

New Frontiers Exploration Program

Guidelines for funding applications

Purpose

This document provides guidance to explorers to lodge an Invitation to Apply (application form) for funding under the New Frontiers Exploration Program.

Applications are encouraged from a wide range of active NSW exploration companies holding an appropriate title in NSW. You must be a legal entity to be eligible for funding and have suitable land access arrangements in place.

Background

The New Frontiers Exploration Program, managed by the Department of Regional NSW, is part of a NSW Government initiative to drive mining investment in NSW. The program is intended to support the long-term sustainability of the NSW resources sector by encouraging mineral exploration and discovery:

- particularly in greenfield areas in the state
- that will test new geological ideas and models, and/or in regions with significant cover, and/or targets critical minerals
- that will create stronger relationships between government and industry.

The program will provide funds to successful applicants for exploration drilling and geophysical programs (Group 1, 6 and 10 minerals under the *Mining Act 1992* only) which demonstrate strong prospectivity, sound financial planning and a proven technical base.

The application

Applications must be completed via the application form, which requires details of the applicant, the project plan, and completion of the technical assessment criteria.

Where an application has not been submitted using the application form, the department reserves the right to deem the application as non-conforming and set it aside from further consideration at its absolute discretion.

Applicants may make multiple applications for funding through the program, based on different projects in their exploration programs. Prospects within the same exploration licence or that are clearly for the same target may be considered as single projects and will be considered as one project for grant purposes.

Timetable for applications and assessment

2 September 2022	Applications open
31 October 2022	Applications close
30 April 2023	Notification and announcement of successful applicants

Funding

The NSW Government will allocate \$1.5 million in round 5 of the New Frontiers Exploration Program. The program provides co-funding of 50 per cent of total drilling program costs and/or exploration geophysics costs.

Maximum funds available to any individual applicant is \$100,000 for drilling programs and \$50,000 for geophysical acquisition. The maximum amount available to any single applicant is \$150,000.

If applying for multiple projects, applicants must submit separate applications and include only one type of activity (drilling or geophysics) per application.

Claimable activity

Funding is only claimable for all direct costs of drilling and/or geophysical survey costs as charged by the contractor and described in the relevant invoices. The work must be directly related to the target described in the application.

If the program in the application form has been completed before application, funds may not be claimed. If a program has commenced but not completed before announcement, grants can be claimed.

The Department recognises that exploration is a dynamic and iterative process, so variations to drill hole collar locations, orientations and target depths, or geophysical parameters may be permitted, subject to written approval from the Department.

To claim, the Department must be invoiced after compulsory reporting is submitted to the department and the project work has been completed and payments made to contractors. The applicant must invoice the Department and provide evidence of payment of costs for cross-referencing before grant payments will be made.

Project cost claims from successful applicants must be GST exclusive.

Payments to the successful applicants will be made only after work is completed and compulsory reporting is submitted to the Department, as described in the funding deed. Successful applicants must submit a correctly rendered invoice to the Department, which will be paid on 30-day terms.

The assessment panel

Applications will be assessed by a panel comprising:

- three departmental representatives
- a minimum of two independent geoscientists appointed through an open expression of interest process
- a secretariat (the project manager).

Final approval of applicants recommended by the panel will be made by the Departmental financial delegate as outlined in Section 12 of the *Public Finance and Audit Act 1983*. The assessment process will be overseen by an independent probity advisor. Panel members will exclude themselves from assessment of any applications which create a conflict of interest, either actual or perceived.

The assessment

Minimum requirements are specified in sections 2 to 5 of the application form.

Technical assessment will be carried out using a weighted assessment schedule using the technical assessment criteria in section 6 of the application form.

Each of the criteria has a different weighting (stated as a percentage). Each criterion will be scored out of 10. The score given for each criterion will be multiplied by the weighting and ranked.

Applicants must address each criteria specifically. All decisions made by the department (after recommendations from the assessment panel) will be final.

The technical assessment criteria are:

Assessment criteria	Weighting
a) Describe how your proposed program tests sound geological models and innovative concepts and ideas.	30%
b) Describe how your proposed program advances exploration in previously under-explored areas and/or targets critical minerals. For example, does the program test an area previously untested, undrilled, under-drilled or where previous work was ineffective?	35%
c) Describe the work you have already undertaken to define the exploration targets.	25%
d) Provide details of the proposed work program and the anticipated information that will be acquired as part of the exploration program (e.g. element suite to be assayed, downhole geophysical methods and modelling, petrology, geochronology, isotopic analysis, etc).	10%

Successful applicants

Successful applicants will be informed by email and must sign a funding deed with the Department. All funding deeds must be completed within 8 weeks of receipt, otherwise the funds may be offered to other projects.

Quarterly project logistical reporting is described in the funding deed, and a template included. Reporting requirements in the funding deed must be completed before grant funds will be paid.

Selected details of the successful applicant's projects (including the prospect location and description, company name and the amount of funding awarded) may be published on the Department's website as part of legislative reporting obligations. Prior to publication, the Department will consult applicants about information that may be confidential.

Reporting to the Australian Stock Exchange by successful applicants in relation to any New Frontiers Exploration Program project must be first reviewed by the NSW Geological Survey project manager via cooperative.drilling@regional.nsw.gov.au

The NSW Government requires you to have full, appropriate insurance cover, as described in the application form, before commencing your drilling or geophysical project.

Checklist for applicants

Item	Completed
Completed the application form	<input type="checkbox"/>
Attached organisation type information if required	<input type="checkbox"/>
Attached map and project information (if not included on application)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Attached public liability insurance (\$10M), workers compensation (as required by the law of each relevant state and territory) and comprehensive motor vehicle certificates	<input type="checkbox"/>
Declaration signed on the application form	<input type="checkbox"/>

Fees

There are no fees for the submission or assessment of the application.

How to submit your application form

Completed grant application forms must be received before **17:00 AEST on 31 October 2022**.

Applications or registrations received after the grant closing date and time will be deemed to be a late application. The department reserves the right to accept a late application where it is satisfied that its acceptance will not compromise the integrity and competitiveness of the process.

Email: cooperative.drilling@regional.nsw.gov.au

Acknowledgement of receipt of applications will be made by email.

More information

Contact: Malcolm Drummond or Michael Hallett, Mining Exploration and Geoscience

Email: cooperative.drilling@regional.nsw.gov.au

Phone: +61 2 4063 6702, +61 2 4063 6718

© State of New South Wales through Regional NSW 2022. The information contained in this publication is based on knowledge and understanding at the time of writing August 2022. However, because of advances in knowledge, users are reminded of the need to ensure that the information upon which they rely is up to date and to check the currency of the information with the appropriate officer of the Regional NSW or the user's independent adviser.