



Circular Economy Investment Program

2024 GUIDELINES



Program guidelines released	25 June 2024
Stage 1 applications open	25 June 2024
Stage 1 applications close	3pm 29 July 2024
Stage 2 applications	Open (by invitation only) for approximately 4 weeks
Project completion date	Subject to funding agreements but no later than 31 December 2026
Policy Agency	Department of Environment, Science and Innovation
Program budget	\$5 million
Program type	Open, competitive, grant program, two stage application process
Enquiries	If you have any questions, contact: CEPrograms@des.qld.gov.au

Prepared by: Waste Avoidance and Recovery Programs, Office of Circular Economy, Department of Environment, Science and Innovation

The Department of Environment, Science and Innovation acknowledges Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the Traditional Owners and custodians of the land. We recognise their connection to land, sea and community, and pay our respects to Elders past, present and emerging.

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1. Introduction

The [Waste Management and Resource Recovery Strategy](#) (Strategy) provides the framework for Queensland to become a zero-waste society, where waste is avoided, reused and recycled to the greatest possible extent. To achieve these goals, strategic priority 2 identifies the need to transition to a circular economy (CE), to support increased options for reuse, recycling and recovery rates in Queensland, driven by world class industry and technological advances.

Global trends see governments and businesses expanding their consideration of resource recovery by moving towards the adoption of CE principles. Operating within a CE framework presents opportunities for industry, government and community to alter the way a substantial part of the economy operates, while creating growth, improved environmental sustainability and social benefits.

Within Queensland, a significant opportunity exists to transition from the lower order outcomes of the waste hierarchy (reduced landfill disposal and energy recovery) to higher order outcomes (maintaining material value through product repairs, sharing solutions and sustainable design) which are more aligned with circular outcomes.

Through the \$5 million Circular Economy Investment Program (the Program), the Department of Environment, Science and Innovation (the department) seeks to inspire a transition within Queensland to create a pathway from waste management to a system-wide approach that decouples economic growth from consumption of raw materials; while targeting waste minimisation and avoidance and retaining resources in circulation at their highest value for as long as possible (Figure 1).

This document sets out the guidelines for applicants to the Program.

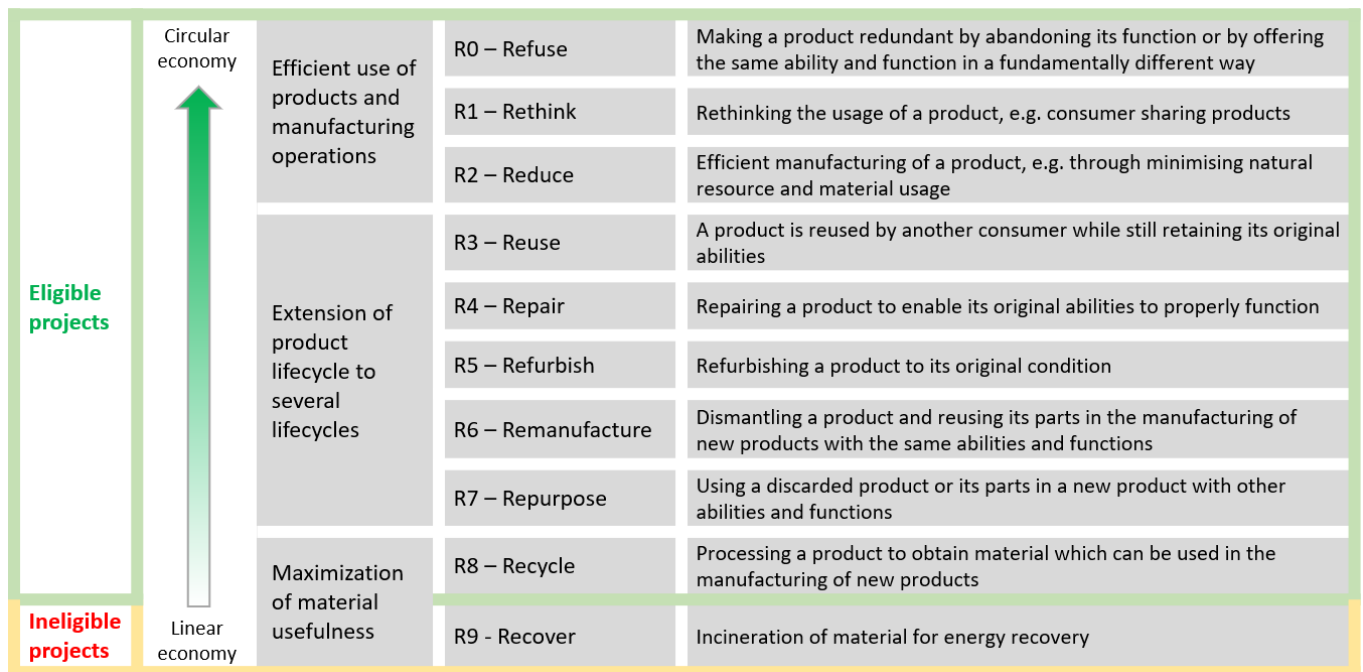


Figure 1: Eligible projects include R0-R8 outcomes (Adapted from Skärin et al.)

2. Circular Economy Investment Program

2.1 Overview

The Program delivers an open, competitive funding package, available for individual businesses, industry clusters and/or cooperative groups, social enterprises, charities, not-for-profit organisations, and multisector partnerships including a mixture of private sector, entrepreneurs, investors, universities and/or non-government organisations.

Funding available:

- between \$250,000 and \$750,000 (excl GST) per grant
- will not exceed 70 percent of the total eligible project costs
- for projects that align with the Program objectives and circular economy principles.

Applications will follow a two-stage process:

- *Stage 1* – An open application process in which applicants provide a summary of their project and demonstrate how their project will meet the Stage 1 assessment criteria (section 8.2). Highest ranked Stage 1 applications will be invited to submit a Stage 2 application.
- *Stage 2* – By invitation, successful Stage 1 applicants will be invited to submit further information to meet the Stage 2 assessment criteria and due diligence assessment (section 8.2). The highest ranked Stage 2 applicants will be offered funding.

2.2 Scope

A successful project will offer large-scale, systems focused CE outcomes for Queensland, offering a substantial increase in capacity to reduce, reuse and/or redesign key material streams and lead to new CE businesses, business outcomes and/or business models, exports and jobs.

2.3 Focus areas

Projects that enable higher order waste hierarchy objectives (R0 to R8 from Figure 1) and align with at least one of the following business models:

Business model	Definition of model	Example project/s
Circular supplies	Solutions that reduce demand for virgin materials.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sustainable products procurement• Solutions offering alternatives to virgin material inputs with renewable or recovered materials• Solutions that cycle waste back through the supply chain
Operational efficiency	Technology or design pathways that improve operational efficiency and reduce wastage in the production of things (excludes recovery activities)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Solutions that increase material, water and energy efficiency through operations• Solutions to collect residual materials for reuse in the design process• Solutions that replace virgin material inputs with renewable or recovered materials and/or increase the return of products for re-use
Sharing platforms	Systems and markets to activate underutilised products and materials to reduce demand for new products and their embedded virgin materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Solutions that enhance collaboration among users to increase the value derived from a product/s• Solutions that optimise the use of existing products rather than creating new products

Extending product life	Extend the lifecycle of things at their highest value for longer and maximise the use of embedded material	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Designing out planned obsolescence • Modular design in construction for disassembly and reassembly at new locations • Replacing single-use items with reusable alternatives
Product service models	Replacement of traditional asset ownership with product service models including lease or rental arrangements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementation of models with increased producer responsibility • Product leasing models • Development of asset management systems that reduce demand for product ownership • Collaborative manufacturing solutions

3. Program objectives

The objectives of the Program are to:

- assist eligible applicants committed to Queensland’s transition toward a CE through projects that introduce new, or transition to, circular business practices/models
- deliver measurable material outcomes with direct linkage to one or more of the [UN Sustainable Development Goals](#)
- deliver outcomes for one or more of the five key focus areas (section 2.3) that reduce consumption of raw virgin materials and maintain products or materials in circulation at their greatest value for the longest possible time
- offer lasting solutions for products or materials that have few or no existing solutions in Queensland due to factors such as regional isolation, being a complex product/material or existing within a limited market.

4. Eligibility

Applications that do not meet the eligibility criteria will not be considered under the Program. To be eligible for assessment, an application must meet the following eligibility requirements for:

- the applicant
- the project
- the project costs.

4.1 Eligible applicants

Applicants are either:

- a standalone entity, or
- an entity representing a collaborative group.

An eligible applicant is:

- a Queensland based entity, operating in Queensland for a minimum 2 years at the application closing date
- either a:
 - registered Australian business (commercial for-profit)
 - industry cluster and/or industry group

- social enterprise
- charity meeting the definition under the *Charities Act 2013 (Cth)* registered with the Australian charities and Not-for-profits Commission
- not-for-profit (NFP) organisation registered under the *Corporations Act 2001*
- representative of a multisector partnership, bringing together a mixture of private sector, entrepreneurs, investors, universities, NGOs or similar
- responsible for completing the project and associated financial, reporting and acquittal requirements
- permitted to submit one application only (either as lead or part of a collaboration)
- not insolvent or does not have owners or directors that are undischarged bankrupt
- not a federal, state or local government entity, statutory authority or special purpose vehicle.

Collaboration

Multi-sector partnerships and collaborative projects help build circularity by unlocking efficiencies, sharing learnings and managing risks. Applicants able to partner with others to support project delivery and maximise impact are encouraged to do so.

An eligible applicant representing a collaborative project must:

- submit the application on behalf of a collaborative group
- clarify with evidence as to the nature of relationships with the group members
- accept responsibility for deliverables and project management under the project
- be the signing party to a funding agreement with the department
- provide relevant information to enable a due diligence process for each group partner.

If the department identifies project proposals with similarities or potential for circular improvements or opportunities through collaboration, these applicants may be offered the opportunity to network and consider expanding their project. The decision to expand a project through these networks is at the discretion of the applicant.

4.2 Eligible projects

To be eligible for funding under the Program, the project must:

- take place wholly within Queensland
- produce outcomes that directly align with the Program objectives
- be completed before 31 December 2026
- demonstrate a shift to increased circularity and higher order outcomes along the waste hierarchy (Figure 1)
- be able to demonstrate benefits within Queensland, with reference to the [UN Sustainable Development Goals](#)
- not be funded through other government programs, and/or funded under this Program through another applicant.

Projects with a potential to deliver large-scale circular economy outcomes with substantial material benefits (e.g. material waste reduction, decarbonisation) and broad economic and social outcomes (e.g. employment, exports, skills development) will be highly regarded.

Projects involving or providing benefit to First Nations communities will be highly regarded.

4.3 Eligible project costs

The following costs are eligible for funding under the Program:

- a) costs of pilot projects, trials and demonstrations intended to inform decisions about wider project implementation.
- b) capital costs for equipment directly linked to the project:
 - o capital works (supported by technical advice)
 - o capital investments such as purchase or lease, installing and commissioning of equipment, infrastructure and other asset/s
 - o developing and launching digital solutions, applications or platforms and capital assets where the equipment is integral to the project
 - o equipment should be integrated with existing systems, processes or workflow, and must not duplicate existing equipment within the operation or its associated entities regardless of location
 - o all items purchased must be owned by the applicant organisation
 - o all registrable plant equipment must be registered and insured in the name of the applicant organisation
- c) costs associated with market access and supply chains directly linked to the project:
 - o contractor or consultancy fees where there is a clearly demonstrated need and the result leads to the program objectives
 - o operational costs associated with capital purchases including transport or technical upskilling
 - o costs associated with a transition to circularity through new products, packaging, partnerships, distribution networks or access to different points in the supply chain
- d) costs for technology and/or system development to improve efficiency and market expansion directly linked to the project:
 - o marketing, advertising, and promotional costs, appropriate to and critical to the project's success
 - o facilitate collaboration and partnership frameworks focussed on circular economy models
 - o development of educational material that shares learnings and can be made publicly available
 - o technology, systems and processes must demonstrate a link to the project's strategic direction, rather than being related to general business operations
- e) costs associated with monitoring and evaluation activities that directly contribute to project outcomes:
 - o developing, delivering or accessing circular economy assessment tools or services to map transition and benefits (e.g. life cycle assessment)
 - o end of project audits to measure transition arising from the project (i.e. material, waste and GHG audits)

Applicants must demonstrate how project funding will be used to contribute to circular economy principles. Where the proposed project involves purchasing or creating products, equipment or infrastructure, applicants must demonstrate proper consideration for sustainable options, including but not limited to lease arrangements, product sharing, second-hand markets, embodied carbon content, recycled content and end of life planning.

4.4 Ineligible project costs

Ineligible project costs include:

- project initiation and planning costs including but not limited to cost benefit analysis, feasibility studies
- legal expenses, statutory fees and charges and/or any costs associated with obtaining regulatory and/or development approvals
- general business costs (business as usual):
 - o employee salaries and on-costs
 - o business administration costs, operational and maintenance costs

- corporate overheads and on-costs
- costs associated with preparing and applying for funding under this program
- any business cost unrelated to the project
- contingency costs
- purchase of land and costs associated with meeting statutory requirements for that purchase e.g. obtaining development approvals or operating licences
- any costs not directly contributing to Queensland's waste reduction targets, including:
 - activities, projects and infrastructure for operations taking place outside Queensland, where there is no direct benefit to Queensland
 - activities that deliver end-of-life strategies including waste processing, disposal or energy recovery
- project management and grant administration costs
- any expense, either purchased or committed to before the project funding agreement commencement date
- financial auditor costs such as third-party accountants providing endorsement on the project's expenditure and costs associated with the development of this grant application
- education, research and training costs not directly related to the project objectives
- movable / portable furnishings supplies and related items, such as portable and attractive items, computers, tables and chairs, and appliances
- any other costs as determined by the department to be ineligible.

Note: The above list identifies common examples of ineligible costs and is not intended to be definitive. If there is any doubt about ineligible projects or costs, please contact the department.

5. Funding

Applicants can apply for a minimum of \$250,000 to a maximum of \$750,000 (excluding GST).

Up to 70 percent of eligible project costs will be funded.

The Program is competitive with no guarantee that applications will be funded or funded in full.

Funding decisions are at the discretion of the Chief Executive of the department. Successful applicants will be required to execute a funding agreement with the department before any funding will be paid or any project activities commence. This funding agreement will outline the terms of funding and detail the milestones to be achieved by the applicant.

The State has no obligation to provide project funding to an applicant until a funding agreement is executed by the applicant and the State. Successful applicants should not make financial commitments until all necessary documents have been finalised and executed.

Applicants should be aware equipment or assets purchased with Program funding must remain in Queensland and be operated by the applicant as set out in their funding agreement for a minimum of five years following the signing of the funding agreement.

Changes to projects after funding agreements have commenced will require the signing of a separate agreement between the department and the applicant to evidence acceptance of those changes.

All unspent grant funds must be returned to the Department at the project's close. The Queensland Government reserves the right to undertake an audit of projects to monitor progress. and/or guide applicants' transition toward circular outcomes.

It is a condition of funding that applicants approve the Queensland Government to use details of the project to promote case studies showcasing the transition to a circular economy.

5.1 Co-contributions

Successful applicants are expected to make a minimum 30 percent co-contribution to the eligible project costs.

Applicants will need to specify the nature and value of financial contributions it or its partners or other participants will be making toward the project.

Funding from other programs administered by the Queensland Government cannot be used to form any part of the 30 percent co-contribution. In addition, this funding is not to be used by the successful applicant as their contribution towards other State or Commonwealth Government funded programs.

5.2 Quotes

To complete the Stage 2 application, two quotes or other documentary evidence must accompany items claimed for funding, if the expenditure exceeds \$5,000 (including contractors, assets and any other items). The quotes will assist the assessment panel to determine the project's value for money. If the applicant is unable to provide at least two quotes, a justifiable explanation must be provided in the application form as to why the quotes have not been provided.

5.3 Goods and Services Tax (GST)

Financial assistance offered in the delivery of this program will be subject to the Australian Taxation Office determination [GSTR 2012/2](#). Activities funded under this program do not involve the supply of goods or services to the Department.

Grant funding provided under this Program is not subject to GST.

Additional funds will not be provided to cover applicants GST obligations associated with their project. Applicants are responsible for their own GST obligations incurred through the delivery of their project.

Applicants not registered for GST should account for any GST costs in their budget as no additional funding will be provided by the department to account for these costs. Registering for GST is free. Non-registered organisations should seek advice from the [Australian Taxation Office](#) on this matter.

Grants may be treated as assessable income for taxation purposes. The State does not provide tax advice to applicants and recommends applicants seek independent professional advice on their tax obligations.

6. The application process

6.1 Key dates

Activity		Indicative date
Guidelines released		25 June 2024
Stage 1	Application portal open	25 June 2024
	Application portal closed	3pm 29 July 2024
	Applicants notified of the outcome and successful applicants invited to submit full application (stage 2)	late August 2024
Stage 2	Application portal open for selected applicants	late August 2024
	Application portal closed	4 weeks after opening date
	Applicants notified of the outcome and successful applicants offered funding	Pending the assessment and approvals process

6.2 How to apply

Applications must be submitted through the [SmartyGrants portal](#). Setting up a SmartyGrants account is free and previous users can use the same account.

Applications must be submitted by the application closing dates for both stage 1 and (if applicable) stage 2. Each applicant can only submit once. By submitting an application, the applicant agrees to abide by all of the terms and conditions as specified in these guidelines.

Late submissions are the responsibility of the applicant and the Chief Executive of the department is under no obligation to consider applications submitted or received after the Program has closed. All decisions made are at the discretion of the Chief Executive of the department and are considered final.

Submission or approval of an application at any stage in the grant application process, is not a guarantee that funding will be provided.

If you experience technical difficulties creating a SmartyGrants account or completing an online form, contact SmartyGrants on (03) 9320 6888. A help guide for applicants is available at: <https://applicanthelp.smartygrants.com.au/help-guide-forapplicants/>.

7. Information and supporting documentation

7.1 Stage 1 applications

A Stage 1 application will require:

- Applicant details:
 - contact details
 - ABN, ACN or registration details for the applicant and each entity within an applicant group
 - physical location
 - validation of existing operations within Queensland for at least 2 years (lead applicant if an applicant group)
 - partners contributing to project delivery
- Project overview:
 - material types / systems / markets and activity identified for circular improvements
 - strategic project goals and objectives
 - project scope, explanation of the partnerships and respective roles, implementation plan and timeframe
 - target recipients and service area/s
 - anticipated project costs in Australian dollars, including both eligible and ineligible project cost items
- Project outcomes:
 - transition pathway, using the waste hierarchy (figure 1) to identify the project start and end points
 - expected environmental, social and economic benefits of the project

The Department will select Stage 1 applications demonstrating a high standard of understanding and commitment to the objectives of the program and a strong linkage to the assessment criteria (section 8) to proceed to Stage 2.

7.2 Stage 2 applications

A Stage 2 application will require:

- Project details:
 - a complete project plan, including strategic objectives, project scope, implementation plan, risk management, and evidence to support the project's expected benefits, including productivity, competitiveness, profitability and value for money
 - options analysis, demonstrating why the chosen project has been selected

- materials, activities or processes available to the applicant, to accelerate the transition toward a circular economy in Queensland
- target recipients and service areas with a focus on the relative size and impact the project will have on Queensland
- disclosure of a suitable environmental, social and governance report or sustainability report by the applicant or applicant group
- impact delivery statement showing how the project addresses one or more of the [United Nations Sustainable Development Goals](#)
- Transition:
 - the current and future positions on the waste hierarchy, detailing a thorough understanding of the applicant's pathway to circular economy principles
 - timeframes required to reach practical completion and produce circular outcomes
 - metrics the applicant will use to measure the transition and project outcomes (e.g. material waste reduction, increased percentage of embedded recycled content, greenhouse gas emissions reduction) as well as broader economic and social outcomes (e.g. employment rates, exports, skills development or other benefits arising from partnerships)
- Financial considerations:
 - a business evaluation (if applicable) and market research in support of the project brief
 - a rationale for the program cost and the proposed co-contribution ratio
 - a detailed project budget including:
 - breakdown of grant funding sought and a description of the items, their function and why they are needed
 - a breakdown of co-contribution funds and a description of the items, their function and why they are needed
 - direct and indirect cost savings and/or other financial improvements expected
 - procedures in place to reduce the risk of fraud
- Employment outcomes
- Project partnerships:
 - suppliers, industry partnerships and other support mechanisms needed to achieve project outcomes and to manage risks or opportunities associated with the transition to a circular economy
 - the level of transparency within the project, including the availability to distribute project design techniques and learnings (case studies) across industries within Queensland
 - any partnerships that form part of the project and the roles each partner will take in the project
- Long-term suitability:
 - operational lifespan of the funded infrastructure, equipment or activity
 - ongoing contributions and support from other organisations
 - the whole-of-life costs for assets and how they will be supported by the organisation after the program ceases
 - projections for long-term behaviour change within industry, the product manufacturer or the end user
- Project governance:
 - details of the project manager responsible for contract management and delivery
 - special permissions, licences, permits or approvals, if required to deliver the project
 - organisational capability used to deliver the project on time and on budget
 - project risks, including potential consequences and mitigation measures

7.3 Supporting documents

The applicant will be required to provide the following supporting evidence as attachments to the application:

Stage 1:

1. Evidence to confirm applicant eligibility (i.e. incorporation under the *Corporations Act 2011* as proof of not-for-profit status).
2. A letter from the organisation's Chief Executive (or equivalent), on company letterhead, authorising the proposed project and confirming any co-contributions.
3. For leases, a letter from the property owner (or representative), authorising the proposed project and

- confirming any co-contributions.
- 4. Evidence to support any co-contributions from third parties.
- 5. Reviewed or audited financial statements (in line with the entities annual reporting requirements) for the previous two years.

Stage 2:

- 6. If the application is an expansion of an existing activity, evidence of current costs.
- 7. Valid quotations (two at a minimum) to support cost estimates for equipment or infrastructure exceeding \$5,000 in value.

7.4 Insurance

Successful applicants will be required to provide the following prior to release of any grant funding:

- 1. Certificate of currency for public liability insurance coverage of at least \$20 million (in total and per event) that is current and remains current for the duration of the project.
- 2. Certificate of currency for workplace health and safety insurance and evidence of adequate insurance coverage for workers and volunteers as required under the *Work Health and Safety Act 2011* (where applicable).
- 3. Other project-specific insurances as required by the department.

8. The assessment process

8.1 Assessment stages

Applications will be assessed according to the following process:

Eligibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All applications will be reviewed to determine eligibility (section 4) and completeness. • Applicants will be contacted if their application is deemed ineligible or incomplete.
Stage 1 assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eligible applications will be assessment against the Program guidelines and the Stage 1 assessment criteria (section 8.2).
Stage 1 notification	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applicants will be notified of their assessment outcome. • Successful applicants will be invited to submit a Stage 2 application • Unsuccessful applicants will be notified in writing.
Stage 2 assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eligible applications will be assessment against the Program guidelines and the Stage 2 assessment criteria (section 8.2).
Moderation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The moderation panel will review the assessment results and recommend projects for approval by the delegate.
Stage 2 – Notification	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Successful and unsuccessful applicants will be notified in writing.

Details including the name of successful applicants, funding allocated, location of the project and a description of the project will be published on the Queensland Government website and may be announced through media including social media.

Successful applicants will be contacted by the Program Manager regarding funding arrangements, grant agreements and other documentation/approvals that may be required (refer to the 'Required documents' section of this guideline).

8.2 Assessment criteria

Applicants progressing through each stage will be assessed based on the following criteria.

Assessment criteria	Stage 1	Stage 2
<p>1. The project aligns with the Program objectives</p> <p>The project will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support Queensland's transition toward CE principles through the introduction of a new, or transitions towards a circular economy business practice, model or product Deliver measurable circular economy outcomes with direct linkages to one or more of the UN Sustainable Development Goals. Deliver outcomes in at least one of the Program's five key focus areas (section 2.3) to reduce consumption of virgin materials and maintain products at their greatest value for the longest possible time Offer lasting solutions for products or materials that have few or no existing solutions in Queensland due to factors such as regional isolation, being a complex product/material or existing within a limited market. 	<p>Weighting: 40%</p> <p>The stage 1 application must demonstrate a strong alignment to the criterion</p>	<p>Weighting: 30%</p> <p>The stage 2 application must include a thorough, evidence-based proposal for each criterion.</p>
<p>2. The project is well considered, proportionate to the current scale of operations, is realistic and will be delivered to a high standard with direct and indirect benefits for Queensland</p> <p>The project will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demonstrate a significant contribution to Queensland's transition to a circular economy Raise the profile of circular economy principles in Queensland Produce long-term sustainability outcomes and demonstrate the potential for scalability Offer regional benefits Offer employment and skills development benefits. 	<p>Weighting: 30%</p> <p>The stage 1 application must demonstrate alignment to the criterion</p>	<p>Weighting: 30%</p> <p>The stage 2 application must demonstrate a strong alignment to the criterion, supported by evidence</p>
<p>3. The applicant/s demonstrates a strong commitment to a transition to circular economy principles</p> <p>The applicant will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demonstrate the pathway strategies by which the project will progress the entity towards more circular outcomes Demonstrate a good understanding of, and the alignment of the project to, circular economy principles and business models Demonstrate the organisational capacity and capability required to deliver the project to a high standard, including project management, resourcing, knowledge, financial contributions and previous experience. 	<p>Weighting: 20%</p> <p>The stage 1 application must demonstrate a strong alignment to the criterion</p>	<p>N/A</p>
<p>4. Well considered project governance</p> <p>The applicant will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demonstrate the organisational capacity and capability required to deliver the project to a high standard, including project management, resourcing, knowledge, financial contributions and previous experience Clearly articulate the project activities, milestones and key performance indicators Identify and give appropriate consideration to project risks and mitigation measures Demonstrate an ability to collect data, and use these data to monitor and evaluate the project, including benefits and outcomes Where relevant, establish beneficial partnership arrangements to deliver the project 	<p>N/A</p>	<p>Weighting: 20%</p> <p>The stage 2 application must demonstrate a strong alignment to the criterion, supported by relevant details and evidence</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The project represents value for money for the Queensland Government 	<p>Weighting: 10%</p>	<p>Weighting: 20%</p>

<p>The application will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide evidence to support the scale of the project and demonstrate the activities are proportional to the funding sought. • Include a well considered project budget which clearly demonstrates an understanding of investment strategies, costs and ability to manage ongoing asset responsibilities • Demonstrate how the project delivers value for money and will provide a compelling case for the allocation of funding • Clearly identify project co-contributions from the applicant and/or third party partners 	<p>The stage 1 application must demonstrate alignment to the criterion</p>	<p>The stage 2 application must demonstrate a strong alignment to the criterion, supported by relevant details and evidence</p>
	<p>100%</p>	<p>100%</p>

**The Chief Executive reserves the right to consider a range of factors when prioritising projects for funding.*

8.3 Due diligence checks

The department will undertake a due diligence and probity review on the applicant (and partner entities) including, but not limited to, the following:

- applicant bona fide checks (status, corporate structure, ownership, directors review etc.).
- relationships with collaborative partners involved in the project.
- background and probity searches (financial, adverse Media, Compliance, Environmental and Safety).
- financial capability (historical financials) and viability (funding capacity and sources).
- business and project risks, and planned mitigations.
- conflicts of interest.

The outcome of the Department's due diligence review may impact on the Department's assessment of the application, that is, if deemed not to satisfy due diligence and financial probity, the application may be deemed ineligible for a grant and the Department may elect to not progress the application further.

9. Program monitoring, acquittal and evaluation

All projects will be monitored by the department to ensure that the Program is achieving its aim and objectives.

Successful applicants must comply with the reporting, records and audit obligations in the Project Funding Agreement.

All projects will be evaluated by the department to ensure that the Program achieved its aim and objectives.

10. Acknowledgement of funding

10.1 Acknowledgement requirements

The Queensland Government must be acknowledged in any promotional activity or items where funding has been received under the Circular Economy Investment Program.

The funding agreement between the funding recipient and the department will provide the detailed acknowledgement of funding requirements specific to the funded activity/ies.

Full details of the funding acknowledgement requirements, including where and how funding is to be acknowledged is available here:

<https://www.qld.gov.au/environment/management/funding/funding-acknowledgment-requirements>

10.2 Approval

Acknowledgment of the Queensland Government funding must be approved for paid advertising, printed materials and external signage (including vehicle signage). This must be submitted to the department for approval at least 10 business days prior to release, printing, publishing or production.

Approval of other items is not required however evidence of the use of the correct acknowledgement must be supplied as part of the funding milestone reporting requirements.

For more information or if you have questions regarding these acknowledgement requirements, please contact your relevant departmental contact.

Further information on acknowledgement requirements is included in the Grant Agreement.

11. Communication

11.1 Confidentiality obligations

Confidentiality obligations are specified in the funding agreement/instrument. There are restrictions on making press, release or other announcements relating to the project without the department's approval. Approval will not usually be given to announce or release the project by the recipient prior to any government announcement.

As far as practicable, all media and communications will be undertaken jointly with successful applicants.

Recipients must seek and obtain the department's approval before contacting the media to discuss any information regarding successful or unsuccessful applications for funding support. Funding decisions and assessment outcomes are considered confidential until announced by the Queensland Government.

11.2 Confidentiality, privacy and use of information

The department is collecting personal information within applications for funding. All personal information provided as part of the application, will be routinely used to assess your application.

During the application, assessment and approval process, an applicant must keep confidential its application/s and its dealings with the Queensland Government about its application/s but may make disclosures if required by law or to its representatives or advisors who are under an obligation of confidentiality.

An applicant must also keep confidential any information designated by the Queensland Government as confidential.

The Queensland Government may disclose information, including confidential information, of or provided by an applicant:

- (a) to its representatives and advisors for any purpose
- (b) to any government agency or authority and its representatives and advisors, including for the purpose of assessing and verifying such information
- (c) to comply with or meet applicable standards of accountability of public money or established government policies, procedures or protocols or
- (d) if required to be disclosed by law.

The Queensland Government intends to publicly disclose the names of applicants, information about projects, the amount of funding granted to each successful applicant and details about the anticipated economic outcomes and benefits of successful projects.

Any personal information submitted as part of an application will not be used by the Queensland Government or disclosed to any third party for a purpose other than in connection with the assessment of the application without an applicant's consent, unless required by law or in accordance with the *Information Privacy Act 2009*.

For audit purposes, the Queensland Government is required to retain applications and other supplied supporting material. Successful applications will be retained for seven years and unsuccessful applications retained for two years.

The provisions of the *Right to Information Act 2009* apply to documents in the possession of the Queensland Government.

11.3 Complaints and appeals

Ineligible applicants may appeal the decision. The applicant must appeal the decision within seven calendar days of receiving notice of the decision regarding the application's eligibility.

Applicants seeking feedback or lodging an appeal with the department for any decisions made relating to their grant application may do so by emailing:

Program Manager

Office of Circular Economy

Email: CEPrograms@des.qld.gov.au

Complaints can also be made via the department's website at: www.des.qld.gov.au/contactus/feedback-form-complaint.

12. Enquiries and contact details

For general program enquiries please contact the department's Circular Economy Programs Office at CEPrograms@des.qld.gov.au. Please note, the department is not able to assist in the preparation of applications.

13. Terms and conditions

1. Reservation of rights

- a. Despite any provision of these guidelines to the contrary, the State reserves the right to administer the Program and conduct the process for the assessment and approval of applications to the Program in such manner as it thinks fit, in its absolute discretion.
- b. Without limiting paragraph (a), the State retains all rights and powers to make all decisions and actions in order to achieve the program objectives and the State reserves the right, in its absolute discretion and at any time, to:
 - i. change the structure, procedures, nature, scope or timing of, or alter the terms of participation in the process or overall Program (including submission and compliance of applications), where in such circumstances notice will be provided to applicants
 - ii. consider or accept, or refuse to consider or accept, any application which is lodged other than in accordance with these guidelines or is lodged after the relevant date for lodgement, or which does not contain the information required by these guidelines or is otherwise non-conforming in any respect
 - iii. vary or amend the eligibility or assessment criteria
 - iv. take into account any information from its own and other sources (including other government agencies and other advisors)
 - v. accept or reject any application, having regard to these guidelines, the eligibility criteria, the assessment criteria or any other item, matter or thing which the State considers relevant, including the limitations on the funds available for the Program
 - vi. give preference by allocating weighting to any one or more of the eligibility criteria or assessment criteria over other criteria
 - vii. conduct due diligence investigations in respect of any applicant and subject applications to due diligence, technical, financial and economic appraisals
 - viii. require an applicant to clarify or substantiate any claims, assumptions or commitment contained in an application or provide any additional information
 - ix. terminate the further participation of any applicant in the application process
 - x. terminate or reinstate the Program or any process in the Program
 - xi. not proceed with the Program in the manner outlined in these guidelines, or at all
 - xii. amend the nature, scope or timing of the Program
 - xiii. allow the withdrawal of an applicant
 - xiv. seek presentations from or interviews with any applicant and conduct negotiations with any one or more applicants after the applications have been lodged
 - xv. publish the names of applicants to the Program, and
 - xvi. take such other action as it considers in its absolute discretion appropriate in relation to the Program processes.

- c. Where, under these guidelines, it is stated that the State may exercise a right or discretion or perform any act or omit to perform any act, then unless stated otherwise the State may do so at its sole and absolute discretion and will not be required to act, or be restrained from acting, in any way or for any reason nor to take into account the interests of any third party (including an applicant).

2. No relationship

- a. The State's obligations in connection with the application process are limited to those expressly stated in these guidelines.
- b. No contractual or legal relationship exists between the State and an applicant in connection with the Program, these guidelines or the application process or any stage of the Program.
- c. An applicant, or its representatives:
 - i. has no authority or power, and must not purport to have the authority or power to bind the State, or make representations on behalf of the State
 - ii. must not hold itself out or engage in any conduct or make any representation which may suggest to any person that the applicant is for any purpose an employee, agent, partner or joint venturer with the State, and
 - iii. must not represent to any person that the State is a party to the proposed project other than as a potential funder, subject to the application process detailed in these guidelines.

3. No action

- a. To the extent permitted by law, no applicant will have any claim of any kind whatsoever against the State (whether in contract, tort (including negligence), equity, under statute or otherwise) arising from or in connection with:
 - i. any costs, expenses, losses or liabilities suffered or incurred by the applicant in preparing and submitting its application (including any amendments, requests for further information by the State, attendance at meetings or involvement in discussions) or otherwise in connection with the Program;
 - ii. the State at any time exercising or failing to exercise, in its absolute discretion, any rights it has under or in connection with the Program, or
 - iii. any of the matters or things relevant to its application or the Program in respect of which the applicant must satisfy itself under these guidelines.
- b. Without limiting paragraph (a), if the State cancels or varies the Program at any time or does not select any applicant following its assessment of the applications, or does (or fails to do) any other thing referred to under clause 1 (Reservation of Rights) of these guidelines, no applicant will have any claim against the State arising from or in connection with any costs, expenses, losses or liabilities incurred by the applicant in preparing and submitting its application or otherwise in connection with or in relation to (whether directly or indirectly) the Program.
- c. For the avoidance of doubt, each applicant:
 - i. participates in the Program at its own risk, and
 - ii. is wholly responsible for its costs of applying for, participating in, or otherwise in connection with, the Program.

4. Non-exhaustive

- a. These guidelines do not contain all of the information that applicants may require in reaching decisions in relation to whether or not to submit an application. Applicants must form their own views as to what information is relevant to such decisions.
- b. Applicants must make their own independent investigations of the information contained or referred to in these guidelines. Applicants must obtain their own independent legal, financial, tax and other advice in relation to information in these guidelines, or otherwise made available to them, during the application process.

5. Disclaimer

- a. The State makes no warranty or representation express or implied, and does not assume any duty of care to the applicants that the information in these guidelines, or supplied in connection with the Program (information) is accurate, adequate, current, suitable or complete, or that the Information has been independently verified.
- b. The State accepts no responsibility whether arising from negligence or otherwise (except a liability that cannot lawfully be excluded) for any reliance placed upon the information or interpretations placed on the Information by applicants.

6. Intellectual property

- a. Any intellectual property rights that may exist in an application will remain the property of an applicant or the rightful owner of those intellectual property rights. Any part of an application considered to contain

intellectual property rights should be clearly identified by an applicant.

- b. The applicant grants to the State (and will ensure relevant third parties grant) a nonexclusive, royalty free and irrevocable licence to use and reproduce the intellectual property for the purpose of administering the Program.

7. Law

- a. These guidelines are governed by the laws applicable in Queensland.

14. References

Skärin, F.; Rösiö, C.; Andersen, A.-L. An Explorative Study of Circularity Practices in Swedish Manufacturing Companies. Sustainability 2022, 14, 7246. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su14127246>

Ellen Macarthur Foundation. *Circular economy systems diagram* (February 2019) www.ellenmacarthurfoundation.org

15. Definitions

These definitions ensure consistent meanings for key terms while the Program operates. Do not rely on these definitions as an agreed version or meaning for any other work undertaken by the Queensland Government.

Linear economy: Typically extract natural resources in the “production of things” either in the manufacturing, delivery, use or disposal phase of the thing. These resource inputs and the products made from them, are generally not used to their full potential in what is commonly called a “take-make-waste” model.

Circular economy: Through the *Waste Reduction and Recycling Act 2011*, Queensland recognises there are finite natural resources available in the “production of things”.

To avoid waste and minimise the impact of waste on the environment and human health, all materials and products should be kept in the economy for as long as possible and at their highest possible value.

A circular economy in Queensland operates across two systems (ref: Figure 2). The **biological** where activities focus on renewable materials and nutrient capture for regenerative outcomes, and the **technical** where activities focus on retaining, reusing and repairing products and materials in use for longer.

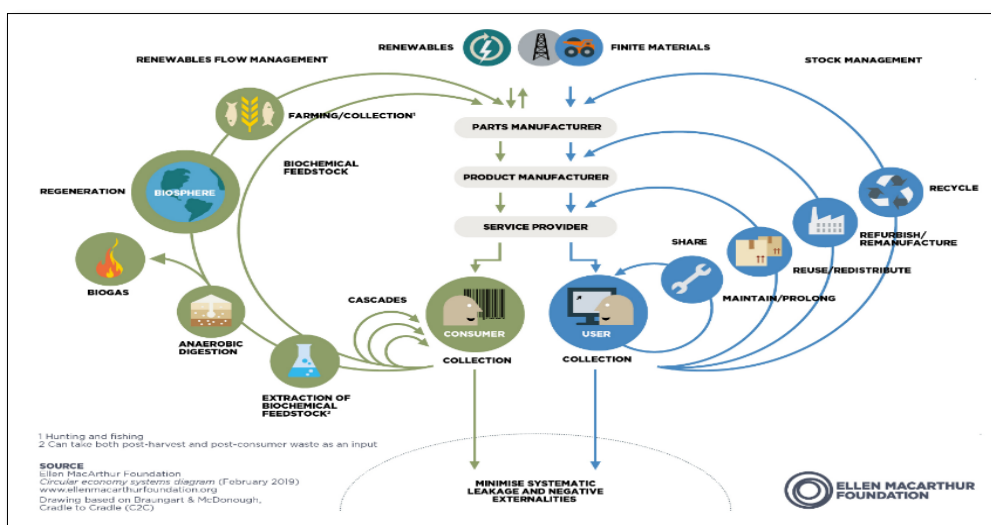


Figure 2: The butterfly diagram: visualising the circular economy (Ellen Macarthur Foundation)