

# **INDUSTRIAL TRANSFORMATION STREAM**

**FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

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Australian Government  
Australian Renewable  
Energy Agency

**ARENA**

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# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

This document contains FAQs regarding the Industrial Transformation Stream Program (**ITS Program**). ARENA will update this FAQ list as needed. Please refer to the Program Guidelines and the Program [webpage](#) for further details.

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

## PROGRAM

### WHAT IS THE 'POWERING THE REGIONS FUND'?

The Australian Government will support the decarbonisation of existing industries and creation of new clean energy industries through the \$1.9 billion Powering the Regions Fund (**PRF**). The PRF forms part of 'Powering Australia', the Governments plan for Australia to become a renewable energy superpower, meeting the emission reduction targets of 43 per cent below 2005 levels by 2030, and net zero emissions by 2050.

PRF has several funding streams: the \$400 million ITS Program, \$600 million Safeguard Transformation Stream Program (**STS Program**), and \$400 million Critical Inputs to Clean Energy Industries (**CICEI Program**). ARENA is responsible for the delivery of the ITS Program.

### WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE ITS PROGRAM AND THE STS PROGRAM?

The STS Program is for Scope 1 greenhouse gas emissions abatement of trade-exposed Safeguard facilities covered by the Safeguard Mechanism<sup>1</sup>.

The ITS Program is for Scope 1 and Scope 2 greenhouse gas emissions abatement of existing, regional industrial facilities (not limited to trade exposed Safeguard facilities). See 'Eligibility' for further detail.

### WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE ITS PROGRAM AND THE NATIONAL INDUSTRIAL TRANSFORMATION PROGRAM?

The National Industrial Transformation (**NIT**) Program is a \$40 million funding program to support the reduction of scope 1 and scope 2 emissions at existing or planned industrial facilities in Australia.

Key elements of each Program are shown below:

	ITS	NIT
Relevant locations?	Regional	No constraint
Facility must meet the NGER eligibility criteria?	Yes	No constraint
Existing industrial facilities or new build?	Existing	Both
In scope emissions abatement?	Yes, Scope 1 and Scope 2	Yes, Scope 1 and Scope 2
In scope technologies <sup>2</sup> ?	Renewable Energy Technologies, Energy Efficiency Technologies and Electrification Technologies	Renewable Energy Technologies, Energy Efficiency Technologies and Electrification Technologies
Support for studies, pilots and deployment?	Yes, all	Yes, all

1 The Safeguard Mechanism is a legislative framework which has been in place since 2016 which limits the emissions of around 215 large industrial facilities (around 28% of national emissions).

2 See the ITS Program Guidelines glossary for detailed technology definitions.

	ITS	NIT
Encourage technology demonstration, collaboration and knowledge sharing across industry and/or regions	Yes	Yes

Applicants are strongly encouraged to contact ARENA at [industrialtransformation@arena.gov.au](mailto:industrialtransformation@arena.gov.au) to discuss the appropriate Program for its proposal prior to the submission of an EOI. ARENA can assist Applicants in navigating between the respective programs.

## WHAT ARE THE OBJECTIVES OF THE ITS PROGRAM?

The Program objectives are to:

- support industrial Facilities in Regional Australia to reduce emissions in line with Australia's 2030 emissions reduction goals and transition to net zero by 2050;
- improve technology readiness and commercial readiness of Renewable Energy Technologies, Energy Efficiency Technologies and Electrification Technologies that will result in a significant reduction in Scope 1 and/or Scope 2 emissions or improve the energy efficiency of an industrial process or processes;
- encourage technology demonstration, collaboration and knowledge sharing across industry and/or regions; and
- support upskilling of existing industrial workforce in new decarbonisation activities.

In addition to the Program Objectives in the ITS Guidelines (see item 1.7), Applicants should read the ITS Focus Areas on the ITS Program [webpage](#) that outline the targeted Projects being sought by ARENA.

## DO I NEED TO ADDRESS ALL OBJECTIVES IN MY APPLICATION?

While it is not mandatory to address all Program Objectives, Projects that can address multiple objectives may be considered of higher merit. Merit criterion A assesses how Projects meet the ITS Program Objectives and align with the ITS Focus Areas (see Part 4 of the ITS Guidelines).

## WHAT ARE SCOPE 1 AND 2 GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS?

Scope 1 greenhouse gas emissions are the emissions released to the atmosphere as a direct result of an activity or series of activities at a facility level. Scope 1 emissions are sometimes referred to as direct emissions. Emissions produced from the burning of fossil fuels on site are Scope 1 emissions.

Scope 2 greenhouse gas emissions are the emissions released to the atmosphere from the consumption of an energy commodity. For example, using electricity sourced from the electricity grid results in Scope 2 emissions.

## HOW WILL FUNDS BE DEPLOYED UNDER THE ITS PROGRAM?

The ITS Program will be delivered as a series of Targeted Funding Rounds. Each Round will be supported by ITS Focus Areas which outline the targeted Projects being sought by ARENA. Information on the Focus Areas, allocated funding and duration of any Funding Rounds is available on the ITS Program [webpage](#). Focus areas for the first Targeted Funding Round have been selected based on ability to accelerate regional emissions reduction in line with the ITS Program objectives.

The total funding allocated for the Program is \$400 million and the Program will run as an open, ongoing program with Targeted Funding Rounds until the funds are exhausted or otherwise terminated or extended at the discretion of ARENA.

## DOES THE PROGRAM TARGET SPECIFIC INDUSTRIAL SECTORS?

The following Target Sectors (based on the Australian and New Zealand Standard Industrial Classification (**ANZSIC**) codes published by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (**ABS**)) are considered well aligned to the Program Objectives in terms of industrial emissions abatement opportunity:

- a. agriculture, forestry and fishing;
- b. electricity, gas, water and waste;
- c. manufacturing;
- d. mining; and
- e. transport.

Other sectors may be considered based on a compelling emissions reduction opportunity. If a Project addresses multiple sites, the sector which aligns with most of the sites in the Project should be selected.

## HOW DO I FIND THE RIGHT ANZSIC CODE?

The ABS maintains the publication Australian and New Zealand Standard Industrial Classification 2006 (ABS cat no. 1292.0) which can be accessed and downloaded for free on the [ABS website](#).

## CAN MY PROJECT INCLUDE MULTIPLE SITES?

Yes, a Project can consider multiple, existing industrial sites, provided the Eligibility Criteria for Project location are met (see Part 3 of the ITS Guidelines). The total emissions abatement will consider the aggregated opportunity across all sites.

## WILL PROJECTS AT HIGH EMITTING FACILITIES BE OF HIGHER MERIT?

Merit Criterion A will consider the site specific industrial emissions opportunity (at the facility/facilities where the Project will take place) as well as potential replicability for broader industrial emissions abatement if the solution is scaled.

Merit assessment will consider all five criteria detailed in Part 4 of the ITS Guidelines. Projects supporting multiple industrial facilities or third-party aggregators that aid multiple Small Medium Enterprises (**SMEs**) in decarbonisation activities will also be encouraged, provided at least one party/entity is an existing industrial facility and all the Eligibility Criteria are met.

## ARE FEASIBILITY AND FEED STAGE PROJECTS INCLUDED?

Yes, the ITS Program can fund feasibility stage projects (i.e. 'studies') through to demonstration and deployment stage projects (see item 1.12 of the ITS Guidelines).

## ARE ANY PROJECT ACTIVITIES EXCLUDED FROM THE ITS PROGRAM?

ARENA considers the following activities outside the scope of the Program:

- a. are not part of a net zero pathway, or provide only a partial abatement solution (without a pathway to net zero);
- b. have limited replicability, and/or do not have a pathway to commercial deployment beyond the project;
- c. options analysis, opportunity assessments or concept studies;
- d. grid connected or behind-the-meter development of commercially proven renewable energy supply or the procurement of PPAs (including deployment of solar PV, wind turbines or rooftop solar);
- e. predominately scale up or deploy established technologies or business models already proven in Australia;
- f. repair and maintenance projects that would be undertaken in the normal course of business;
- g. plant closure projects; and
- h. measures that are not integral to the industrial process, including but not limited to building space heating and cooling and building lighting.

## WHAT IS AN “OPPORTUNITY ASSESSMENT” AND WHY IS IT EXCLUDED FROM THE PROGRAM?

An “opportunity assessment”, sometimes also known as an “energy audit” or “options study” or “trade study”, is an early-stage study which seeks to identify a range of possible energy and emission reduction options for further consideration. The ITS Program is seeking to fund later-stage studies which examine a specific chosen solution.

## WILL ARENA RECOMMEND OR ASSIGN CONSULTANTS TO SUPPORT PROJECTS?

No, ARENA will not be recommending or assigning consultants to undertake the Projects. If relevant, Applicants should select their preferred consultant to undertake the work.

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# ELIGIBILITY

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## CAN MY ORGANISATION APPLY FOR FUNDING?

To be eligible for funding, at the time of applying and for the life of the Project, the Applicant must hold an Australian Business Number (ABN) and be:

- a. an Australian entity incorporated under the *Corporations Act 2001 (Cth)*;
- 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 they may partner with an eligible Applicant.

## DO I NEED TO BE AN NATIONAL GREENHOUSE ENERGY REPORTING (NGER) FACILITY TO APPLY?

No, any facility or entity can apply to the ITS Program provided the Project meets the Eligibility Criteria (see Part 3 of the ITS Guidelines). The lead Applicant is not required to be an NGER facility.

If the lead Applicant does not meet the NGER Eligibility Criteria, the Application will need to demonstrate the role of the Industrial Facility which meets the NGER Eligibility Criteria and the level of commitment to the Project as part of the consortium (see ITS Guidelines, items 4.7-4.10).

To meet the NGER Eligibility Criteria, the Project must be to the direct benefit of an Industrial Facility which is under the operational control of an entity which meets the Corporate Group Threshold for reporting under the *National Greenhouse and Energy Reporting Act 2007 (Cth)* (**NGER Act**).

For example, the relevant Industrial Facility will need to have a contractual commitment to the Project. This allows for the aggregation of multiple smaller Industrial Facilities, provided an eligible facility is included in the Project consortium.

## DOES THE NGER REPORTING REQUIREMENT NEED TO BE MET AT FACILITY OR ENTITY LEVEL?

The NGER reporting requirement will be assessed at the entity level. That is, an Industrial Facility where a Project is proposed to take place does not have to meet the NGER threshold at the individual facility level. However, the Industrial Facility should be under the operational control of an entity which meets the Corporate Group Threshold for reporting under the NGER Act.

## WHAT TYPE OF PROJECTS ARE ELIGIBLE?

To be eligible for funding, an Applicant must be able to demonstrate to the satisfaction of ARENA that the Project described in the application (see ITS Guidelines item 3.4):

- a. addresses the Scope 1 and/or Scope 2 emissions of an existing Industrial Activity;<sup>3</sup>
- b. has the potential to contribute to the Program objectives;
- c. does not include research (Technology Readiness Level (TRL)<sup>4</sup> 1-3);
- d. has not received (or is currently under assessment) for funding from any of the other PRF funding streams (STS or CICEI); and
- e. meets any other requirements specified in the relevant Program Focus Areas or Funding Announcement.

## WHAT LOCATIONS ARE ELIGIBLE FOR PROJECT SITES?

To be eligible for funding, an Applicant must be able to demonstrate to the satisfaction of ARENA that the Project will occur in regional Australia (see ITS Guidelines item 3.6), defined as being outside the Greater Capital City Statistical Areas (and including the Kwinana Industrial Area).

Projects at any new or expanded coal and gas facilities are considered ineligible. A new facility means not already in operation before 1 June 2023. An expanded facility means not expanded post 1 June 2023.

## IS MY PROJECT IN 'REGIONAL AUSTRALIA'?

Regional Australia is defined as being outside the Greater Capital City Statistical Areas<sup>5</sup> and including the Kwinana Industrial Area. Applicants can use the ABS [data by region](#) to visualise the Greater Capital City Statistical Areas on a map to see if a Project falls within the regional boundaries.

## CAN SAFEGUARD ENTITIES APPLY FOR FUNDING?

Yes, entities which are covered under the Safeguard mechanism and eligible for funding under the STS Program can apply for ITS funding. However, funding from both the STS and ITS Program cannot be sought for the same Project.

## WHAT IS EXISTING INDUSTRIAL ACTIVITY?

Industrial Activity as per the ITS Guidelines is defined as “the manufacturing, production or processing of raw goods, products or waste materials, including any associated distribution and storage of any such activities”. An existing Industrial Activity is an Industrial Activity that was in operation by 1 June 2023.

## IS ARENA TARGETING SPECIFIC TECHNOLOGIES?

No, the ITS Program is technology agnostic. However, ARENA will assess the innovation potential of a chosen technology or solution as part of its merit assessment.

The Applicant must also be able to demonstrate to the satisfaction of ARENA that the Project described in the application is a technology that ARENA can lawfully fund in accordance with the ARENA Act (see ITS Guidelines item 3.5), being some form of:

- a. Renewable Energy Technology, which includes hybrid technologies and technologies (including enabling technologies) that are related to renewable energy technologies;
- b. Electrification Technology, which means technologies that use electricity and replace technologies that use fossil fuels or technologies that facilitate the replacement of technologies that use fossil fuels with technologies that use electricity; and/or
- c. Energy Efficiency Technology, which includes energy conservation technologies, demand management technologies and technologies (including enabling technologies) that are related to energy efficiency technologies.

ARENA will consider supporting feasibility studies through to the demonstration and deployment stage.

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<sup>3</sup> Refer to the Glossary of the ITS Guidelines for a definition of Industrial Activity

<sup>4</sup> Refer to Appendix B of the ITS Guidelines for an explanation of the TRL index.

<sup>5</sup> Australian Bureau of Statistics: Greater Capital City Statistical Areas (GCCSAs)

### **CAN THE LEAD APPLICANT CHANGE DURING A PROJECT?**

No. The nominated lead Applicant would be expected to lead the entirety of the Project. The lead Applicant would be able to change during the assessment period.

### **CAN I MAKE MORE THAN ONE APPLICATION OR BE A MEMBER OF MORE THAN ONE PROJECT TEAM?**

Yes, there is no limit to the number of applications individuals may make or number of applications in which individuals are included. However, if individuals intend to be part of more than one Application it will need to be justified that individuals will have, or be able to allocate, sufficient time to all of the applications should they be successful.

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# **ASSESSMENT PROCESS**

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### **HOW DO I APPLY FOR FUNDING?**

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

### **IS THERE A DEADLINE TO APPLYING FOR FUNDING?**

No, the ITS Program is an open, ongoing program that will be delivered over four years or until the funds for the Program are exhausted or the Program is closed, with applications to be typically assessed on a rolling monthly basis. However, the Focus Areas relevant to each funding round are time-bound and expected to remain open for 12-18 months. Please refer to the ITS Program [webpage](#) for active Focus Areas and Project application deadlines.

### **CAN I SUBMIT A ONE-STAGE APPLICATION?**

Where deemed appropriate ARENA may, at its sole discretion, provide Applicants with the option of a one-stage Full Application. One-stage Full Applications processes will generally be reserved for simpler, low cost and complexity projects such as feasibility and Front End Engineering Designed (**FEED**) studies. Applicants should consult with ARENA to assess as to whether their project would be suitable for the One-Stage Full Application process.

### **SHOULD I TALK TO ARENA PRIOR TO SUBMITTING AN APPLICATION?**

ARENA may seek to work with Applicants or potential Applicants and their project partners who are in the process of preparing an EOI or Full Application, except in the instance of any Targeted Funding Rounds (see ITS Guidelines, items 2.28-2.30)

Applicants may apply at any time; however, Applicants are strongly encouraged to contact ARENA at [industrialtransformation@arena.gov.au](mailto:industrialtransformation@arena.gov.au) to discuss proposals prior to submitting an online 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 to ARENA. If the application does not include the information required (and in the format prescribed by ARENA), ARENA may, acting in its sole discretion, decline to assess the application or seek supplementary information or clarification from the Applicant.



## WHAT DO I NEED TO APPLY?

Please refer to Part 2 of the ITS Guidelines and Project Plan Guidance available on the ITS Program [webpage](#) for an outline of what is expected to form part of respective EOI and Full Application applications. With the exception of a Targeted Funding Round, ARENA will typically engage and collaborate with Applicants regarding potential Projects.

## DO I NEED A NEW ARENA APPLICATION FOR A SECOND PHASE OF WORK ON THE SAME PROJECT?

No, the ITS Program has a 'Multi-Stage Funding Mechanism' that will allow Applicants to seek funding approval for the first stage of a Project and conditional funding approval for the second stage of a Project, without having to start a new application. Funding for Stage 2 is conditional only and will be contingent on the completion of Stage 1 and on a detailed Stage Gate Review (see items 5.7-5.10 in the ITS Guidelines).

The stages considered are:

- a. **Stage 1:** for feasibility or FEED work; and
- b. **Stage 2:** conditional funding for an implementation stage that may be a subsequent pilot, demonstration, or deployment commencing within a specified timeline and subject to a Stage Gate Review.

The inclusion of a Multi-Stage Funding Mechanism in a Project is at the sole discretion of ARENA. ARENA may progress an EOI or Full Application to the next stage with or without the inclusion of a Multi-Stage Funding Mechanism, despite its inclusion in an Application. See Part 5 of the ITS Guidelines for further detail.

## WHAT LEVEL OF DETAIL IS EXPECTED FOR A MULTI-STAGE PROJECT?

Where a Multi-Stage Funding Mechanism is proposed, the Project Plan should include all relevant stages of the Project. Stage 1 is expected to be addressed in detail (as recommended in the supporting Project Plan Guidance on the ITS Program [webpage](#)). Stage 2 should be addressed in sufficient detail such that ARENA can adequately assess the conditional funding proposal. Please refer to items 5.5-5.6 of the ITS Guidelines for more information.

## WHAT SHOULD I EXPECT AT A STAGE GATE REVIEW?

As part of Funding Agreement negotiations, ARENA will define a set of conditions, processes, and timeframes (considering the specific circumstances of each Project) that will form part of a Stage Gate Review. Please refer to items 5.7-5.10 of the ITS Guidelines for more information on the Stage Gate Review requirements.

## HOW DOES ARENA DECIDE WHICH PROJECTS RECEIVE FUNDING?

ARENA will review applications against the Merit Criteria outlined in Part 4 of the ITS Guidelines. ARENA may take a portfolio approach to selecting Projects for funding, considering how a Project will contribute to the Program Objectives either uniquely or as part of the 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 as, 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 provide a presentation to the ARENA Advisory Panel regarding their application. Greater detail around the assessment process is provided in Part 2 of the ITS 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.

## ARE THERE MINIMUM AND MAXIMUM FUNDING THRESHOLDS?

Applicants should review the ITS Focus Areas for information regarding the expected minimum or maximum Grant amount. Although there is not a maximum Grant amount, ARENA funding is typically expected to be matched on a minimum of a 1:1 contribution, including the value of the In-Kind Contributions. Refer to Part 1 of the ITS Guidelines for further information on the ARENA funding model.

## IS THERE A REQUIRED LEVEL OF CO-INVESTMENT THAT MUST BE PROVIDED?

It is expected that Applicants will provide a combination of cash and in-kind contributions, alongside the ARENA Grant. ARENA will contribute a maximum of 50 per cent of eligible costs for Projects. Projects which require lesser contributions from ARENA may be considered of higher merit.

## WHY DOES ARENA REQUIRE CO-INVESTMENT?

ARENA funds Projects to support commercialisation outcomes over the short, medium, and long-term. ARENA therefore expects that Project proponents should bear some of the cost and risk associated with the Project.

ARENA is seeking to fund Projects that offer high value for its contribution to the total Project cost. Projects that seek a lower proportion of ARENA funding as a share of the total Project cost may be of higher merit. Please refer to Merit Criteria D in the ITS Guidelines.

## DOES ARENA CONSIDER THE INCLUSION OF GRANT FUNDING OR CONCESSIONAL FUNDING?

ARENA will consider the total amount of Grant 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 on commercial or arm's length terms in its consideration of concessional funding. ARENA retains discretion on any classification adopted.

Applicants should note that Projects that have received (or are in the process of applying for) funding from other PRF streams, such as STS or CICEI, will not be eligible for funding from the ITS Program.

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

## 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 a cash contribution.

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.

## WILL OVERHEADS BE ACCEPTED AS A CONTRIBUTION?

Where overheads are directly related to the Project, e.g. contract negotiation or administration costs incurred as part of the Project management, expenses should be included as Eligible Expenditure. Where overheads are related to costs incurred in the normal course of business and do not relate directly to the Project these should be considered ineligible expenditure.

## HOW WILL PAYMENTS BE MADE IF MY PROPOSAL IS SUCCESSFUL?

If a Full Application is accepted for funding and a Funding Agreement is executed, ARENA will make payments as per the terms of the Funding Agreement. The amount and timing of funding to be paid will be determined on a case by case basis as part of the process of negotiating the Funding Agreement.

Where an Applicant is in any doubt as to the eligibility of proposed expenditure, the Applicant must bring the matter to ARENA for decision. ARENA's determination on the eligibility of expenditure will be final.

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# KNOWLEDGE SHARING

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## WHAT ARE ARENA'S REQUIREMENTS FOR KNOWLEDGE SHARING

Knowledge sharing refers to lessons learnt throughout the Project and creating opportunities for further uptake of the Project technologies in the wider energy and industrial sectors. In some cases, the knowledge 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 any successful Applicants, ARENA support must be acknowledged in all communications material distributed by grant recipients in relation to the ARENA-funded Project.

Applicants are required to agree to a Knowledge Sharing Plan which can be found on the ITS Program [webpage](#) and in the ITS Program Funding Agreement template.

Further information is available at  
arena.gov.au

## Australian Renewable Energy Agency

To discuss potential for funding:  
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**ARENAWIRE**



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