Applications must be submitted using ARENA's Grants Management System (ARENANet). ARENANet can be accessed through the Driving the Nation Program website. Applicants can commence an online application by going to ARENANet. Please review the Driving the Nation Program Guidelines for a full list of mandatory and optional attachments required.

Applicants must include a Project Plan as part of their application.

Each section of the application contains instructions on what information is required and any word limits which may apply. Applicants can save their application at any time before submitting. There is no time limit on when applications must be submitted by.

HOW DOES ARENA DECIDE WHICH PROJECT WILL RECEIVE FUNDING?

ARENA will review applications against the Merit Criteria outlined in Part 4 of the Program Guidelines. ARENA may take a portfolio approach to selecting Projects for funding, giving consideration to how a Project will contribute to the Program Objectives either uniquely or as part of a suite of complementary ARENA Projects. ARENA may choose not to fund an otherwise meritorious Project if the aims or outcomes of that Project are the same, or similar to, the aims and outcomes of a Project that has previously been funded (either by ARENA or alternative investors) or that ARENA is intending to fund.

ARENA may seek advice on the merit of a Proposal from the ARENA Advisory Panel, and may request Applicants to provide a presentation to the ARENA Advisory Panel regarding their Application.

Greater detail around the assessment process is provided in Part 2 of the Program Guidelines.

CAN ARENA PROVIDE AN EXAMPLE APPLICATION FORM?

No, ARENA does not provide sample answers or Applications for any of its programs. ARENA expects all answers to be honest, succinct, well justified and complete.

FINANCES

WHAT ARE THE MINIMUM AND MAXIMUM AMOUNTS OF FUNDING I CAN APPLY FOR?

The minimum and maximum Grant amount is outlined under each Focus Area and supersedes the amount outlined in the Program Guidelines. Where an amount is not listed under a Focus Area, the amount listed in the Program Guidelines is to be used in place. The current minimum Grant amount under the Program Guidelines is \$500,000, however this is subject to funds available under the Program.

ARENA expects that any funding request reflects the scope, complexity, and the overall value of the Project as a contributor to the Program objectives.

HOW DOES ARENA CONSIDER THE INCLUSION OF OTHER GRANT FUNDING OR CONCESSIONAL FUNDING?

ARENA will consider the total amount of concessional funding that an Applicant has applied or received for the project in assessing projects. This includes both ARENA funding and other grant funding a project may receive from State or Commonwealth Government initiatives. ARENA will also assess any project arrangements that may not be considered to be on commercial or arms length terms in its consideration of concessional funding. ARENA retains discretion on any classification adopted.

ARENA encourages Applicants to investigate opportunities for funding from state and territory governments. However, any such funding must not be used to reduce the Applicant's in-kind and cash contributions.

Consideration of concessional funding excludes finance that may be obtained from the Clean Energy Finance Corporation (CEFC) or the Northern Australia Infrastructure Facility (NAIF).

WHERE IS THE ARENA BUDGET TEMPLATE?

The ARENA budget template can be found in the online ARENANet application form, under 'Merit Criterion D'. Applicants should also submit a more detailed Project budget as a separate attachment as well as a financial model for the Project.

SHOULD SALARIES BE COUNTED AS IN-KIND OR CASH CONTRIBUTIONS?

Where personnel are already engaged by the recipient prior to the commencement of the Project and have not been engaged specifically to work on the Project, this cost should be classified as an in-kind contribution, as opposed to cash contributions. In addition, where an existing member of personnel is transferred to work on the Project (for all or part of the time), then the proportion of time that is spent on the Project should be classed as an in-kind contribution.

Where personnel are (or will be) specifically hired to work on the Project, this can be classed as a cash contribution. The hire of personnel to work on the Project may also include the hire of existing personnel, where the duration of their existing engagement does not cover their proposed involvement in the Project. The appropriate FTE must be apportioned to the Project and must not overlap with any pre-existing role or work on other projects.

The applicant can elect to assign cash salaries from either a cash contribution or the ARENA grant funding request under the budget. This budget and its justification will be assessed for merit under Merit Criterion D.

HOW WILL PAYMENTS BE MADE IF MY APPLICATION IS SUCCESSFUL?

In general, ARENA pays upon the completion of milestone payments. If necessary, ARENA may allow small upfront payments to assist with upfront costs associated with Project commencement. These activities will be agreed upon during negotiation of the Funding Agreement. Please refer to the Driving the Nation Program Funding Agreement template for more detail on the proposed milestone structure and funding profile. ARENA reserves the right to amend the funding profile in instances where the Project length is less than two years.

CAN I INCLUDE THE COST OF THE VEHICLE IN THE BUDGET?

The Project budget should include all costs directly attributed to the Project, however, not all costs are considered Eligible Expenditure. ARENA funding can only be used for Eligible Expenditure. See Appendix A of the Program Guidelines for more detail on eligible and ineligible expenditure.

Upfront vehicle costs and vehicle operating costs are considered ineligible expenditure for Light Vehicles (including passenger vehicles, SUVs and light commercial vehicles). Therefore, these costs should be included in the Project budget as ineligible expenditure.

KNOWLEDGE SHARING

WHAT ARE ARENA'S REQUIREMENTS FOR KNOWLEDGE SHARING?

Knowledge sharing refers to lessons learnt throughout the Project, the sharing of successful stories, and creating opportunities for collaboration with the wider renewable energy sector. In some cases this may be made publicly available, in others it may be restricted to a relevant audience within the specific sector. Knowledge sharing does not include any commercially valuable information or intellectual property (IP).

For this Round, Knowledge Sharing is not a merit criterion. Instead, Applicants are required to agree to a Knowledge Sharing Plan as an eligibility requirement, which can be found in the Driving the Nation Program Funding Agreement template on the Driving the Nation Program website arena.gov.au/funding/driving-the-nation-program.

For any successful Applicants, ARENA support must be acknowledged in all communications material distributed by grant recipients in relation to the ARENA-funded Project.

Further information is available at
arena.gov.au

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