

Energy Innovation Fund Round 3 – Electrification of the Food and Beverage Processing and Manufacturing Sector

Application Guidelines



We acknowledge and respect Victorian Traditional Owners as the original custodians of Victoria's land and waters, their unique ability to care for Country and deep spiritual connection to it.

We honour Elders past and present whose knowledge and wisdom has ensured the continuation of culture and traditional practices.

DEECA is committed to genuinely partnering with Victorian Traditional Owners and Victoria's Aboriginal community to progress their aspirations.



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Contents

Message from the Minister	4
Glossary	5
1. Introduction	7
2. Overview of the EIF	9
3. Round 3 – Electrification of the food and beverage sector	11
4. Who can apply?	14
5. What will be funded?	17
6. How will Projects be assessed?	19
7. How and when to apply?	24
8. Funding conditions	26
9. Contacts and further information	30
Appendix A Technology and commercial readiness	32
Appendix B Checklist before applying	33

Message from the Minister

Victoria's manufacturing sector plays an incredibly important role in our economy. It supports thousands of jobs, strengthens regional communities and produces the food and beverages we rely on every day.

As the largest food and beverage manufacturer in Australia, Victoria is well-placed to lead the shift to a lower cost, more competitive, and renewable powered industry.

We're investing \$10 million through Round 3 of the Energy Innovation Fund to help food and beverage manufacturers make that shift by replacing fossil fuel-powered equipment with modern electric alternatives.

Grants of up to \$2 million per application will mean lower energy costs for business, less dependence on volatile gas prices, and lower emissions. The funding also opens the door to new and emerging technologies that are better suited to the future of manufacturing.

These funds build on recent Victorian Government support to facilitate 36 feasibility studies for large energy users to assess opportunities to electrify.

At MainStream Aquaculture in Werribee, a Victorian Government supported feasibility study explored replacing gas boilers with a water-sourced electric heat pump that uses geothermal water available on site. The study found that this switch to electric would cut gas use by 70 per cent and save over \$100,000 each year.

This round of funding demonstrates that the Allan Labor Government is committed to backing Victorian businesses on every step towards achieving our legislated target of net-zero emissions by 2045.

To make sure our workforce is ready, we've invested \$5 million in free training for plumbers, electricians and construction workers. This includes training in installing electric appliances, building 7-star all-electric homes, and mentoring the next generation of clean energy workers. This builds on the \$12 million already invested to train more than 6,000 workers in renewable energy and electric systems.

Electrifying Victorian industry will cut energy costs for business, boost competitiveness while slashing the State's dependence on fossil gas.

Initiatives like the Energy Innovation Fund demonstrate the Allan Labor Government's commitment to delivering a stronger economy for all Victorians.



The Hon. Lily D'Ambrosio MP

Minister for Energy and Resources

Minister for Climate Action

Minister for the State Electricity Commission

Glossary

Table 1: Glossary of terms relevant to Round 3 of the EIF

Term	Definition
ABN	Australian Business Number
AEMO	Australian Energy Market Operator
Applicant	An organisation or entity that applies for grant funding under the Energy Innovation Fund
Application	An application for funding under the Energy Innovation Fund
Application Form	A form provided to Applicants to share key information regarding their Energy Innovation Fund project with DEECA. DEECA is aiming to release the Applicant Form, including supporting documentation templates, to Applicants on Monday 29 September 2025
ARENA	Australian Renewable Energy Agency
Co-fund	Financial support of a successful Project under the Fund provided by the Department and a private sector entity or entities
Commercial-in-confidence information	Any information that discloses an Applicant's financing arrangements, cost structure, profit margins or full financial model; intellectual property for which Applicants have an interest; any matter the disclosure of which would place Applicants at a substantial commercial disadvantage
Commercial Readiness Index (CRI)	The commercial readiness index value assigned to a Project or part of a Project in accordance with Appendix A
Conflict of interest	A situation where a person decides or exercises a power in a way that may be, or may be perceived to be, influenced by either material personal interests (financial or non-financial) or material personal associations
Corporations Act	Corporations Act 2001 (Cth)
Department or DEECA	The Victorian Government department which has the responsibility for the administration of the fund, which at the time of publishing of these Guidelines is the Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action
Department Parties	The Department and its employees, agents and officers
EIF	Energy Innovation Fund
Eligible Application	An application under the Fund that the Department has determined is eligible for merit assessment in accordance with this document. An application is eligible if it meets the program's Eligibility Criteria
Eligibility Criteria	The eligibility criteria set out in Section 4.1
Eligible Expenditure	Expenditure of the kind described as eligible in Section 5.2
Emerging technology	Energy technologies that can achieve a Technology Readiness Level (TRL) of 9 and a Commercial Readiness Index (CRI) of 2 to 5, as set out in further detail in Appendix A
FAQ	Frequently asked questions
Fund	The Victorian Energy Innovation Fund described in these Guidelines
Fund Materials	Any materials released by the Department associated with the Fund

Fund Objectives	The objectives of the Fund set out in Section 3.2
Fund Website	https://www.energy.vic.gov.au/grants/energy-innovation-fund
Funding Agreement	An agreement between the Department and a Recipient, under which funding is provided to the Recipient
Guidelines	The approved framework for the operation and administration of the Fund contained in this document, as may be amended and updated from time to time, including as needed to ensure it remains current and accurate
Joint Funding	Financial support of a Project under the Fund by the Department and a non-private sector party such as ARENA
Knowledge Sharing Plan (KSP)	Has the meaning given in Section 8.7
Merit Criteria	The merit criteria set out in Section 6.2
Minister	The Minister with responsibility for the Energy Innovation Fund, which at the time of publishing these Guidelines is the Victorian Minister for Energy and Resources
Network	Unless stated otherwise, the electricity system operated by the relevant network service provider for the Project. This may be either a distribution network service provider or a transmission network service provider
Opportunity costs	Any benefits or production lost due to the allocation of resources to the Project ahead of any other possible activities by the Recipient
Project	A project described in an application for funding under the Energy Innovation Fund
Project Eligibility Criteria	The criteria described in Section 4.1
Property	Physical real estate assets owned, leased, or controlled by an entity, including land, buildings, and associated structures intended for operational, administrative, or strategic use
Recipient	An Applicant or other person that has been offered funding under the Energy Innovation Fund and has entered into a Funding Agreement with the Department
Related Body Corporate	Has the meaning given in the Corporations Act
Round 3	Round 3 of the EIF
REZ	Renewable Energy Zone
SEC	State Electricity Commission of Victoria
State	The State of Victoria
Technology Readiness Level (TRL)	The technology readiness level assigned to a Project or part of a Project in accordance with Appendix A

1. Introduction

The Energy Innovation Fund (EIF or the Fund) is a Victorian Government initiative that supports the commercialisation of emerging energy transition technologies critical to achieving net-zero emissions by 2045. The Fund plays a key role in accelerating the deployment of pre-commercial technologies that will underpin the long-term transformation of Victoria's energy system.

Round 3 of the EIF targets the electrification of Victoria's food and beverage processing and manufacturing sector—one of the State's most energy-intensive industries. The round seeks to overcome barriers to electrification by co-funding innovative projects that replace fossil fuel usage with electric alternatives.

1.1 Purpose of this Document

These Application Guidelines (the Guidelines) outline the key information and requirements for Round 3 of the EIF. They are intended to support prospective entities who are seeking funding under Round 3 of the EIF (Applicants) by outlining the following:

- the objectives and eligibility requirements;
- the types of projects and activities that may be funded;
- the assessment criteria and application process; and
- the key funding terms and reporting obligations for successful Applicants.

Definitions of key terms are provided in the Glossary. The Guidelines contain important information for Applicants and should be read in conjunction with the Fund Website, grant Application Form and any other Fund documentation.

1.2 Document Structure

The Guidelines are structured as follows:

- Section 1 - Introduction
- Section 2 - Overview of the EIF
- Section 3 - Round 3 – Electrification of the food and beverage sector
- Section 4 - Who can apply?
- Section 5 - What will be funded?
- Section 6 - How will Projects be assessed?
- Section 7 - How and when to apply?
- Section 8 - Funding conditions and compliance requirements
- Section 9 - Contacts and further information

1.3 Key Dates

Key indicative dates for Round 3 of the EIF are set out in table 2 below. These dates may change at the Department's sole discretion. If any changes occur, updates will be published on the [Fund Website](#).

Table 2: Round 3 Key Dates

Activity	Timing
Applications open	Monday, 29 September 2025
Questions close	Extended to Friday, 5 December 2025 Friday, 21 November 2025
Applications close	Extended to 1pm (AEDT) Friday, 12 December 2025 1pm (AEDT) Friday, 28 November 2025
Application eligibility and merit assessment	December 2025 – February 2026 November 2025 – February 2026
Shortlisting, due diligence and Funding Agreement negotiations	February – June 2026
Funding Agreements executed and Projects commence	July – September 2026
Activities completed and acquittal reports submitted	2029-2030 financial year

2. Overview of the EIF

The EIF aims to support the commercialisation of emerging, innovative and transformational energy transition technologies and projects.

2.1 Victoria's energy transition

Victoria's energy sector is undergoing a significant transformation, driven by the retirement of thermal generation and the accelerated uptake of lower-cost, renewable energy sources.

The Victorian Government recognises the importance of energy costs to productivity and competitiveness of Victorian industry. Through Victoria's integrated energy transition the government seeks to assist energy consumers to find savings and minimise cost pressures.

Independent data sources have confirmed that Victoria's integrated energy transition is delivering results including:

- **Victoria consistently has the lowest wholesale power prices in the country.** Over the last financial year, Victoria's average wholesale price was 40% lower than New South Wales (NSW), 29% lower than South Australia (SA), 19% lower than Queensland (QLD) and 7% lower than Tasmania.
- **Futures markets indicate confidence our electricity prices will stay lower,** with energy contracts for 2028 trading 48% lower than NSW, 17% lower than QLD and 22% lower than SA.
- **Victoria's traded gas prices are also about a dollar per gigajoule lower** than those in NSW, QLD and SA. However, we know gas prices have increased five times faster than electricity prices since 2014 - and electrification provides strong returns on investment for many business users.

The State has legislated a suite of ambitious decarbonisation targets, reflecting its leadership in the renewable energy transition:

- renewable energy targets of 65% renewable electricity generation by 2030 and 95% by 2035;
- a net zero greenhouse gas emissions target by 2045;
- a legislated energy storage target of at least 2.6 GW of energy storage capacity by 2030 and at least 6.3 GW by 2035; and
- offshore wind targets of at least 2 GW by 2032, 4 GW by 2035, and 9 GW by 2040.

These targets were most recently updated and legislated in March 2024 to reflect the State's accelerated energy transition objectives.¹ To support these goals, Victoria continues to implement a suite of progressive energy and emissions reduction initiatives, including:

- Victorian Energy Upgrades and Solar Homes programs, which are materially reducing the up-front cost of going electric and improving energy efficiency;
- the Gas Substitution Roadmap, which sets out pathways to reduce reliance on fossil gas through electrification, energy efficiency and renewable gases; and
- the EIF which provides capital support for pre-commercial and emerging renewable energy technologies.

Complementing these initiatives is the establishment of key entities:

- Offshore Wind Energy Victoria (OWEV) which is coordinating the development of Victoria's offshore wind sector, guiding industry and communities toward an offshore wind energy future and supporting Traditional Owners' aspirations in this process.
- The SEC which is putting power back in Victorians' hands by co-investing with the private sector and speeding up the transition to renewables.
- VicGrid, which is progressing a new approach to energy infrastructure with the delivery of the first Victorian Transmission Plan. This will ensure we have the right infrastructure in the right place at the right time to

¹ Changes were introduced through the [Climate Change and Energy Legislation Amendment \(Renewable Energy and Storage Targets\) Act 2024](#).

support the transition to renewable energy – while ensuring benefits are shared with local communities, Traditional Owners, and landholders.

These investments and institutions are essential to accelerating the deployment of emerging technologies required to meet Victoria's energy transition goals. By fostering innovation and supporting strategic infrastructure delivery, Victoria is positioning itself as a leader in the global renewable energy economy—delivering cheaper, more reliable, renewable energy for households, businesses, and industry.

2.2 The Energy Innovation Fund

The Victorian Government has developed the EIF to support the commercialisation of innovative, emerging energy transition technologies in Victoria, which is required to meet the net-zero emissions by 2045 target. The Fund aims to position Victoria at the forefront of the energy transition, attracting investment and first-mover advantages by:



Supporting emerging energy technologies to transition from pre-commercial to commercially viable energy options.



Providing funds to fast track the development and deployment of projects in priority energy subsectors.



Targeting sectors that may not be commercially competitive today but are anticipated to play a critical role in supporting Victoria's energy transition.

Figure 1: Aims of the EIF program

The Fund brings intellectual property, innovation, local economic development and environmental benefits to the State, local businesses and communities. These are achieved through supporting activities that progress innovative projects from front-end-engineering-design, large scale pilots and demonstrations. The type of activities supported by the EIF will depend on the specific focus of each funding round. For Round 3, eligible activities are those outlined in Section 4.1.2.

2.3 Rounds of the EIF

The EIF is being delivered in the following targeted funding rounds, which are aligned with the Victorian Government's energy transition technologies priorities:

- **Round 1 (closed for applications)** – dedicated to offshore wind;
- **Round 2 (closed for applications)** – technology-neutral, focused on supporting any energy transition technology that contributes to Victoria's net-zero emissions by 2045 target; and
- **Round 3 (current round)** – dedicated to industrial electrification projects, with \$10 million in grants available (up to \$2 million per Application), focusing on Victoria's food and beverage processing and manufacturing sector.

3. Round 3 – Electrification of the food and beverage sector

3.1 Why the food and beverage sector?

Victoria is Australia's largest food and beverage manufacturing state, 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.

Victoria's Gas Substitution Roadmap outlines a clear direction for bringing on new gas supply sources, where possible, while supporting the transition away from fossil gas to reduce pressure on Victoria's declining legacy gas fields.

Given the importance of industrial food and beverage production in Victoria's economy there are opportunities to improve the support to transition away from gas, which has seen significant price increases in Australia and internationally.

Food and beverage businesses often depend on fossil gas for industrial process heat, continuous operations and maintaining product quality. To support business competitiveness and meet Victoria's net-zero targets viable, scalable zero-emission alternatives will be important.

Despite growing awareness, the uptake of efficient, electric technologies in this sector may be limited by upfront capital costs, payback periods, process integration challenges, technological immaturity, and uncertainty around energy supply and infrastructure.

Victoria's lower energy costs compared to states such as New South Wales, Queensland, and South Australia is source of competitive advantage in the food and beverage manufacturing sector. Maintaining this competitive advantage will be critical to sustained growth, boosting job opportunities for regional Victorians.

To address emissions and the competitiveness of Victoria's food and beverage sector, Round 3 of the EIF will be dedicated to accelerating the deployment of electrification technologies in the food and beverage processing and manufacturing sector.

The food and beverage manufacturing industry is also connected to broader priorities for Victoria, including:

- The *Economic Growth Statement*² (released December 2024); and the *Victorian Industry Policy*³ (released June 2025) both identify advanced manufacturing (including food manufacturing) as a key priorities for the Victorian Government.
- The Victorian Industry Policy presents a framework for boosting economic capacity and efficiency, and improving business conditions. The policy outlines skills, technology adoption and innovation as key pillars to boosting competitiveness and productivity. Food manufacturing is called out specifically as a focus for impact area in the policy.

Round 3 will be delivered in a single stage. Timing for Round 3 is detailed in section 6.1.

² Economic-Growth-Statement.pdf

³ Industry Policy | Priorities and initiatives | Department of Jobs, Skills, Industry and Regions

3.2 Objectives of Round 3

The figure below outlines the objectives of Round 3 of the EIF.

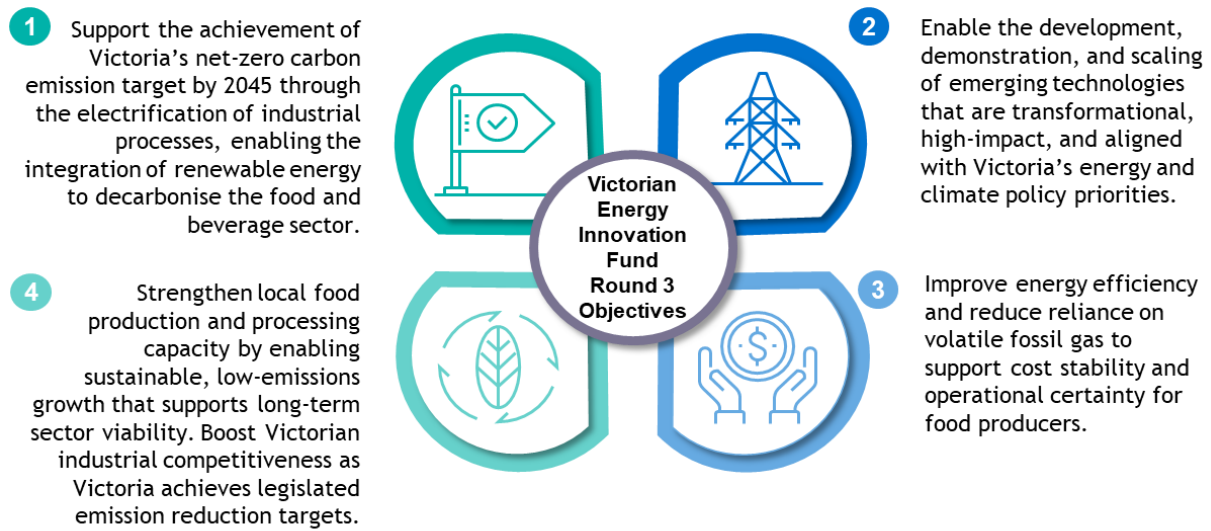


Figure 2: Objectives of Round 3 of the EIF

3.3 Round 3 - Key Parameters

The table below provides a high-level overview of the key parameters that define the scope and focus of Round 3 of the EIF. Please note that this table is a summary only, with each parameter outlined in detail in Sections 4 to 6 of these Guidelines.

Table 3: Key parameters for Round 3

Parameter	Summary	Further details
Eligible sector	Food and beverage processing and manufacturing sector (excludes agriculture, packaging and/ or distribution only businesses).	4.1.2
Project type	Physical Projects involving the replacement of fossil-fuel-based systems with electric alternatives.	4.1.2
Funding pool	Up to \$10 million in total grant funding.	7.3
Maximum grant per Project	\$2 million per Application (exceptions considered where exceptional value can be demonstrated).	7.3
Funding ratio	Up to 50% of eligible Project expenditure.	5
Eligible activities	Funding is intended to support activities that are directly related to the delivery of the physical Project and capital works. Eligible activities must contribute to the construction, commissioning, or physical implementation of the Project.	4.1.2
Ineligible activities	The Fund will not support feasibility studies, concept development, technology trials, or other early-stage or non-capital activities.	4.1.2
Technology requirements	Project must have a Technology Readiness Level (TRL) of 9, or a demonstrable pathway to reach TRL 9 by the date the Funding Agreement is executed, and a Commercial Readiness Index (CRI) of between 2 and 5 (refer to Appendix A).	4.1.2 Appendix A
Project location	Activities must primarily take place in Victoria.	4.1.2

4. Who can apply?

An Application must meet the Eligibility Criteria detailed in Section 4.1 below to be eligible for assessment against the Merit Criteria (detailed in Section 6.2).

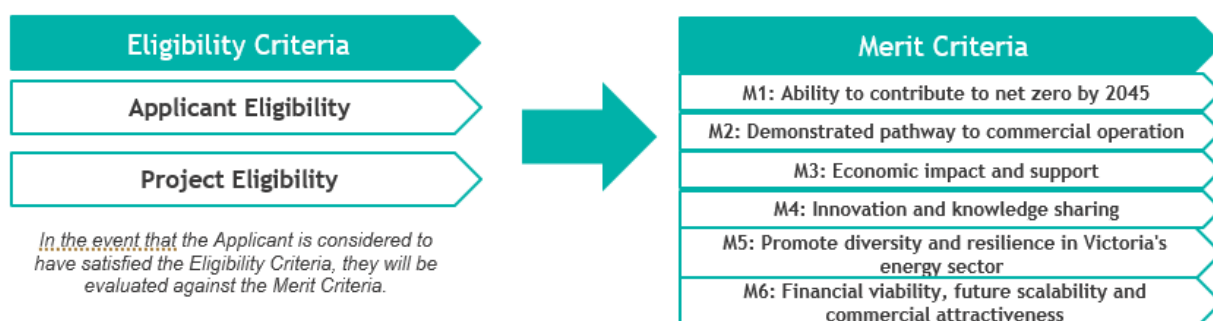


Figure 3: Overview of criteria relevant to Round 3

4.1 Eligibility criteria

An Application must meet the Applicant and Project Eligibility Criteria.

4.1.1 Applicant Eligibility

To be eligible to participate in the EIF, an Applicant must satisfy the following criteria:

- hold an Australian Business Number (ABN);
- be:
 - a. an Australian entity duly incorporated under the Corporations Act and hold and comply with all necessary authorisations that are material to the conduct of the business of the Applicant; or
 - b. a Commonwealth entity under section 10 of the Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013 (Cth); or
 - c. an Australian State or Territory owned body corporate, or a subsidiary of an Australian State or Territory owned body corporate; or
 - d. an Australian State or Territory local Government or council.

In some limited circumstances a legal entity other than those listed above may, at the Department's discretion, be accepted as an eligible Applicant. Any other entity that wants to apply to the Fund should contact the Department prior to the lodgement of an Application. Entities registered outside Australia who can otherwise comply with the Applicant eligibility requirements set out in this document may participate.

- not be subject to any insolvency event, including an order or resolution for winding up or dissolution (other than for the purposes of reconstruction or amalgamation) or the appointment of a receiver, liquidator, administrator or similar;
- be the legal and beneficial owner of, or have all necessary rights to use, any intellectual property necessary to carry out the Project;
- acknowledge that the Applicant will be required to submit a Knowledge Sharing Plan and enter into an agreement with the Department to publicly share knowledge and information about, and resulting from, the Project described in the Application (e.g. as part of the Funding Agreement);
- disclose any legal proceedings or investigations to which the Applicant is subject including, litigation, arbitration, mediation or conciliation that are ongoing, pending or (to the best of the Applicant's knowledge, after having made proper enquiries) threatened against the Applicant or a Related Body Corporate;
- disclose all Australian State, Territory and Commonwealth Government grants applied for in relation to the Project and the history of grant funding (including both successful and unsuccessful applications) of the Applicant/ Project;

- comply with the following requirements to the satisfaction of the Department:
 - a. all obligations under employment contracts to which the Applicant is a party;
 - b. industrial agreements and awards to which the Applicant is subject;
 - c. all codes of conduct and practice relevant to conditions of service and to the relations between the Applicant and the employees employed by the Applicant; and
 - d. all applicable Workplace Health and Safety legislation.
- hold all insurances required by law;
- if applicable, 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)⁴;
- not be named on the list of persons and entities on the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade sanctions list;⁵ and
- not be named as an Applicant that hasn't complied with the Workplace Gender Equality Act 2012.⁶

Joint ventures are eligible to apply, however, Funding Agreements will be executed with the lead entity, should an Application proceed to negotiations.

If at the time of the Application, the Recipient is expected to be a different legal entity to the Applicant, the Applicant must specify this in its Application and provide details of the expected Recipient.

Applicants should note that the Recipient (if different to the Applicant) must also meet and comply with the eligibility criteria set out above. The Department will not be obliged to enter into a Funding Agreement with any person other than the proposed Recipient assessed by the Department at the time of application or an entity that is majority-owned and controlled by the proposed Recipient assessed by the Department at the time of application.

Applicants must demonstrate that they and the Project will remain financially viable throughout the life of the Project.

4.1.2 Project Eligibility

Applicants must demonstrate to the satisfaction of the Department that their Project meets each aspect of the Project Eligibility Criteria detailed in the table below.

Table 4: Project Eligibility Criteria for Round 3

#	Project Eligibility Criterion	Detail
PE 1	Project type	The Project supports the electrification of the food and beverage processing and manufacturing sector through the substitution of fossil fuel usage with efficient, electric alternatives.
PE 2	Location	Primarily involves activities that take place in Victoria ⁷ .
PE 3	Regulatory Approvals	Demonstrates how they comply or intend to comply with regulatory requirements applicable to the proposed technology and Project scope.
PE 4	Emissions	Can demonstrate a contribution to Victoria achieving net zero emissions by 2045. A minimum threshold has not been set for the purposes of determining whether a Project is eligible.
PE 5	TRL and CRI	Has a Technology Readiness Level (TRL) of 9, or a demonstrable pathway to reach TRL 9 by the date the Funding Agreement is

⁵ Australian Government, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade Consolidated List, <https://www.dfat.gov.au/international-relations/security/sanctions/consolidated-list>

⁶ Australian Government, Workplace Gender Equality Agency, Non-compliant list, <https://www.wgea.gov.au/non-compliant-list>

⁷ While early-stage development activities may occur elsewhere in Australia, the decarbonisation outcomes must ultimately be realized in Victoria.

#	Project Eligibility Criterion	Detail
		executed, and a Commercial Readiness Index (CRI) of between 2 and 5 (refer to Appendix A).

Interpretation of Project Eligibility Criteria

As described in Section 4.1, to be eligible for Round 3, a Project must deliver the replacement of fossil fuels with electricity as an input to produce 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 excluded.

Applications should demonstrate how the Project is innovative in the local context. Innovation may be demonstrated by the choice of technology itself, or via the deployment of existing technologies which are innovative within Victoria/Australia, the sector or manufacturing site, including by the innovative integration of a technology with other on-site systems and processes.

Subject to the satisfaction of the Applicant and Project Eligibility Criteria, the Department considers electrification to include the replacement of fossil-fuel-powered equipment with electric alternatives. 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.

It excludes:

- technologies that rely on renewable fuels or thermal processes, such as bioenergy, geothermal and renewable hydrogen; and
- technologies not integrated within existing processing or manufacturing facilities⁸.

Applicants must demonstrate that technologies comply the TRL and CRI requirements outlined above in this Section 4.1.2. Where a TRL of 9 and a CRI of 2 to 5 is targeted, eligible activities may include:

- first-time deployment of electrification technologies in Victoria;
- purchase and installation of plant and equipment that enables electrification;
- infrastructure upgrades directly supporting electrification;
- pilot-scale or demonstration projects validating performance and scalability.

Activities that are not eligible include basic research, laboratory-scale trials, feasibility studies, investment case development not directly related to and delivered as part of a proposed capital investment in electrification projects, and projects involving technologies already commercially deployed at scale in Victoria. Additionally, projects focused solely on business-as-usual upgrades, maintenance, or energy audits without a clear electrification outcome will not be considered.

⁸ Eligible electrification technologies must be physically and operationally integrated into an existing industrial site where food or beverage processing occurs to be eligible.

5. What will be funded?

The EIF will only fund:

- Eligible Expenditure, as determined solely by the Department; and
- up to 50% of the total Eligible Expenditure, subject to competitive assessment and in accordance with the funding parameters outlined in Section 7.3.

5.1 General principles

The following general principles apply when the Department considers Eligible Expenditure:

- Eligible Expenditure is expenditure related directly to the undertaking of the Project;
- Eligible Expenditure is calculated as the GST inclusive amount less any GST credits the Recipient, or its representative member is entitled to claim;
- Applicants intending to use in-kind contributions must clearly identify this in their Application. Non-cash contributions (in-kind contributions) are not preferred. 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;
- 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;
- opportunity costs are not Eligible Expenditure;
- where resources are used on a Project and on unrelated activities elsewhere in the Recipient organisation, the cost of those resources should be apportioned to the Project, based on the proportion of those resources that were used in undertaking the Project;
- related party transactions must be treated without mark-up, unless the recipient can demonstrate to the satisfaction of the Department, that the transaction will occur on an arm's-length basis; and
- generally accepted accounting principles are to be followed and it must be possible to track Project expenditure through a Recipient's accounting system to meet the financial reporting and audit requirements in the Funding Agreement.

5.2 Eligible Expenditure

Eligible Expenditure must:

- be directly related to the delivery of the physical project and associated capital works; and
- contribute materially to the construction, installation, or commissioning of infrastructure, plant, or equipment that forms part of the Project.

Eligible Expenditure may include the following:

- expenditure incurred under contracts directly entered into for the purposes of delivering the physical scope of the Project (e.g. construction, plant supply, grid connection), subject to the ineligible expenditure exclusions in Section 5.3;
- labour expenditure for personnel employed directly on the physical delivery of the Project (e.g. project managers, site engineers), including reasonable on-costs such as workers' compensation insurance, superannuation, leave accruals, and payroll tax;
- construction-related administrative expenses where these are directly and demonstrably required to enable delivery of the Project (e.g. site accommodation, site-specific travel, printing of construction plans);
- capital expenditure on major plant, equipment, or components to be installed as part of the Project;
- expenditure associated with the civil, structural, or electrical construction of the Project;
- expenditure on legal, audit, or accounting services where these are directly associated with contracting, construction, or delivery of the physical works;

- expenditure necessary for securing licences, permits, or intellectual property essential for the deployment of the physical plant, equipment, or components to be installed as part of the Project; and
- construction-phase insurance and associated risk management costs, where these are necessary to enable delivery of the capital works for the Project.

5.3 Ineligible Expenditure

The Fund 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. The Fund will also not support political campaigning or advocacy activities for political parties.

Ineligible expenditure includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- activities that directly relate to Victorian Government planning assessment processes (that would normally be progressed by project developers);⁹
- upgrades of existing and / or acquisition of new renewable energy generation and storage assets, where that expenditure is not directly related to and necessary for delivering underlying electrification outcomes;
- projects focused solely on business-as-usual upgrades, maintenance, or energy audits without a clear electrification outcome;
- the purchase of Property;
- feasibility studies;
- investment case development not directly related to and delivered as part of a proposed capital investment in electrification projects;
- 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;
- expenditure involving technologies already commercially deployed at scale in Victoria; and
- research and development activities, including laboratory trials and the education and training of students. For the avoidance of doubt, Project activities may include research components to the extent these are part of a larger activity focused on the deployment and commercialisation of a Project that meets the eligibility requirements under the Fund, including requirements for TRL.

⁹ Commissioned studies undertaken to inform and support the planning process may be considered Eligible Expenditure.

6. How will Projects be assessed?

6.1 Process overview

The Fund's application and assessment process is competitive, and not all applications will be successful in receiving funding. Round 3 will be a single stage application assessment process. Figure 4 below provides a high-level indicative overview of the assessment process for Round 3. Further details on each stage are provided in the section that follows.

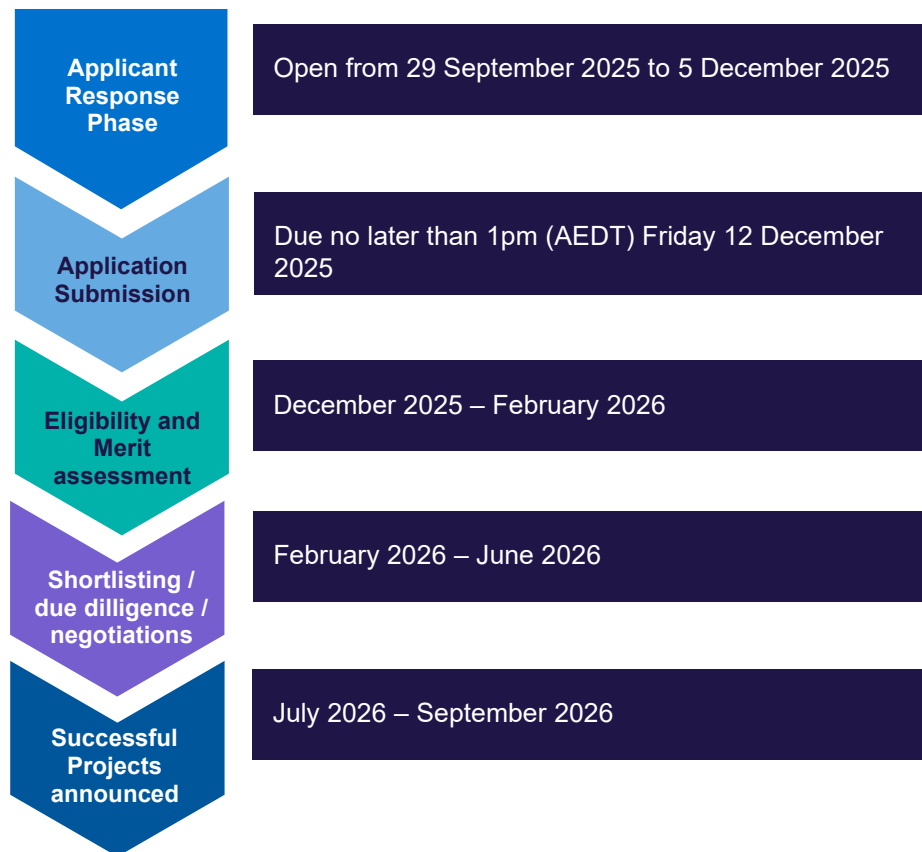


Figure 4: Overview of EIF Round 3 Application and assessment process

Note - dates provided are indicative only and may be subject to change

Applicant Response Phase

Applications will open 29 September 2025. Applicants will be given a period of approximately **9 11** weeks to prepare their submissions. During the Applicant response phase, Applicants will have the opportunity to submit clarification questions regarding the application process, including this Guidelines document. Further information on how and when clarification questions can be submitted is provided in Section 7.2.

Application Submission

Applications must be submitted via DEECA's Grants Online portal prior to the specified closing time. Late submissions will not be accepted unless exceptional circumstances can be clearly demonstrated to the satisfaction of the Department. Applicants are strongly encouraged to allow adequate time to complete and upload all required materials well before the deadline.

Applicants should note that this is a competitive process and are therefore encouraged to provide as high-quality an Application as possible at the time of lodgement. Applicants should not rely on, or assume, that the Department will seek clarification or further information after submission.

Further details on how to submit an Application, including submission requirements and supporting documentation, are provided in Section 7.1.

Eligibility Assessment

All applications will undergo an initial review to confirm that required information has been provided and that eligibility requirements have been addressed. Where minor gaps in the information provided are identified, the Department may provide Applicants with a limited opportunity to rectify these issues. This process will look to address any typos / inconsistencies in any applications received.

Following this review, the Department will assess whether each Application meets the Eligibility Criteria (refer to Section 4.1 for details). Applications that do not meet the Eligibility Criteria will not proceed to merit assessment.

While the Department reserves the right to request further information to clarify an Applicant's eligibility status, it is not obliged to do so. Applicants should ensure all eligibility requirements are clearly addressed in their Application.

The Department retains full discretion in interpreting and applying the Eligibility Criteria, including how it interacts with Applicants during the eligibility assessment process and whether, in its view, an Applicant has satisfied those criteria and associated requirements.

Merit Assessment

Applications that pass the Eligibility Assessment will be evaluated against the Merit Criteria set out in Section 6.2 below.

The Department may seek advice on the merit assessment of an Application from a panel of advisers, which may include external consultants or advisers. The Department may seek clarification from Applicants in relation to any matter arising from the assessment of the application.

Information contained in an Application may be shared with other State or Commonwealth Government departments and agencies (including ARENA, CEFC and AEMO) and relevant Network Service Providers. By submitting an application, Applicants consent to information being shared to these bodies and other Government entities, where deemed relevant to the assessment process.

Eligible Applications may also be assessed with select groups of Eligible Applications in a portfolio analysis to determine the contribution to the Fund Objectives of groups of high-merit applications.

Shortlisting, due diligence and negotiations

The Department will determine which shortlisted applications will proceed to due diligence and Funding Agreement negotiation, noting that not all shortlisted applications may be successful in receiving funding. The Department may invite shortlisted Applicants to present their Projects to the Department and its advisers.

Further detail on the due diligence process is provided in Section 7.4. Negotiations with shortlisted Applicants on a full-form Funding Agreement will follow the due diligence process, and should the Department and Applicant successfully conclude negotiations, subject to Government approvals, a Funding Agreement will be executed.

6.2 Merit Criteria

Projects that meet the Eligibility Criteria will be assessed against six Merit Criteria, which reflect the core objectives of the Energy Innovation Fund and the specific policy priorities of Round 3. Figure 5 below provides a high-level overview of each merit criterion, with further detail and supporting documentation requirements set out in the remainder of this section.

1	Supporting the energy transition – ability to contribute to net zero by 2045
2	Demonstrated pathway to commercial operations
3	Economic impact and community support
4	Innovation and knowledge sharing
5	Market scalability and cost competitiveness
6	Financial viability, future scalability and commercial attractiveness

Figure 5: Overview of Round 3 Merit Criteria

Table 5: Overview of Merit Criteria

#	Merit Criterion	Detail
MC1	Merit Criterion 1: Supporting the energy transition – ability to contribute to net zero by 2045	This criterion assesses how a Project can support Victoria's energy transition and contribute towards the legislated net zero by 2045 targets, including: • how the project aligns with Victoria's key policy initiatives (i.e. Victoria's Gas Substitution Roadmap, Victoria's renewable energy targets); • how the emerging electrification technology will enable the transition away from fossil fuels; and • demonstration of how the Project will support future scalability of the technology within the food and beverage processing and manufacturing sector.
MC2	Merit Criterion 2: Demonstrated pathway to commercial operations	Assessed under this criterion is the ability of a Project to demonstrate a viable pathway to commercial operations and electrification, including the: • demonstrated understanding of the financial, technical, environmental and delivery risks, and the appropriateness of the proposed risk mitigants; • demonstration of a viable pathway to commercial feasibility for both the Project and the electrification technology in the food and beverage sector, and understanding of all required approvals; • Applicant's track record and experience in projects of a similar nature in Australia or overseas; and

#	Merit Criterion	Detail
		Applicant's technical capabilities to successfully deliver the Project.
MC3	Merit Criterion 3 – Economic impact and community support	This criterion assesses the impact of the Project on the Victorian economy, local and regional benefits, and community support, including: - projected economic value generated by the Project and associated local supply chains, and the percentage of economic benefit accruing to regions;¹⁰ - time taken for forecast economic benefits to flow; - the ability of the Project to demonstrate local community benefits; and - the extent and quality of engagement undertaken with the local community to date, including Traditional Owners, and the Applicant's understanding of relevant Victorian social procurement requirements. This includes demonstrated awareness of obligations and good practice in community engagement and social value creation, with specific reference to engagement with Aboriginal people¹¹.
MC4	Merit Criterion 4 – Innovation and knowledge sharing	Innovation and broadening the knowledge base regarding deployment of innovative electric technologies in the food and beverage manufacturing sector is a key aim. The following will be assessed under this criterion: - a clear demonstration of the innovative and transformational aspects of the proposed Project to Victoria/ Australia. Innovation can be demonstrated via the technology used, technical design, integration with other systems, business model or other aspects; - a commitment to make available the learnings gained from the Project with the State, including a comprehensive Knowledge Sharing Plan¹²; and - the project's contribution to broader cultural and social outcomes, including identification of opportunities to collaborate and knowledge share with Traditional Owners.
MC5	Merit Criterion 5 – Promote diversity and resilience in Victoria / Australia's energy sector	The following will be considered when assessing each Project's ability to promote diversity and resilience across the energy sector, including: - the ability to reduce industry reliance on fossil gas; and - the extent to which the Project introduces new ways to reduce fossil fuel usage within and beyond the food and beverage processing and manufacturing sector.
MC6	Merit Criterion 6 – Financial viability, future scalability and commercial attractiveness	Assessed under this criterion is the Project's ability to demonstrate its financial viability and commercial attractiveness, including the: demonstrated need for grant funding;

¹⁰ Refers to the projected economic value generated by the Project and its associated local supply chains. This includes job creation, investment, and business growth. The percentage of this benefit accruing to regional areas highlights the Project's contribution to regional development and equity. Applicants may refer to and consider how they comply with the Government's Local Jobs First Policy: [Local Jobs First - Grant recipients](#).

¹¹ Applicants may consider the Victorian Aboriginal people social procurement guide as part of their application: [Victorian Aboriginal people: social procurement guide | buyingfor.vic.gov.au](#)

¹² Applicants should consider both quantitative and qualitative information they intend to share with the Department if they were to receive grant funding. This information should be captured within their Knowledge Sharing Plan as part of their application.

#	Merit Criterion	Detail
		• clear pathway to commencement and completion of funded activities; • the capacity to deliver the Project from a financial perspective, including the ability to meet both upfront and ongoing capital requirements; • demonstration of how the Project will support future scalability of the technology; and • potential for future funding support being required to reach commercial maturity.

6.3 What supporting documents will need to be provided?

Anticipated supporting documentation required includes, but is not limited to:

- Cost template;
- Project milestone schedule template;
- Project plan template;
- Funding Agreement departures;
- Knowledge Sharing Plan;
- Project risk register; and
- any other documents to support and provide context for the Application, however, the Department is not obliged to consider these documents in the assessment of the Application.

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, templates for supporting documents will be available on <https://www.energy.vic.gov.au/grants/energy-innovation-fund>.

7. How and when to apply?

7.1 Application process and key timing

Applications must be made via the online grant management portal. Please refer to the Fund Website below for key submission and timing dates. The Department may accept or reject any Application received after the closing time on the closing date in its absolute discretion. Applicants are encouraged to register for updates on the website noted below to receive alerts and updates.

<https://www.energy.vic.gov.au/grants/energy-innovation-fund>

7.2 Applicant questions

Applicants can submit clarification questions in relation to the Guidelines, the application process and the broader Fund to the Department. Please refer to the Fund Website for guidance and timing on submitting questions.

Any information provided by the Department in response to any question raised by a potential Applicant may be uploaded onto the Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) document. An initial set of FAQs is available from the Fund Website.

Clarification questions can be submitted to: energy.innovation@deeca.vic.gov.au

Please ensure questions follow the subject line guidance below:

EIF – [Applicant Organisation Name] – Question

7.3 Funding

A total of \$10 million in grants will be available under Round 3 of the EIF, with funds being capped at \$2 million per application. 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. Total grant funding requests (including all government funding sources) must not exceed 50% of the Project's Eligible Expenditure, as outlined in Section 5.

The Department encourages Applicants to explore all other funding opportunities (including those available under other Commonwealth and State initiatives) when developing their application.

Payment of grant funding will be based on verifiable Project milestones. Applicants will be required to provide suggested milestones and associated payment amounts to occur upon satisfaction of each milestone.

7.4 Due diligence

At any time during the assessment process the Department may undertake due diligence on an application. Due diligence may include, but is not limited to:

- inviting Applicants to present their application to the Department and/or the Department's consultants and advisers;
- commissioning or completing research, analysis and modelling to support assessments;
- contacting identified Project participant organisations, the Australian Renewable Energy Agency (ARENA), AEMO and or the relevant network service provider or Government appointed advisors to confirm or verify elements of an application;
- contacting any relevant federal, State, territory and international Government agency about an application or an Applicant/Recipient; and
- inviting Applicants to disclose to the Department (and its advisors) of any necessary information or materials reasonably required by the Department to conduct its assessment against the Project Eligibility Criteria and Merit Criteria.

Where an Applicant has also applied for Joint Funding, the Department will work with the joint funding body to share due diligence resources, where possible, to minimise the burden on Applicants. Due diligence by

the Department, and the Applicant's cooperation with this, is likely to have a material impact on the Department's assessment of an application.

In addition, Applicants should be aware that:

- the completion of due diligence to the satisfaction of the Department may also be required to satisfy one or more criteria for release of funding under the Funding Agreement;
- they are required to detail all grant funding that has been applied for, or received, and demonstrate why the EIF is the most suitable Victorian Government funding source; and
- where Project contributions are expected to include debt financing, the Department may require access to, and reliance on, professional due diligence commissioned by debt financiers to satisfy one or more criteria for release of funds under the Funding Agreement. Accordingly, Applicants will need to liaise with the Department to facilitate appropriate terms and arrangements when engaging with debt financiers.

7.5 Final decision

The Department has discretion to reject, refuse or cease to assess an application at any time if the Department is of the view (in its absolute discretion) that an application is unlikely to be successful and/or is not in alignment with the Government's policy or priorities.

The validity period of applications is set at 12 months. Once the validity period expires, applications will be deemed invalid.

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

- the decision to continue assessment of an Application;
- the approval of applications for funding;
- the amount of grant funding awarded; and
- the terms and conditions of funding.

Resubmission, or requests for re-review of applications, will not be accepted (unless otherwise decided by the Department).

8. Funding conditions

8.1 Funding Agreement

Successful Applicants must enter into a Funding Agreement with the Department. Funding Agreements establish the parties and outline their commitments and obligations to each other, as well as setting out the general funding terms and conditions.

No funding will be released until DEECA and the Applicant have executed the Funding Agreement and the appropriate milestone evidence identified in the Funding Agreement has been met. DEECA reserves the right to withhold payments in cases where evidence has been provided but the Department deems that there are concerns relating to the delivery of the Project. In this instance, the Department will release funding when appropriate actions have been taken to ensure the Project is delivered within the agreed timeframes.

Project expenditure undertaken prior to entering into a Funding Agreement with the Department for the project will not be released to the successful Applicant through the EIF. Funding arrangements must also be capable of execution 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.

8.2 Legislative and regulatory requirements

In delivering the project grant recipients are required to comply with all relevant Commonwealth and state/territory legislations and regulations, including but not limited to:

- *The Privacy Act 1988 (Commonwealth)*
- *The Freedom of Information Act 1982 (Vic)*
- *Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004*

8.3 Tax implications

For an organisation with an ABN and who is GST registered, payment will be made GST inclusive. 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.

8.4 Funding offers

All offers to negotiate and any payment of funds by the Department under the Fund are subject to the execution of a Funding Agreement with the Department. Applicants who receive an offer to negotiate must keep the offer confidential until the execution of a Funding Agreement by the Applicant and the Department (and thereafter comply with the terms of the Funding Agreement in relation to confidentiality and publicity). Any public communication by the Applicant regarding the Project between the time of application submission and execution of the Funding Agreement can only be done with the Department's prior consent. The Department may withdraw its negotiation offer if the Applicant does not comply with this requirement.

8.5 Use of funding

Funding must be used only for Eligible Expenditure on the Project. Applicants will be required to identify objectively verifiable milestones and prepare budgets reflecting the Eligible Expenditure required for each milestone (which will be set out in the Funding Agreement).

Eligible Expenditure is expenditure related directly to the undertaking of the Project and is outlined in Section 5.2. This guidance must be adhered to in the preparation of the budget that is submitted with an Application and as part of the regular milestone reporting required of Recipients.

8.6 Project monitoring and delivery

Recipients are required to comply with Project monitoring and reporting requirements to be outlined in the Funding Agreement. Applicants are responsible for Project delivery, including any Project cost overruns. In cases where a Project is delayed for an unreasonable length of time, where substantive changes to scope are

made after funding has been approved, or where a Project fails to be delivered, the Department reserves the right to cancel the grant and, if applicable, recoup any payment that has already been provided.

Successful Applicants that enter into a Funding Agreement with the Department will be required to provide reporting in line with the requirements of the executed Funding Agreement. Department Parties will monitor the progress of Projects by assessing reports submitted by Applicants and may conduct site visits to confirm details of the reports. Occasionally the Department may need to re-examine claims, seek further information or request an independent audit of claims and payments.

8.7 How will the Department share knowledge and publish information?

Applicants must agree to enter into an agreement with the Department to publicly share knowledge and information about, and resulting from, the Project described in the application (e.g. as part of the Funding Agreement). Applicants will fill out a Knowledge Sharing Plan (**KSP**), which will be competitively assessed.

The KSP objective is to provide a reference document that captures knowledge sharing activities related to the Applicant's Project. The KSP describes how the learnings from the Project will be made available to the public and energy industry, and information shared with the Project's key audiences. Knowledge sharing activities for joint-funded Projects may be streamlined to meet multiple partners' requirements and to minimise duplication.

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.

The Victorian Government will share or publish information about any Project when required under law.

Further, a condition of funding is agreement to publish a formal document about the Project to inform industry and the broader community about the Project's development and findings, through a Knowledge Sharing Report. The terms of the Funding Agreement will include an obligation on the recipient to comply with a Knowledge Sharing Plan for the Project that is approved by the Department.

8.8 Acknowledgement

Recipients are expected to acknowledge the Victorian Government's support and promotional guidelines will form part of the Funding Agreement. Recipients must consult the Department prior to the publication of any Project promotional materials and liaise with the Department to coordinate any public events or announcements related to the Project. Successful Applicants may be required to contribute information on activity outcomes for use in Fund evaluation or in the Department's communication materials.

Subject to any specific requirements in an executed Funding Agreement, if successful Applicant's make a public statement about a funded Project, it is a requirement to acknowledge the support provided by the Department. The following wording is suggested:

"This Project received grant funding from the Victorian Government [and other funding body – where applicable]."

8.9 Cost

The Department is not liable for any costs, expenses, losses, claims or damages that may be incurred by Applicants or other potential Recipients in connection with the application process, including in preparing or submitting an application, providing further information to the Department, or participating in negotiations with the Department.

8.10 Probity for application procedures

The Applicant and any of its associates must not offer any incentive to or otherwise attempt to influence any of the persons who are either directly or indirectly involved in the application process, or in awarding any subsequent contract. If the Department determines that the Applicant or any of its associates have violated this condition, the Applicant may be disqualified from further consideration, in the Department's absolute discretion.

Applicants must not engage with other parties in the Victorian Government regarding the Fund, other than those listed in Section 9. Any contact initiated by Applicants to the Department must only be made through the email address noted in Section 9.7.

Applicants must not engage in any anti-competitive or collusive behaviour in relation to the Project.

By submitting an application, the Applicant consents to the Department performing probity and financial investigations and procedures in relation to the Applicant or any of its associates. The Applicant agrees, if requested by the Department, to seek consents from individuals to allow such probity checks.

8.11 Work health and safety

All organisations have obligations under relevant work health and safety law (as persons conducting a business or undertaking) to ensure the health and safety of workers so far as is reasonably practicable and that the health and safety of other persons is not put at risk from their undertakings.

This obligation includes Applicants ensuring that safe systems of work are in place for each of the activities conducted in support of the Project. The Department expects Applicants to be committed to health and safety management in the proposed Project.

8.12 Privacy

Any personal information about you or a third party in your application will be collected by the department for the purposes of administering your grant application and informing Members of Parliament of successful applications. Personal information may be disclosed to external experts, such as members of assessment panels, or other Government Departments for assessment, reporting, advice, comment or for discussions regarding alternative or collaborative grant funding opportunities. If you intend to include personal information about third parties in your application, please ensure that they are aware of the contents of this privacy statement, and consent to you providing their personal information.

Any personal information about you or a third party in your correspondence will be collected, held, managed, used, disclosed or transferred in accordance with the provisions of the Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014 and other applicable laws.

DEECA is committed to protecting the privacy of personal information. You can find the DEECA Privacy Policy online at www.deeca.vic.gov.au/privacy.

Requests for access to information about you held by DEECA should be sent to the Manager Privacy, P.O. Box 500 East Melbourne 8002 or contact by emailing Foi.unit@deeca.vic.gov.au.

8.13 Confidential information

Subject to the Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014 and the requirements of other applicable laws, unless otherwise stated in these Guidelines or other Department or Victorian Government materials relating to the Fund, and subject to the terms of any executed Funding Agreement, any information reasonably determined by the Department to be commercial-in-confidence information provided by Applicants as part of, or in connection with, a registration, application or negotiation process will be treated confidentially by the Department.

The Department may disclose commercial-in-confidence information provided by Applicants to the following parties:

- the Minister or Minister's office;
- the Victorian Ombudsman and Victorian Auditor-General's Office;
- Department staff, consultants and advisers;
- ARENA;
- AEMO;

- any agency or body of the Victorian Government, or any other organisation or individual considered by the Department to have a need or an entitlement to know that information (including any federal, state or territory agency or body), where that need or entitlement to know that information arises out of or in connection with the Department's assessment, verification or due diligence of any aspect of the application;
- to any person to whom disclosure is otherwise authorised or required by law; and
- in accordance with the Knowledge Sharing Plan.

The Department may receive commercial-in-confidence information provided by Applicants from the above parties.

If the Department discloses commercial-in-confidence information to any of the above parties, it will inform the party that the information is strictly confidential. The Department will otherwise only disclose commercial-in-confidence information provided by Applicants with the Applicant's consent.

9. Contacts and further information

9.1 Commencement and authority for the Guidelines

These Guidelines have been approved by the Department. The Guidelines may be varied from time to time or revoked. The Department has the authority to award funding under the Fund and execute and vary the agreements that allow the Victorian Government to provide this funding.

9.2 Limitations

9.2.1 No representation, warranty or guarantee

The Department and its employees, agents and officers (the Department Parties) do not give any representation, warranty or guarantee, whether express or implied, in relation to the information contained in any materials released by the Department associated with the Fund (Fund Materials) including their completeness, accuracy, currency or reliability or the process by which they were prepared. None of the Department Parties give opinions regarding, legal, accounting, regulatory, taxation or any other matters. Without limiting the foregoing, nothing in the Fund Materials is or should be regarded as advice in relation to those matters.

Nothing contained in the Fund Materials is or may be relied upon as a promise, guarantee, representation or warranty.

9.2.2 No obligation to update

The Fund Materials, the information contained herein and the matters to which it relates may be amended, updated or withdrawn at any time, at the Department's discretion. However, the Department parties do not accept any responsibility to update, supplement or correct the Fund Materials, nor to inform Applicants about any matter that may affect the Fund Materials.

9.2.3 No liability

Each Department Party expressly disclaims all liability for any loss or damage incurred by any person arising from, or because of, any person's use of or reliance on any information, statement, opinion or matter (express or implied) contained in, derived from, or omitted from the Fund Materials, except for any liability which cannot be excluded as a matter of law.

9.2.4 Other limitations

The Fund Materials are not an offer, recommendation or invitation by any Department Party in respect of any contract or commitment and (subject to a Funding Agreement being fully executed) nothing in the Fund Materials will form the basis of any contract or commitment.

Applicants must rely entirely upon their own investigations, review and analysis in relation to the assessment of whether to apply to and participate in the Fund.

9.3 Complaints

Complaints concerning the Fund should be emailed to the DEECA email address noted in Section 9.7.

Complaints will, in the first instance, be reviewed by the Department. If the Department cannot resolve the complaint within 30 business days of receipt, the Department will provide details of a nominated complaints and review officer from the DEECA Complaints, Legal and Legislation Division who will advise the next steps. If the complaint is still not resolved satisfactorily, the Victorian Ombudsman can be reached for external review of the administrative actions of the Department.

9.4 Conflicts of interest

The Department will administer conflict of interest procedures for the Fund, including procedures for all staff to declare their interests.

All consultants and advisers engaged by the Department to assist in delivery of the Fund will be required to disclose any conflicts of interest they may have in relation to Applicants and may be excluded from work if required under the Department probity procedures.

Applicants will be required to disclose any conflicts of interest existing or that may arise throughout the course of the life of the Project.

9.5 Fund evaluation

The Department may internally evaluate the Fund to determine the extent to which funded activities contributed to achieving the Fund Objectives. We may use information from applications and Project reports for this purpose.

The Department may also interview Applicants or ask Applicants for more information to help the Department understand how the grant impacted Applicants and to evaluate how effective the Fund was in achieving its objectives. Without limiting any specific reporting or evaluation requirements (or similar) set out in any Funding Agreement executed with the Department, we may contact Applicants up to two years after the Project is finished for more information to assist with this evaluation.

9.6 No contract or liability

Despite any part of these Guidelines, or any other documentation that forms part of this process (in part or together), by applying, each Applicant must, and must procure that any other potential Recipient for the Project does:

- acknowledge that neither the Applicant nor the Department intend to create any contract or other relationship under which the Department is obliged to conduct the process in relation to the Fund in any manner or at all, and that there is no such contract or other relationship in existence;
- accordingly, acknowledge that neither this document, nor any submission will create any legal or other obligation upon the Department to conduct the process in any manner or at all; and
- release the Department from any claim it might otherwise have been able to make or bring against the Department, arising out of or in connection with the Department's conduct of, or failure to conduct, the process in any manner or at all.

9.7 Further information

Potential Applicants and interested parties should refer to the Fund Website for up-to-date information on the Fund at <https://www.energy.vic.gov.au/grants/energy-innovation-fund>.

Any questions or clarifications can be sent in writing to energy.innovation@deeca.vic.gov.au.

Appendix A Technology and commercial readiness

Technology and commercial readiness

As outlined in Section 4.1.2, to be eligible, Projects applying for funding under the EIF must achieve a TRL of 9 and a CRI of 2 to 5. ARENA's Advancing Renewables Program Guidelines provide formal definitions for these levels and should be referred to for this purpose¹³.

To qualify for a TRL of 9, the full-scale system must have been previously operated across all expected operating conditions. This means the technology must have progressed past all initial commissioning, demonstration, and prototype stages. A Project with a CRI of 2 to 5 means the Project has been tested commercially in some setting (small or large scale) but is not yet considered as a bankable or a mature commercial technology.

Figure 6: Technology and Commercial Readiness outlines the TRL and CRI levels and highlights the stages of development applicable under the EIF.

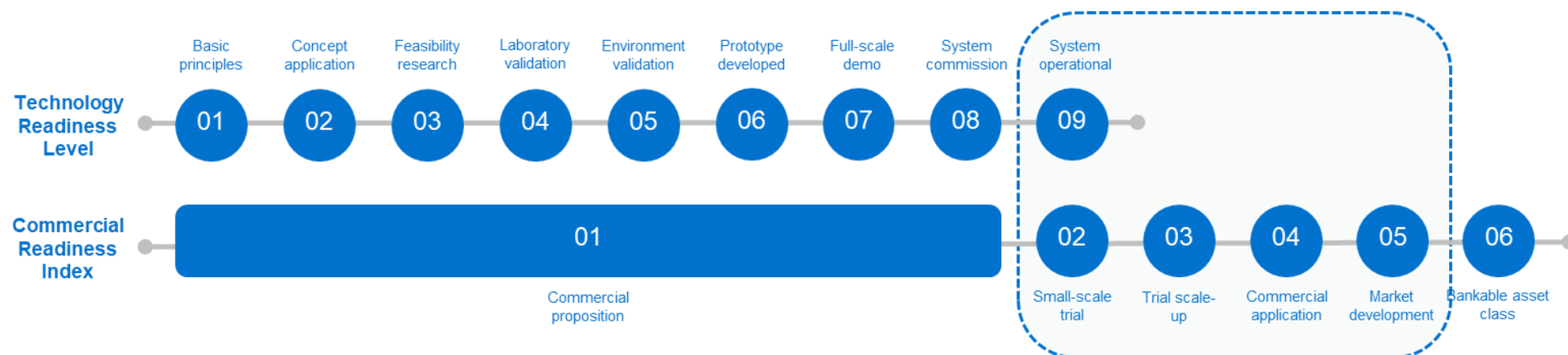


Figure 6: Technology and Commercial Readiness

¹³ Further information on ARENA's Advancing Renewables Program Guidelines can be found here: [Advancing Renewables Program](#).

Appendix B Checklist before applying

Read these Guidelines and the information about this grant program within Sections 3 and 4 before applying and complete the following checklist.

Have you:

- ☐ Read these Guidelines carefully?
- ☐ Checked if you are, or your organisation is, eligible for this grant funding (4.1.1 Applicant Eligibility)?
- ☐ Checked if your activity is eligible for this grant funding (4.1.2 Project Eligibility)?
- ☐ Checked that you would be able to comply with all relevant laws and regulations in delivery of your activity (4.1.2 Project Eligibility)?
- ☐ Checked you can appropriately demonstrate how your project contributes to Victoria achieving net zero by 2045 (4.1.2 Project Eligibility)?
- ☐ Checked that your project involves an electrification technology that is considered pre-commercial within the Victorian context, meeting the required Technology Readiness Level (TRL) and Commercial Readiness Index (CRI) criteria (4.1.2 Project Eligibility)?
- ☐ Reviewed the Funding Agreement and its terms and conditions?
- ☐ Considered the Merit Criteria and established whether you have sufficient information to address each consideration and complete the supporting documentation required (6.2 Merit Criteria and 6.3 Supporting documentation)?

