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| **Energy Market Ready Grants (EMRG)**  **Application Guidelines**  **February 2023** |

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| Acknowledgment  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.  We are committed to genuinely partner, and meaningfully engage, with Victoria's Traditional Owners and Aboriginal communities to support the protection of Country, the maintenance of spiritual and cultural practices and their broader aspirations in the 21st century and beyond. |
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Contents

[1. What is the Energy Market Ready Grants (EMRG) program? 4](#_Toc125621593)

[1.1 Definitions 4](#_Toc125621594)

[1.2 Objectives 4](#_Toc125621595)

[2. What are the funding details? 5](#_Toc125621596)

[3. Eligibility Criteria 5](#_Toc125621597)

[3.1 Who is eligible? 5](#_Toc125621598)

[3.2 What is an eligible project? 5](#_Toc125621599)

[4. Funding Types 5](#_Toc125621600)

[4.1 What might be funded? 5](#_Toc125621601)

[4.2 What will not be funded? 6](#_Toc125621602)

[5. Assessment 6](#_Toc125621603)

[5.1 What are the assessment criteria? 6](#_Toc125621604)

[5.2 What supporting documents will need to be provided? 7](#_Toc125621605)

[5.3 What is the application process? 7](#_Toc125621606)

[5.4 How do applicants apply? 7](#_Toc125621607)

[6. What are the funding conditions? 8](#_Toc125621608)

[6.1 Funding agreements 8](#_Toc125621609)

[6.2 Legislative and regulatory requirements 8](#_Toc125621610)

[6.3 Tax implications 8](#_Toc125621611)

[6.4 Acknowledging the Victorian Government’s support 8](#_Toc125621612)

[6.5 Payments 8](#_Toc125621613)

[6.6 Monitoring 8](#_Toc125621614)

[6.7 Privacy 9](#_Toc125621615)

[7. Additional information 9](#_Toc125621616)

[8. Checklist 9](#_Toc125621617)

# What is the Energy Market Ready Grants (EMRG) program?

The Energy Market Ready Grants (EMRG) program provides start-ups in the early to market entry stage with funding to further develop their data-driven or digital solutions; solutions that improve access to reliable, sustainable, and affordable energy to Victorians and capitalise on Victoria’s rich energy data resources.

This pilot initiative will improve understanding of the innovation journey and barriers faced for start-ups at the early to market entry stage. The outcomes of the pilot will be evaluated to determine what support mechanisms are most needed by Victorian start-ups with energy-related products and services. As the EMRG program is a pilot initiative, engagement and feedback from applicants will be required throughout the program.

## 1.1 Definitions

The following definitions apply to the market ready grants program:

* A **digital energy solution** includes processes, products and services that integrate data, software, and energy technologies. This results in smart, reliable, and affordable energy solutions for homes and businesses. These products and services help end users understand, engage with, and actively manage energy use and improve access to sustainable energy.
* **Project** refers to a set of defined activities with a specific budget, outcome, and timeframe, that results in start-ups having progressed their solution towards market entry.
* Start-ups in the **early to market entry stage** are:
  + start-ups that are seeking to further develop a solution from a proof-of-concept stage to Minimum Viable Product (MVP) (i.e. the prototype is complete and has received early independent feedback for development); or,
  + start-ups seeking to validate their prototype solution or MVP with customers and progress to a stage of generating early-stage revenue
* A **prototype** is an early mock-up of a product or solution that shows proof of concept and can be used to generate early viability, testing or feedback on an idea. Examples of prototypes may include wireframes, a landing page, videos, or an interactive frontend.
* A **Minimum Viable Product (MVP)** is a solution or product that is developed enough to be ready for early customer feedback and market validation. An MVP may be used by start-ups to generate the first stage of revenue.

## 1.2 Objectives

The objective of the EMRG program is to support start-ups with innovative digital energy solutions that benefit consumers and contribute to Victoria’s energy transition.

The Victorian Government is providing funding to:

* Demonstrate the opportunities that digital or data-driven solutions present for the energy transition
* Realise benefits for start-ups to operate and scale digital energy solutions in Victoria
* Support the development of innovative solutions with a unique value proposition that demonstrate clear benefits for consumers
* Build collaboration between government and start-ups to develop the digital energy ecosystem.

# What are the funding details?

Grants of either $25,000 or $50,000 are available to successful applicants from a total funding pool of $150,000. Applicants will need to demonstrate completion of all project activities within 6 months of receiving the grant.

Funding for wages and professional services can be included in applications as part of the grant funding.

# Eligibility Criteria

This program provides funds for projects that support start-ups with an innovative digital energy solution in the early to market entry stage of development.

## Who is eligible?

Applicants must:

* have a current ABN
* hold IP or the rights to commercialise
* be one of the following entities:
* sole traders
* private sector starts ups
* not for profit organisations

Government agencies, local government authorities, and established private sector businesses and agencies are not eligible to apply for funding.

## What is an eligible project?

The project must:

* Progress the development or path to market for a digital solution that benefits consumers and contributes to Victoria’s energy transition
* Demonstrate at least 80% of the expenditure will occur in Victoria
* Achieve at least one of the following financial outcomes:
  + received prior funding from an external source, such as grant funding, crowd funding, incubator or accelerator program, or previous investors.
  + demonstrate co-investment can be secured for the project.
  + demonstrate an ongoing funding stream.

# 4. Funding Types

## 4.1 What might be funded?

Grant funding will be available for a variety of proposals for a digital energy solution in the early to market entry stage, which may include but is not limited to:

* Using energy data such as solar generation, battery storage or energy use to better engage Victorian households to improve their energy management and reduce their energy costs
* Using digital solutions to create equitable ways of sharing sustainable energy with others
* Providing easier access to sustainable energy and energy efficiency upgrade services for households and businesses
* Any other digital or data-led innovation that enables the Victorian consumer to access sustainable affordable energy, more easily manage their home/business energy use or costs.

Priority will be given to:

* start-ups that have demonstrated commercial potential but are yet to develop their solution and offer their product or service to potential customers in the market
* start-ups that are testing, trialling, making improvements, or demonstrating a market fit to a prototype or MVP product for market entry.

## 4.2 What will not be funded?

The Market Ready Grants Program will not fund the following activities:

* Development of hardware only solutions
* Routine or ongoing maintenance activities
* Feasibility studies or construction projects
* Recurrent operating costs, for example rent and utility costs, and/or activities establishing expectations of ongoing funding

# 5. Assessment

## 5.1 What are the assessment criteria?

Applications will be reviewed to make sure that the applicant and their activity are eligible for funding. Eligible applications will then be assessed using the criteria listed below. Each criterion is given a percentage weighting to indicate its relative importance in the assessment process. Applications should address all relevant criteria.

**Why are you doing this project? 25%**

Applicants will be required to:

* describe the problem or opportunity that the project is addressing
* demonstrate how the project contributes to a digital solution that will improve access to reliable, sustainable, and affordable energy to Victorians

**What will be delivered? 25%**

Applicants will be required to provide:

* details of project deliverables and project outcomes
* a business plan or model of no more than 2 pages, that covers target customer segments, size of potential business to consumer (B2C) or business-to-business (B2B) target audience, scalability of the solution, potential revenue streams, and how customers would be reached
* details of work done to date for the development of the prototype or MVP, to ensure the project is ready for implementation

**How will the project be delivered? 25%**

Applicants will be required to:

* provide a brief project outline including high-level budget, project risks and timeframes
* outline the capability and capacity of the key personnel to deliver the project
* provide details of co-funding, previous or ongoing funding, or future funding

**Who will benefit from the project? 25%**

Applicants will be required to:

* outline expected benefits of the project, including social, environmental, economic, and other benefits
* describe how the project will benefit energy consumers in Victoria

## 5.2 What supporting documents will need to be provided?

An online application form will set out all requirements for supporting documentation. Anticipated required supporting documentation includes, but is not limited to:

* business plan / model of no more than 2 pages
* brief project outline including risk register, project delivery schedule and project budget
* evidence of confirmation of other funding sources
* ABN and business entity details.

Applicants will also have the opportunity to upload an optional short video pitch as part of the application form.

## 5.3 What is the application process? ­

Please note that all timings are indicative and are subject to change at the Department’s discretion.

Successful and unsuccessful applicants will be notified in writing after the assessment process is completed. All decisions are final and are not subject to further review. Unsuccessful applicants can ask for feedback on their application.

Figure 1: Key Dates (Application Process)

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| Applications open | Mid March 2023 |
| Applications close | Mid April 2023 |
| Applicants notified | Late May 2023 |
| Funding agreement executed and  activities commence | Early June 2023 |
| Activities completed and  acquittal report submitted | Within 6 months |

## 5.4 How do applicants apply?

Applications are submitted online using the Grants Online portal.

To apply, go to the grant program web page <https://www.energy.vic.gov.au/grants/energy-market-ready-grants/> and click on the ‘Start New Application’ button. To return to a saved draft application, click on the ‘Access Saved Application’ button.

**Attaching required documents:**

Supporting documents must be in an acceptable file type, such as Word, Excel, PDF, or JPEG. The maximum file size for each file is 10MB.

You will receive an application number when you apply online. Please quote this number in all communications with the department relating to your application.

If you have documents to submit that cannot be attached to your online application you can email them to grantsinfo@delwp.vic.gov.au, quoting your application number. Attach all documents to one email, zipping the files if required.

Make sure your application is submitted by **5 pm on 11th April 2023.**

**Note:** No hard copy applications will be accepted. Late and incomplete applications will not be considered.

# What are the funding conditions?

## 6.1 Funding agreements

Successful applicants must enter into a funding agreement with DEECA. The Victorian Common Funding Agreement (short form) will be used for grant recipients. It is recommended that applicants review the terms and conditions before applying. Information about the Victorian Common Funding Agreement is available on <https://www.vic.gov.au/victorian-common-funding-agreement>

The activity does not include using the Funding for political campaigning or advocacy activities for political parties.

## 6.2 Legislative and regulatory requirements

In delivering the activity 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*

## 6.3 Tax implications

Applicants should consult the Australian Taxation Office or seek professional advice on any taxation implications that may arise from this grant funding.

## 6.4 Acknowledging the Victorian Government’s support

Successful applicants must liaise with the departmental program area to coordinate any public events or announcements related to the project.

## 6.5 Payments

Payments will be made as long as:

* the funding agreement has been signed by both parties.
* grant recipients provide reports as required.
* other terms and conditions of funding continue to be met.

## 6.6 Monitoring

Grant recipients are required to comply with project monitoring and reporting requirements as outlined in the funding agreement. This may include progress reports, engagement activities, completion reports and acquittal documentation.

## 6.7 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 also 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.

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 (formerly DELWP) is committed to protecting the privacy of personal information. You can find the DEECA Privacy Policy online at www.delwp.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@delwp.vic.gov.au](mailto:Foi.unit@delwp.vic.gov.au).

# Additional information

Additional information is available at the program web page <https://www.energy.vic.gov.au/grants/energy-market-ready-grants/>

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| If you require assistance submitting your application online, email grantsinfo@delwp.vic.gov.au. |

# Checklist

Read these guidelines and the information about this grant program at <https://www.energy.vic.gov.au/grants/energy-market-ready-grants/> 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?

 checked if your activity is eligible for this grant funding?

 checked that you would be able to comply with all relevant laws and regulations in delivery of your activity?

 prepared the appropriate supporting documents?

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