



Funding

Q: What is the total level of funding available for each project?

A: There is no set maximum grant value for each project, but the NSW Government can allocate up to \$15 million in funding for Fixing Country Rail Pilot Projects.

Q: What is the expected co-contribution percentage from other stakeholders?

A: There is no fixed percentage for co-contribution to projects, but they are strongly encouraged.

Q: Can I also apply for Australian Government funding?

A: Yes, the Fixing Country Rail criteria is aligned with Australian Government programmes; such as the National Stronger Regions Fund (NSRF).

Australian Government programmes will contribute up to 50 per cent of the total project cost.

For more information, including how to apply and funding conditions, read the programme criteria and proposal forms at: www.infrastructure.gov.au

Completing the EoI

Q: Is there a limit on how many projects can be submitted?

A: No.

Q: Is it possible to have the deadline extended for submitting an Expression of Interest (EoI)?

A: The deadline for submitting an EoI is 5pm on Friday, 6 May 2016 and this will not be extended.

The EoI application is scaled down from the full application process. The Assessment Panel is not expecting all applications will have confirmed project costs, funding contributions, completed approvals or safety audits. The panel may need to contact applicants for further clarification or information if required.

Q: Do I need to submit a Benefit Cost Analysis with my application?

A: A Benefit Cost Analysis (BCA) and Benefit Cost Ratio (BCR) are not required for the EoI phase, but applicants are encouraged to do so. Shortlisted applicants will be required to submit a completed BCA on a template provided by Transport for NSW (TfNSW).

Q: Can applicants use a different tool to generate a BCR?

A: Yes, during the EoI phase.

During the full application phase applicants are required to use the TfNSW BCA tool to generate a BCR, so there is consistency across Fixing Country Rail projects for the assessment process.

Q: What type of letters of support should be included with applications?

A: Support letters from industry, peak bodies and other stakeholders should articulate why the project is important and the specific benefits the project would provide.

Program Assessment Criteria

Q: How are the four assessment criteria weighted?

A: There is no specific weighting. Eligible applications are assessed against all four criteria described in the guidelines:

- Access and productivity benefits
- Growth and economic benefits
- Strategic alignment
- Deliverability and affordability.

Q: How do I complete access and productivity benefits?

A: Applications should demonstrate how the project will achieve productivity and access benefits for freight in the region, particularly in regards to removing constraints in the movement of freight from origin to destination, or access to key freight networks. The following are examples of access and productivity benefits:

- The ability to utilise longer and/or heavier trains
- Improved cycle times for train services
- Reduction in heavy vehicle trips and km travelled
- Better utilisation of existing assets and infrastructure.

Q: How do I complete growth and economic benefits?

A: Applications must demonstrate how a project would have a positive impact on productivity and economic growth. Applicants must make a strong case backed up by appropriate letters of support and other evidence. Examples include:

- Decrease in transport operating costs
- Reduction in distances travelled or travel time
- Positive impact on freight volumes due to utilisation of a longer/heavier train
- Improved safety
- Improved maintenance costs.

All full applications must be accompanied by a completed BCA Model provided by TfNSW.

A completed BCA is not obligatory during the EoI phase, but strongly encouraged.

Q: How do I complete strategic alignment?

A: Applicants should show how the project aligns with the priorities of Australian, NSW State and Local Government, as well as the region and industry.

- Region: for example, is upgrading the track a regional priority as evidenced by a regional transport plan?
- Industry: for example, does the project support the efficiency and expansion of businesses within the region as evidenced by appropriate letters of support and industry financial contribution?

Applicants are encouraged to provide letters of support from industry and other stakeholders. Support letters should articulate why the project is important and the specific benefits that the project would provide. Generic support letters are not useful.

Applicants should demonstrate that they have considered the degree of co-contribution to the project from industry, council, the Australian Government, as well as other state government sources. In-kind contribution is also viewed as co-contribution under the program. Projects with co-contribution from various sources are viewed most favourably as they provide compelling evidence of stakeholder alignment.

The applicant will need to indicate whether the contribution is confirmed or unconfirmed and provide appropriate evidence. If the applicant has not received written confirmation of co-contribution at the time of application, then the Technical and Assessment Panel will only be able to recommend qualified funding that is contingent on the applicant receiving confirmation of said funds.

Q: How do I complete deliverability and affordability?

A: Applicants should provide sufficient evidence to show:

- Amount of planning that has already been undertaken
- Approvals required for the project, and what steps have been taken to obtain and manage these approvals
- Risks and impediments that may impact on project commencement/ completion and how these have been addressed
- Detailed breakdown of expected costs, level of confidence and factors that could materially impact cost estimates
- How expected costs represent value for money.

Applications for funding should demonstrate the capacity to deliver the project through robust strategies for procurement, project management and risk management. Applicants need to indicate that the project is affordable, taking into account net life-cycle cost impacts and allowing for on-going operating, maintenance and replacement requirements.

Suggestions for railway network enhancement works do not need to demonstrate delivery capacity for works on the State owned network.