

NSW Bushfire Mission

Bushfire Commercialisation Fund

Guidelines for Applicants

Round 1

JULY 2022

- 1.0 Background**
- 1.1 The [NSW Bushfire Response Research & Development \(R&D\) Mission \(the Mission\)](#) is the first NSW R&D Mission recommended by the Turning ideas into jobs: Accelerating research & development in NSW Action Plan (the Action Plan).
 - 1.2 The Action Plan recommends that the Mission should focus on improving planning, preparations for and responses to bushfires – aligning with recommendation five of the [NSW Bushfire Inquiry](#).
 - 1.3 The Bushfire Commercialisation fund (BCF) is an annual competitive technology development and commercialisation program funded by the NSW Government through the Mission, administered by NSW Department of Enterprise, Investment and Trade (NSW DEIT) through the Office of the NSW Chief Scientist & Engineer (OCSE). The NSW Government recognises the importance of capturing potential commercial applications of bushfire related technology in NSW.
- 2.0 Program purpose**
- 2.1 The aim of the BCF is to accelerate the development, commercialisation and adoption of bushfire technologies and services in NSW.
 - 2.2 The objective of the BCF is to enable businesses to progress bushfire technology along the commercialisation pathway or adapt existing technology for use in bushfire management or operations, through the provision of competitive grant funding.
 - 2.3 The BCF targets innovative devices/systems within Technology Readiness Level (TRL) 3 – 7 to help them move along the TRL scale and enable them to attract large-scale private investment. The TRL scale is at **Attachment A**.
- 3.0 Minderoo Foundation**
- 3.1 The Minderoo Foundation is a modern, philanthropic organisation that tackles tough, persistent issues with the aim of driving systemic change.
 - 3.2 Minderoo established the Fire and Flood Resilience Initiative (**the Initiative**) in response to the 2019/20 Bushfires. More information on the Initiative and priorities are outlined [here](#).
 - 3.3 There are strong strategic alignments between the Initiative and the Mission.
 - 3.4 NSW DEIT has signed a letter of intent with Minderoo to explore opportunities for co-investment into third-party projects that align with both parties' strategic objectives.
 - 3.5 NSW DEIT has entered an observership agreement with Minderoo. The observership agreement is aligned with the objectives and intent of the Initiative and the Mission. Minderoo will act as observers during the BCF assessment process. For consenting applicants and only after the BCF assessment process has concluded, Minderoo will be granted full access to all BCF applications only for the purpose of allowing Minderoo to decide on funding to those applicants independent of the BCF funding. Any offer of funding directly from Minderoo is separate to NSW DEIT funding through the BCF.
 - 3.6 Minderoo will undertake its own internal review (separate to the BCF assessment process) and may contact applicants directly if they wish to discuss potential funding directly from Minderoo. Minderoo will only conduct its internal review and contact applicants after the BCF assessment process has been completed.

3.7 Controls will be implemented with the purpose of ensuring that any review or outcomes by Minderoo will not have any bearing or consideration on the BCF assessment process and/or recommendations on BCF projects recommended for funding by NSW Government and will adhere to probity principles and controls to ensure funding offered through the BCF and any funding offered by Minderoo are mutually exclusive and both processes remain independent.

4.0 Impacts of COVID-19 and Natural Disasters

- 4.1 NSW DEIT is committed to responsible management of COVID-19 and Natural Disasters.
- 4.2 The project team must comply with any current government directives as outlined by [NSW Health](#) COVID-19 or where a NSW Natural Disaster Declaration is issued.

5.0 BCF Funding

- 5.1 BCF funding will be awarded to applications based on merit-based assessment and will depend on the overall quality and quantity of applications received.
- 5.2 Funding will be in the range of \$200,000 to \$8 million over a period of one to three years. The funding will be distributed in a single payment to each successful applicant.
- 5.3 Funding will take the form of a cash contribution following the execution of a funding agreement between the applicant and NSW DEIT.
- 5.4 Funds can be expended on any aspect of the project occurring in NSW outlined in the project budget.
- 5.5 The amount of funds delivered to each of the successful applicants will be determined at the discretion of the external independent expert panel (BCF Expert Panel).
- 5.6 NSW DEIT requires repayment of the grant if the project achieves a specified level of economic success. The specific terms of this repayment such as time and other factors will be agreed to as part of the funding agreement.
- 5.7 Refer to [website](#) for an up to date timeline of anticipated date of funds being released.

6.0 Principles

- 6.1 The following principles apply to the BCF:
- the applicant must demonstrate:
 - how the device/system will attempt to solve a problem related to bushfire prevention, preparation, mitigation, or recovery
 - significant potential economic, environmental, and social benefits to NSW
 - an existing prototype/proof-of-concept
 - a clear path to commercialisation.
- 6.2 Funding may be prioritised if there is a clear contribution to NSW

Government priorities in line with the Mission.

6.3 Funding can be used for:

- prototyping and piloting studies
- manufacturing
- conducting market and product assessments
- salaries and access to external expertise that is directly related to delivery of the project
 - commercialisation strategies and commercial feasibility studies
 - specialist equipment and/or infrastructure necessary to progress the project
 - intellectual property protection or advice.

6.4 The BCF will not support activities that are deemed to be in the very early stages of project development (e.g. TRL 1-2) (**Attachment A**).

6.5 The BCF Expert Panel have flexibility to tailor funding support according to what it believes is required to assist the development and commercialisation of a device or system. This could include a smaller amount of seed-funding for highly competitive applicants who successfully demonstrate their commercialisation strategy to the BCF Expert Panel.

6.6 The BCF Expert Panel may not support projects where it deems that funding from the BCF is not necessary to commercialise the technology. For example, where the applicant or project has already raised substantial funds.

7.0 Eligibility criteria

7.1 To be eligible for the BCF, you must be:

- a financially viable commercial enterprise based in NSW (e.g. location of manufacturing jobs, headquarters based in NSW, NSW investment); have an Australian Business Number (ABN); and be an Australian-registered company; or
- an individual who agrees to form such an entity with which NSW DEIT can enter into a legally binding funding agreement; or
- a NSW public research organisation applying through its appropriate technology transfer office or the Chief Executive Officer (or equivalent) of the research organisation that will become a separate entity before entering into a legally binding funding agreement with NSW DEIT.
- Have an Australian Business Number (ABN)
- Be headquartered in NSW and demonstrate that most of the project activities will take place in NSW.
- Demonstrate that the technology has reached a minimum of TRL of three and does not exceed TRL seven (**Attachment A**).
- Hold the Intellectual Property or the rights to commercialise the device/system.
- Demonstrate that any funding from the [NSW Physical Sciences Fund \(PSF\)](#) does not duplicate activities in the BCF application and is unique to commercialise bushfire-related technology.

8.0 Joint applications

- 8.1 Joint applications between a business entity and research-based organisations (including universities) are encouraged. However, the business entity must lead the project and submit the grant application.
- 8.2 The lead application (the business entity) must outline clearly in their application who the project partners are and how each partner will contribute to achieving the objectives of the project proposal.

9.0 Selection criteria

Applications will be evaluated against information and evidence provided in relation to the following selection criteria:

1. sound scientific/technological basis and application to bushfire management or operations
2. understanding of the problem the device/system is trying to solve and why a customer would adopt this device/system
3. innovation and competitive advantage
4. anticipated economic, social and/or environmental benefits for bushfire preparation, mitigation, response and/or recovery in NSW
5. sound project development
6. demonstrated technology that has reached a minimum TRL of three and not exceed TRL seven.¹ (**Attachment A**)
7. understanding of customers and target market
8. demonstrated financial need to commercialise product
9. financial viability
10. capabilities to commercialise the device / system and realise benefits

10.0 Application process

Step 1: Preliminary applications

- Applicants will complete a preliminary application form and must submit a 2-minute video clearly explaining the problem it is intended to solve, the scientific and technological basis for the device/system (including imagery of the device/system), how it works and how it would be applied to bushfire management and operation, the intended outcome/benefit to the community, and how the funding will be used to drive commercialisation.
- OCSE will assess all preliminary applications received by the closing date and time against the eligibility criteria (Section 7).

Only eligible applications will be assessed by the BCF Subcommittee representing technical and commercial experts against the selection

¹ Applicants with technology that has achieved a TRL of 6 should strongly consider applying for the Bushfire Technology Pilots Program (BTTP). The BTTP aims to pilot field-ready technology with NSW bushfire management and response agencies.

criteria. Resilience NSW will represent NSW bushfire agencies on the subcommittee to provide subject matter expertise as required.

Applicants who can demonstrate that they meet all the criterion, will be shortlisted, and invited for an interview.

Step 2: Interview of shortlisted applicants

- Shortlisted applicants will present to the Expert Panel, followed by questions from the Expert Panel.

Step 3: Final applications

Following the interview stage, the Expert Panel will shortlist applicants and invite them to submit more detailed financial information and answer additional questions identified by the Expert Panel.

Step 4: Final assessment and recommendations for funding

The expert panel assess final information provided by the applicants and make funding recommendations

- 10.1 All questions in the application form must be answered. If they are not applicable, please indicate.
- 10.2 Preliminary applications must be submitted via SmartyGrants by **5pm 12 September 2022.**
- 10.3 No late applications will be accepted.
- 10.4 The application must be certified (using the form provided) by at least one of the core participants (i.e. by the head of the organisation or their authorised delegate).
- 10.5 All applicants will be informed of the outcome of the BCF Expert Panel's decision regarding their applications. All applicants will have the opportunity to seek specific feedback on their application only.
- 10.6 All information provided to NSW DEIT will be collected and stored in accordance with *Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998 (NSW)*
- 10.7 Information provided by applicants will be kept confidential and disclosed only as required by law, for the purposes of grant assessment or as permitted by an applicant. Successful projects will be publicly promoted by NSW DEIT as agreed with the relevant applicants.
- 10.8 NSW DEIT will engage:
 - an independent probity advisor to oversee the process
 - a commercial and financial advisor to assess shortlisted applications and monitor the commercial success of BCF grantees.

Looking for assistance in applying?

At NSW DEIT, we are committed to diversity, equity, and inclusion. We encourage people with disability to apply. If you have disability and require

more information on adjustments and assistance to apply, please contact us at [link](#) contact email. Assistance in completing this application can be found at [Communities and Justice](#), [People with disability Australia](#) or [legal aide](#).

If you are an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander check out [Aboriginal Affairs](#) or your country's [Aboriginal Corporation](#) to get assistance in the preparations of applications and grant program processes.

11.0 Assessment process

The assessment of BCF applications is a staged process:

Eligibility screening by OCSE Secretariat

Only applications which meet all eligibility criteria as outlined in section 7 will progress to the next phase.

Assessment and shortlisting by the BCF Subcommittee

Eligible preliminary applications will be assessed against the selection criteria outlined above in Section 9. Only applications that demonstrate they meet all the criteria will progress to the next stage.

Interviews of shortlisted applicants by the Expert Panel

Shortlisted applicants will be invited to make a short presentation followed by questions from the Expert Panel. The Expert Panel will evaluate applicants interviewed and shortlisted applicants will progress to the final stage.

Final assessment and recommendations for funding by Expert Panel

Applicants complete a final application form comprising of more detailed financial information, and additional questions. The Expert Panel conducts a final assessment based on all criterion and determine which applications will be recommended for grant funding.

NSW DEIT will notify unsuccessful applicants at the end of each assessment stage after endorsement has been received and recorded from the required delegate.

NSW DEIT, at its discretion, may choose not to award or recommend funding under this program.

12.0 Funding agreements & reporting

12.1 All applicants who are successful under the BCF and who accept the offer of a grant will be required to enter into a funding agreement with NSW DEIT. The funding agreement will specify obligations that relate primarily to the recipient's accountability for the grant, grant activities, the return of unspent grant funds, and reporting on the use of the grant for the duration of the terms.

Successful applicants will be required to meet annually with the NSW DEIT to discuss the progress of the project.

13.0 Timeline

13.1 The timetable for the process is:

19 July 2022	Preliminary applications open
12 September 2022	Preliminary applications close
November 2022	Shortlisted applicants present to the BCF Expert Panel
December 2022	Final applications requested
February 2023	Final applications close
March 2023	Successful applicants announced

Please note dates are subject to change.

Attachment A

TRL	TRL description	Evidence of achievement
1	Basic principles observed and reported	Published research that identifies the principles that underlie this technology
2	Technical Device/System concept formulated	Practical applications (e.g., devices) of the basic principles of the invention
3	Technical proof of concept demonstration	The basic performance of the invention is demonstrated in a laboratory setting
4	Alpha prototype: Component and/or process validation in laboratory environment	Design, development and lab testing of components/processes. Results provide evidence that performance targets may be attainable based on projected or modelled systems
5	Laboratory-scale (or similar) system validation in relevant environment	Basic technological components and/or process validation is achieved in a relevant environment
6	Beta prototype: System/sub-system model or prototype demonstration in operational environment	Engineering-scale models or prototypes are tested in relevant environment
7	System prototype demonstration in operational environment	Actual system prototype demonstrated in an operational environment
8	Actual system completed and qualified through test and demonstration	Actual system/process completed and qualified through test and demonstration (pre-commercial demonstration)
9	System proven and ready for commercial deployment	The technology is in its final form and proven through successful operations in operating environment, and ready for full commercial deployment