

## Disaster Ready Fund Round Three

### Overarching Feedback

NEMA is providing feedback to assist applicants and delivery partners to understand what generally comprised an excellent application for DRF Round Three.

Successful applicants provided strong responses to the selection criteria and demonstrated their ability to meet the eligibility requirements outlined in the Guidelines. Scores took into account the applicant's responses and any supporting documentation provided.

#### **Criterion One – Contribution to disaster risk reduction, resilience and/or knowledge (40 percent)**

Excellent Applications demonstrated strong alignment with the DRF assessment criteria. The project was clearly articulated with well-defined objectives and scope and is supported by strong evidence (qualitative and/or quantitative) to demonstrate the project will achieve its aims. Risks to project success may be present, but the Application identified mitigation strategies and controls to manage the risk.

The Application and Project Proposal demonstrated how the project reduces disaster risk, increases resilience, adaptive capacity and/or preparedness for disasters, and/or contributes to understanding disaster risk.

- well-defined and highly relevant project objectives (problem and solution), inputs (resources), outputs (activities) and outcomes (short, medium and long-term).
- a detailed outline and comparison of level(s) of exposure and vulnerability to natural hazards prior to and upon conclusion of the project.
- a clearly articulated and compelling case that shows the potential impact of the project on the identified target area or group/s in terms of:
  - increased understanding of natural hazard disaster impacts,
  - increased resilience, adaptive capacity and/or preparedness, and/or
  - reduced exposure to risk, harm and/or severity of a natural hazard's impacts.
- multiple sources of high quality evidence (e.g. references to peer reviewed research data and expert advice) to support claims related to levels of disaster risk and expected project benefits.

- a strong commitment to maintain the project benefits beyond the duration of program funding (enduring benefit), and a highly credible explanation of how they will do this is.

This application clearly defined:

- the natural hazard/s the project is addressing, current and future risks posed to the target community (including consideration of climate change impacts) and how these have been assessed, or if there is limited or no existing hazard or risk information, how the project funding will contribute to increasing understanding of the hazard, level of risk and potential future disaster impacts;
- the benefits the project will deliver for the community during and beyond the term of funding, including the estimated level/s of disaster risk, resilience, and/or understanding prior to and upon conclusion of the proposed project, along with any enduring benefits (as defined in Glossary);
- how the project will avoid and manage the potential for maladaptation including any unintentionally negative social, environmental or economic outcomes; and
- for infrastructure projects, how climate change may impact the investment over its intended lifespan, and how these risks will or may be mitigated.

In addition:

- if the project sought to improve understanding of natural hazards and disaster risk, the Project Proposal outlined how the new hazard and risk information would be shared with affected communities; and
- if there are potential co-benefits associated with the project (i.e. benefits that go beyond intended risk reduction, resilience and knowledge outcomes, such as reduced insurance costs), these were identified in the Application and supported by evidence.

**Criterion Two – Alignment with national and state/territory/local disaster resilience and risk reduction plans, strategies and frameworks (30 percent)**

The Application and Project Proposal demonstrated this through identifying:

- how the project meets one or more of the DRF objectives and aligns with one or more of the priorities, outcomes and/or national actions identified in the Second National Action Plan; and
- how the project aligns with and/or supports delivery of any existing state, territory, local government or community disaster risk reduction or adaptation plans, policies or frameworks, or how the project will develop or contribute to development of these policies, plans or frameworks where they do not currently exist.

A highly detailed and convincing explanation of how and to what extent the project activities and intended outcome/s address one or more of the DRF's Objectives, namely to:

- increase the understanding of natural hazard disaster impacts, as a first step towards reducing disaster impacts in the future;

- increase the resilience, adaptive capacity and/or preparedness of governments, community service organisations and affected communities to minimise the potential impact of natural hazards and avert disasters; and
- reduce the exposure to risk, harm and/or severity of a natural hazard's impacts, including reducing the recovery burden for governments and vulnerable and/or affected communities.

a case that includes specific references to relevant Commonwealth (e.g. [National Disaster Risk Reduction Framework](#)), state, territory or local government disaster risk reduction policies and/or risk assessments, and clearly articulates how the project is consistent with or supports those policies and/or assessments.

Specific references to the National Disaster Risk Reduction Framework and the National Strategy for Disaster Resilience. Aligned with the Second National Action Plan priorities: understand disaster risk; accountable decisions; enhanced investment; governance, ownership and responsibility.

Aligned with DRF objectives and investment principles. Proposals should increase the understanding of natural hazard disaster impacts; increase resilience, adaptive capacity and/or preparedness; and/or reduce the exposure to risk, harm and/or severity of a natural hazards impacts. Proposals are risk informed; aligned with plans; priority targeted; and deliver diverse and equitable outcomes.

### **Criterion Three – Capacity, capability and resources to deliver the project (30 percent)**

High quality applications demonstrated:

- a track record that includes extensive experience successfully managing multiple projects of a similar size and scope.
- a team (applicant plus any delivery partners) that possesses all the required skills and expertise to successfully achieve the target outcomes.
- assumptions were relevant, clear and reasonably detailed.
- some risks may be present, but any concerns or reservations are minor and can be managed.
  - this includes any national interest, financial, legal, regulatory, governance or other issues/risks identified
- a highly detailed project plan (including, but not necessarily limited to, information presented in the Project Logic attachment) that is highly feasible and highly likely to achieve the intended outcomes taking into account the project inputs, outputs, duration (maximum 3 years 'other projects', five years infrastructure projects), assumptions and risks.

- addresses scope, implementation methodology, timeframes, budget, community consultation, and risk management.
  - readiness to formally commence the project once Implementation Plans are endorsed and ability to deliver the project within the maximum project period.
- A detailed timeline/schedule for the project, that provides a very high level of confidence that the project can commence quickly and be completed within the project duration (3 years 'other projects', five years infrastructure projects maximum).
- a budget that is well-justified and appropriate, underpinned by cost estimates (required evidence), for the size and scope of the project, with no significant gaps or other concerns (e.g. excessive claims).
  - value with relevant money
  - new investment vs historical investments
- a co-contribution above the minimum requirement for the applicant type that leverages additional funds (e.g. cash and in-kind contributions) and partnerships.
- a detailed description of how project funds will be used to deliver the project outcomes e.g. – to prevent or mitigate the degree of impacts relating to cascading and systemic risks.
- a highly detailed description of stakeholder engagement activities that shows broad consultation and support from relevant stakeholders such as local government and First Nations communities and how that support will be maintained throughout the project, together with multiple sources of reliable evidence (e.g. endorsement from community group(s) or local council; outcomes from a community survey; community contributions to the project such as cash or in kind contributions (time, assets etc.); collaboration with other organisations within the area; community participation in the project).
- compliance with relevant legislative requirements, government policies and industry standards, such as:
  - where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people will be impacted by the project, how the project will ensure cultural safety in any service delivery?
  - where the project will affect the particular interests of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, how the project aligns with the National Agreement on Closing the Gap Priority Reforms and/or will contribute to progress against targets?
- for infrastructure projects applications demonstrated:
  - how the infrastructure and benefits of the project will be operated and maintained into the future;

- steps taken to get the project ready including:
  - the status of required regulatory and/or development approvals;
  - project designs and costings;
  - authority from the land or infrastructure owner to undertake the project at the nominated site(s); and
  - funding contributions from all sources.
- An application supported by required evidence (subject to the classification of the project):
  - a clear business case
  - cost estimates
  - a cost benefit analysis;
  - copies of relevant designs and approvals (e.g. schematic plans, planning permits, development and building approvals, etc.); and
  - that the Applicant either owns the land/infrastructure being built/upgraded upon or has the landowner's permission to use the land/infrastructure.

## Opportunities for improvement

### Criterion one:

- Project detail should be incorporated into the application response not just the supporting attachments.
- Clearly articulate the project outputs and outcomes.
- Clearly articulate the value add of a project or proposal; demonstrate practical value.
- Greater clarity on the beneficiaries of a project/proposal (i.e. at risk communities, locations).
- Assumptions should be identified and tested/validated.
- Applications would benefit from more supporting evidence and information to align with claims made against the criteria.
- Consider the impact of the project/proposal on future risks.
  - More evidence on the frequency and severity of disasters impacting the affected community/location (exposure to risk/vulnerability/previous natural hazard events/scenarios).
  - How does a project directly change the risk to community?
  - Demonstrable examples of reduction in risk i.e. decreased hospitalisations/population effects
  - Explain what would happen without the project (cost of inaction).
- Articulate the benefits of the proposal beyond the funding window (enduring benefits).
- Further consideration of the co-benefits of projects would strengthen responses.
- Applications should address maladaptation (an adaptation that does not succeed in reducing vulnerability but increases it instead, including where intervention in one location or sector could increase the vulnerability of another location or sector).

**Criterion two:**

- Further evidence or examples of how project proposals will align with emergency management plans at all levels of government and community planning.
- Specific reference to Disaster Ready Fund objectives and investment principles in developing responses.

**Criterion three:**

- Greater detail required in business case:
  - More specific detail on project locations, risks etc.
  - Should clearly articulate the benefits of a project.
  - Clearly articulate readiness to implement projects (approvals, risk assessments, tendering).
    - I.e. clarification around contractors involved in delivery of projects. Proposals should identify contractors involved or the approach planned to secure contractor support.
- Greater consideration of how projects/proposals might impact/benefit First Nations communities (i.e. ensure cultural safety).
- Applications could benefit from communications/stakeholder engagement plans to demonstrate approach to managing relationships across the life of a project.
- Timely cost estimates and schedules: better alignment of project budgets and timelines with the likely timeline for funds availability through the grant process i.e. projects commencing from 2026 when funds become available.
  - Milestones for project delivery should align to the overarching project duration.
- Budget considerations:
  - Demonstrate new investment in project/proposal.
  - Costings should consider ongoing maintenance, storage, and utilisation of facilities and goods, as applicable.
  - An adequate budget contingency needs to be applied, relative to the project proposal.
  - Budget is scaled to the size and scope of the project/proposal.
  - Budget information should be consistent across all elements of the project proposal.
  - There should be a clear funding source for all co-contributions.
- Spell out cost benefits of projects i.e. where projects will result in financial benefits to a region.
- Where multiple sites are identified for investment under a proposal include prioritisation order of sites, informed by risk.