

Energy Innovation Fund Round 3 – Frequently Asked Questions

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GENERAL

1. What is the Energy Innovation Fund?

The Energy Innovation Fund supports the commercialisation of innovative, emerging renewable energy technologies in Victoria, required to meet the net-zero emissions by 2045 target.

The Fund is being delivered in multiple rounds. Round 1 was dedicated to offshore wind and round 2 to any renewable technology type that can support Victoria's net-zero emissions by 2045 target.

The Victorian Government has now launched round 3 of the Fund, with \$10 million in grants available for industrial electrification projects, focussing on the food and beverage processing and manufacturing sector.

2. What is the aim of EIF Round 3?

Round 3 of the Fund aims to:

- Support Victorian food and beverage manufacturing businesses capture the benefits of new and innovative technologies required to transition to zero and low emissions manufacturing; and
- Accelerate the electrification of the food and beverage processing and manufacturing sector by supporting deployment and demonstration of high impact, replicable and scalable solutions that can drive both energy security and sustainable growth outcomes for this critical sector.

Round 3 will help businesses implement new technologies, support emissions reductions, stimulate private investment, and support jobs across regional and metropolitan Victoria.

3. When will applications open and close?

Applications will be open Monday 29 September 2025 and close 1pm, Friday 28 November 2025 (AEDT).

4. How can businesses and organisations apply?

The Department intends to release the Application Form and associated templates for supporting documentation on Monday 29 September 2025. Applicants will be expected to use these templates when submitting their application and supporting materials. Upon release, the link to the online portal and templates for supporting documents will be available on <https://www.energy.vic.gov.au/grants/energy-innovation-fund>

5. Who can apply?

In addition to meeting the EIF objectives, organisations must comply with the Eligibility Criteria set out in Section 4.1 of the Application Guidelines. Applicants should review these guidelines carefully to confirm their eligibility.

FUNDING

1. How much funding is available?

\$10 million in grant funding is available in this round. A maximum grant amount of up to \$2 million is available per project (the Department retains discretion to consider applications exceeding this cap where exceptional value and benefit to the Department can be clearly demonstrated to the satisfaction of the Department.).

2. Will the Department identify co-funding opportunities or provide a list of co-funding opportunities?

A list of co-funding opportunities will not be provided by the Department. The Department encourages Applicants to explore all other funding opportunities (including those available under other State and Commonwealth initiatives) when developing their application. If you are seeking co-funding, please make sure you clearly outline this in your application.

3. Is a co-contribution from the Applicant mandatory?

Yes. As detailed in Section 5 of the Application Guidelines, the EIF will only fund up to 50 per cent of a Project's Eligible Expenditure, with each grant capped at \$2 million per application, unless exceptional value is demonstrated. The remaining eligible costs would need to be covered by other funding sources, including a mandatory co-contribution from the Applicant.

For example:

- A project with \$2 million in total Eligible Expenditure could seek a maximum of \$1 million in EIF funding;
- A project with \$10 million in total Eligible Expenditure could request up to \$2 million in EIF funding.

4. Are 'in-kind' funding contributions allowed?

Section 5 of the Program Guidelines sets out the general principles that apply when considering Eligible Expenditure. Applicants will be provided the opportunity to request approval for inclusion of in-kind contributions, where they can demonstrate to the satisfaction of the Department that the in-kind expenditure could satisfy the Fund's Eligible Expenditure guidelines;

An in-kind contribution is a contribution of a good or a service other than money.

Some examples include:

- voluntary labour (for example, painting work)
- donated goods (for example, kitchen equipment)
- donated services (for example, professional advice)

Further advice on in-kind contributions can be found on the [Victorian Governments Grants - understanding in-kind contributions page](#).

5. Is the Funding Agreement template available to view?

The Funding Agreement template will be available on the EIF website as part of the supporting documents when Applications open Monday 29 September 2025. Applicants must familiarise themselves with the terms and conditions of the Funding Agreement. Acceptance of these terms is a mandatory part of the application process. Any proposed departures from the terms must be submitted at the application stage for consideration.

ELIGIBILITY

1. Is my project eligible for funding?

To be eligible for Round 3, please refer to section 4.1 of the Application Guidelines.

2. Will the EIF fund feasibility/pre-investment studies and capital construction works that have already been completed?

No. EIF round 3 will not support early-stage or non-capital activities, including but not limited to feasibility studies, technology trials, options assessments, commercialisation planning, or other activities not directly tied to capital delivery.

3. Are projects that combine multiple technology types eligible?

Where projects involve multiple technology types, only those technologies which meet the eligibility criteria will be considered for funding, and funding amounts apportioned where required. Applications should clearly outline each of the technologies involved in the project and provide a clear delineation of costs and revenues for each component.

4. Is there a minimum threshold for energy or emissions savings for grant Applicants?

A minimum threshold has not been set for the purposes of determining whether a project is eligible. Applicants are requested to demonstrate a contribution to Victoria achieving net zero emissions by 2045 throughout their application.

5. What Commercial Readiness Index (CRI) and Technology Readiness Level (TRL) scores must a Project achieve to be eligible under the Program Guidelines?

To be eligible under the Program Guidelines, the proposed Project must achieve a TRL of 9 and a CRI of 2 to 5. The application should demonstrate how this is achieved, and refer to Section 4.2.2 and Appendix A for further information.

6. Are joint ventures or consortia eligible to apply?

Yes. Joint ventures and consortia are eligible to apply for round 3. However, if an application proceeds to the negotiation stage, the Funding Agreement will be executed with the nominated lead entity, which will be responsible for managing the project and meeting all contractual obligations.

7. Can Applicants receive funding from EIF Round 3 and claim the relevant Victorian Energy Efficiency Certificates (VEECs)?

The Guidelines do not currently restrict Applicants or their proposed projects from participating in the Victorian Energy Upgrades (VEU) program at the same time as applying for funding under the EIF. Therefore, if an Applicant is successful in securing EIF funding, the project may also be eligible to generate Victorian Energy Efficiency Certificates (VEECs), provided it meets all relevant VEU program requirements.

For clarity, please note that the EIF and VEU are separate government programs. It is the Applicant's responsibility to determine and demonstrate eligibility for each program at the time support is being sought.

APPLICATION PROCESS

1. How can I find out more about EIF Round 3?

An online industry briefing information session will be held on Thursday 25 September 2025 at 1.00 pm -2.00 pm (AEST). For further details please register via the [EIF website](#).

If you're unable to attend the industry briefing information session, the presented PowerPoint will be published on the [EIF webpage](#).

2. When will the funding be available?

Funding will be available to successful Applicants subject to the execution of a Funding Agreement with the Department, and the terms of the Funding Agreement.

Projects must also be capable of executing Funding Agreements by July 2026 to ensure timely commencement and delivery of project outcomes. Funding offers that are not executed within a Funding Agreement with this timeframe will lapse.

3. When will Applicants be notified of outcomes?

Funding Agreements with successful Applicants are expected to be executed mid 2026. Unsuccessful applications are expected to be notified soon after.

4. Are Applicants able to access assistance from contractors and government bodies to support preparation of their application?

You may get assistance from other contractors, Department of Transport and Planning (for example the Planning Group), and other government bodies as it relates to the development of your project, however you must not seek to gain access to or influence the EIF process via these engagements.

5. Can I submit multiple applications, and can I be awarded more than one grant?

Yes. Grants are awarded on a per-Project basis, rather than per Applicant. This means that a single Applicant may submit multiple distinct Projects for consideration and each eligible Project will be considered separately.

6. What is the Local Jobs First policy and how does it apply to EIF round 3?

The Victorian Government is committed to improving opportunities for local suppliers to create more new jobs and grow the economy. Local Jobs First (LJF) applies where the value of the grant or loan meets the LJF thresholds of \$1 million and above in regional Victoria or \$3 million and above in metropolitan Melbourne or for State-wide projects.

Due to the funding pool available, it is expected that LJF will apply to EIF round 3 applications and will form part of the Funding Agreement.

For more information on how the Local Jobs First policy applies to grants, visit:
<https://localjobsfirst.vic.gov.au/industry-guidance/how-to-get-involved>.

7. What is the Victorian Fair Jobs Code and how does it apply to EIF round 3?

The Victorian Government is committed to ensuring that suppliers tendering for threshold procurement contracts or high value procurement contracts, and businesses applying for significant business expansion grants, are recognised for treating workers fairly.

If applicable and as part of Applicant eligibility, an Applicant must hold a valid Fair Jobs Code Pre-assessment Certificate issued by the Fair Jobs Code Unity, where the total grant value being sought is \$500,000 or more (exclusive of GST).

For more information regarding Fair Jobs Code pre-assessment certificates, visit:
<https://www.buyingfor.vic.gov.au/apply-fair-jobs-code-pre-assessment-certificate>.

8. What is the Victorian Aboriginal people social procurement guide and how does it apply to EIF round 3?

Opportunities for Victorian Aboriginal people is one of the Victorian Government's social procurement objectives in the [Social Procurement Framework](#). This objective has two outcomes:

- purchasing from Victorian Aboriginal businesses;
- employment of Aboriginal people by suppliers to the Victorian Government.

When addressing the economic impact and community support for an EIF round 3 project, Applicants may consider the Victorian Aboriginal people social procurement guide as part of their application:

<https://www.buyingfor.vic.gov.au/victorian-aboriginal-people-social-procurement-guide>.

9. What are the key assessment criteria?

Once both the Project and Applicant are confirmed as eligible, the application will be assessed against the defined Merit Criteria shown below. For detailed information on these criteria, please refer to Section 6.2 of the EIF round 3 Guidelines.

- Merit Criterion 1: Supporting the energy transition – ability to contribute to net zero by 2045;
- Merit Criterion 2: Demonstrated pathway to commercial operations;
- Merit Criterion 3: Economic impact and community support;
- Merit Criterion 4: Innovation and knowledge sharing;
- Merit Criterion 5: Promote diversity and resilience in Victoria / Australia's energy sector;
- Merit Criterion 6: Financial viability, future scalability and commercial attractiveness.

10. Can Applicants seek guidance from, or meet with the Department before submission?

No. For probity reasons, the department will not be meeting with applicants prior to the submission of applications. If you have any questions during the application process, please submit a question to the Energy Innovation Fund email inbox – energy.innovation@deeca.vic.gov.au.

11. My application will contain commercially sensitive information, will this be kept confidential?

The Application Guidelines contain information describing how the Department will treat commercial-in-confidence information, and the circumstances in which it may be disclosed to third parties in Section 8.

12. My application will include personal information. How does the Department manage this information?

Any personal information will be managed in accordance with the published Privacy Policy, which can be found at <https://www.deeca.vic.gov.au/privacy>

13. Will details of successful applicants be published?

The Victorian Government may publicly announce and/or publish the following information associated with successful Projects:

- name of the Recipient;
- title of the Project;
- description of the Project and its aims; and
- the amount of grant funding awarded.

CONTEXT

1. Why is the focus on the food and beverage sector in this round?

Victoria is Australia's largest food and beverage manufacturer, with the sector generating revenues of \$47.6 billion and employing over 75,000 Victorians across more than 3,900 businesses and exporting goods worth \$12.2 billion. It is also one of the most emissions-intensive sectors in the State primarily due to its reliance on fossil gas for high-temperature and continuous operations. Helping this sector electrify and become more efficient will reduce emissions, lower energy costs and support jobs across both regional and metropolitan Victoria.

2. What are the expected benefits of this round?

Round 3 will help businesses implement new and innovative technologies, support emission reductions, stimulate private investment, and support jobs across regional and metropolitan Victoria.

3. Why is industrial electrification so important for Victoria's energy transition?

Industrial processes are a major source of energy use and emissions. Electrifying these processes, especially using renewable electricity, can significantly reduce emissions and lower costs. This is a key part of our strategy to meet Victoria's 2035 and 2045 net zero targets.

UPDATED 2 OCTOBER 2025

1. Can the Department advise on eligibility and merit ahead of applications being assessed?

No. The Department is unable to make determinations on specific Project eligibility and merit prior to conducting its assessment.

2. What qualifies as a food and beverage processing and manufacturing project?

To be eligible, a project must be directly related to (or able to demonstrate that it is directly related to) food and beverage processing and manufacturing activities.

As outlined within Section 4.1.2, food and beverage processing and manufacturing refers to the production and processing of food and beverage products for human or animal consumption. This includes the processing of items such as meat, dairy, baked goods, alcoholic and non-alcoholic beverages, confectionery, and pet food.

Activities related solely to agriculture (i.e. producing raw inputs), packaging (i.e. bottling, wrapping, or labelling finished products) or distribution (i.e. warehousing, logistics, or retail delivery) are not considered eligible under this definition.

3. How are ANZSIC codes considered as part of the application process?

Australian and New Zealand Standard Industrial Classification (ANZSIC) codes are used to help support and contextualise the project and participating organisations but are not the sole determinant of eligibility.

Importantly, eligibility is assessed on the nature of the project itself, not the primary business activity of the Applicant or Recipient. A project may still be eligible even if the applicant's ANZSIC code does not fall within the food and beverage processing and manufacturing categories, provided the project clearly aligns with the relevant sector as defined in the guidelines.

4. Does my project need to support electrification of the food and beverage manufacturing sector?

Yes. Round 3 specifically targets projects that electrify industrial processes associated with the food and beverage processing and manufacturing sector.

As outlined within Section 4.1.2, electrification refers to replacing fossil-fuel-powered equipment with electric alternatives that reduce emissions, ideally using renewable electricity. Examples include, but are not limited to electrode boilers, air-to-fluid and fluid-to-fluid heat pumps, electric dryers and electric thermal energy storage.

The following are not considered electrification for the purposes of Round 3:

- stand-alone technologies that use renewable fuels or thermal inputs (i.e. bioenergy, geothermal and renewable hydrogen only); and
- technologies not integrated within existing food and beverage processing or manufacturing facilities.

Importantly, projects do not need to be entirely focused on electrification. However, to be eligible for funding, it must include an electrification component, and only that component will be funded under the EIF.

5. Can technologies that generate renewable energy be considered eligible if they support electrification?

Round 3 funding is focused on electrifying industrial processes within the food and beverage processing and manufacturing sector, specifically, the replacement of fossil-fuel-powered equipment with electric alternatives.

Technologies that generate renewable energy are not considered electrification technologies on their own.

However, if a renewable energy technology is integrated into a project that includes eligible electrification components, it may be considered as part of the broader project context. For example, solar PV that supplies electricity to electric process equipment may support a project but would not be eligible for funding.

Importantly, projects do not need to be entirely focused on electrification. However, to be eligible for funding, it must include an electrification component, and only that component will be funded under the EIF.

6. Do I need to consider any tax liabilities if I apply for grant funding?

Yes. Recipients will be responsible for determining their tax liabilities for grant payments. Grants provided by DEECA may be classified as income and tax may be payable by Recipients. Each Applicant is responsible for investigating their own tax structure and treatment.

7. How can I find out more about EIF Round 3?

An online industry briefing information session was held on Thursday 25 September 2025 at 1.00 pm -2.00 pm (AEST). This session also provided an overview of the [Victoria Energy Upgrades program](#) which may also be of interest to businesses. .

If you were unable to attend the industry briefing information session, the presented PowerPoint and recording are available on the [EIF webpage](#).

UPDATED 9 OCTOBER 2025

1. Could a Funding Agreement be executed before July 2026?

As a minimum, projects must be capable of executing Funding Agreements by July 2026 to ensure timely commencement and delivery of project outcomes. Funding Agreements may be executed before this date subject to due diligence and negotiations outcomes.

For the avoidance of doubt, funding will be available to successful Applicants subject to the execution of a Funding Agreement with the Department, and the terms of the Funding Agreement.

2. If my project is successful for grant funding, will the Funding Agreement commence once negotiations are complete, or once the project is announced?

The Funding Agreement will commence once both parties have executed the agreement and the project can begin. However, successful applicants must not disclose any information about the grant until the grant information has been made publicly available.

3. What if I anticipate having associated project costs before the EIF Funding Agreement is entered into?

Section 5 of the Application Guidelines outlines the general principles that apply when the Department considers eligible expenditure. We draw your attention to the following sections of the Application Guidelines:

- **Section 5.1** (General principles 4th bullet point) states *“expenditure cannot be categorised as Eligible Expenditure if it is undertaken prior to the signing of the Funding Agreement or after the completion date for the Project specified in the Funding Agreement.”*
- **Section 5.3** (ineligible expenditure) sets out examples of ineligible expenditure (7th bullet point) *includes “project expenditure undertaken prior to entering into a Funding Agreement with the Department for the Project or after the completion date for the Project specified in the Funding Agreement.”*

In stating the above, the Department is unable to make any determinations on specific eligible expenditure prior to conducting its assessment of the application.

We encourage applicants to outline all expenditure in the cost template provided, identify any associated risks in the risk template provided and submit these with your application having due regard to the Application Guidelines published on the [EIF webpage](#).

4. Can I download a copy of the Application Form?

Yes. To assist in the preparation of applications and to view the eligibility and merit questions, a downloadable version of the application form can be found on the [EIF webpage](#) (we recommend downloading and viewing in a web browser). Please note that the final application form needs to be completed and submitted through the Grants Online portal found on the [EIF webpage](#).

UPDATED 20 OCTOBER 2025

1. If I determine that my project isn't suited to apply for EIF round 3 funding, what other State or Commonwealth funding opportunities may be available?

If you determine that your project is not suited to apply for EIF round 3 funding, the below websites provide information on other potential State and Commonwealth grant funding opportunities that you may wish to explore:

- To search available Victorian Government grant funding opportunities, please visit [Grants and programs | vic.gov.au](https://grantsandprograms.vic.gov.au)
- To search Australian Government grant funding opportunities, please visit - [GrantConnect Homepage: GrantConnect](https://grantconnect.gov.au)
- The Victorian Energy Upgrades (VEU) program, please visit - [Victorian Energy Upgrades](https://veuprogram.vic.gov.au)

Please note that the Department cannot provide any recommendations or specific support in relation to grant applications listed within the links above.

UPDATED 13 NOVEMBER 2025

1. Is the Applicant required to also be the Recipient?

No, for the purposes of Round 3 grant funding, an Applicant does not need to also be the Recipient. However, the Applicant must clearly identify the proposed Recipient in the Application and demonstrate that the Recipient meets all eligibility requirements under the Program Guidelines. The Recipient will be the entity that enters into the Funding Agreement with the State and assumes responsibility for delivering the Project, complying with all terms and conditions, and managing the grant funds.

2. How can an Applicant demonstrate that their project has a Technology Readiness Level (TRL) of 9 and a Commercial Readiness Index (CRI) between 2 and 5?

For Round 3 of the EIF, Projects must achieve a:

- TRL of 9 by the Funding Agreement execution date (i.e. the date the Funding Agreement is signed by both the Recipient and the State and becomes legally binding (anticipated mid 2026)); and
- CRI between 2 and 5 at the time of the Application.

In accordance with ARENA's Advancing Renewables Program Guidelines, a TRL of 9 means the technology in question is fully proven in its intended operational environment. To reflect this, the Applicant should provide examples of where the technology has been installed and is operating under real-world conditions or intends to be operational by the Funding Agreement execution date.

For CRI, levels 2 to 5 indicate early to intermediate commercial maturity. Specifically:

- CRI 2 reflects technologies are undergoing small-scale trials with limited customers;
- CRI 3 shows scale up of commercial trials through initial market uptake and early adopters;
- CRI 4 involves commercial application of the technology, through multiple commercial offerings and repeatable sales; and
- CRI 5 represents technologies competing in an active market with financing options available and reduced risk perception.

Applicants should demonstrate the commercial readiness of their technology with evidence which directly reflects how they fall into one of the above categories.

3. Can an Applicant request funding above the \$2 million cap?

Yes, while the maximum funding per application is \$2 million, the Department may, at its discretion, consider applications that exceed this cap by up to a further \$1 million, where the Applicant can clearly demonstrate exceptional value and benefit (noting that total grant funding requests must not exceed 50% of the Project's Eligible Expenditure, as outlined in the published Application Guidelines).



To request funding above the \$2 million cap, in the application form and supporting documents, the Applicant should specify the total grant funding being sought and articulate how the project would deliver an exceptional return on public investment. This should be addressed across each merit criterion, where possible.