

Circular Challenge Funding Scheme

FUNDING GUIDELINES

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1. NSW CIRCULAR CHALLENGE FUNDING SCHEME OVERVIEW

The 2021-22 NSW Circular Challenge fund of \$600K will be used to support one or more collaborative iconic projects (The Project), that address critical circular economy problems related to the delivery of circularity in, and scaling of, critical supply chains.

While applications relevant to any supply chain are welcome, there is a particular focus on the work of NSW Circular and its five Circular Supply Chain Alliances in Hospital Plastics, Solar Panels, Textiles, Organics and e-Waste.

The Project should have the potential to leverage State and Federal Government funding schemes and have strong end-user engagement and investment.

The Project will be led by NSW researchers, in partnership with industry, business, and government and will be selected from proposals that:

1. deliver solutions with the potential to be scaled across NSW and may involve technical and non-technical research dimensions.
2. are aligned with key NSW Government priorities in key policy documents relevant to the circular economy:
 - a. NSW Waste and Sustainable Materials Strategy 2041
 - b. Circular Economy Strategy
 - c. NSW Plastics Action Plan
 - d. Special Activation Precincts
 - e. NSW Net Zero Carbon Target
 - f. Turning Ideas into Jobs – Accelerating Research & Development in NSW Action Plan
3. support activities that will secure flow-on benefits to NSW, including economic benefits (e.g. jobs, skills, investment attraction, new businesses), improved capability (e.g. deeper collaboration between research and industry sectors, accelerating translation of research) and improved environmental outcomes (reduction in carbon emissions, reduced use of virgin materials etc).

2. ELIGIBILITY

Submission of EOI proposals can only be made by NSW Circular partner Universities (UNSW, USyd, Macquarie, UoN, UTS, WSU, SCU, UNE, CSU, UoW) or NSW-based research organisations that include:

1. two or more University partners. Preference will be given to EOIs with strong leadership from two of these partners (i.e. co-lead investigators from two different universities) or strong collaboration involving multiple university partners and research organisations



2. business, industry (associations or companies), SMEs (including start-ups) and government as appropriate for the project.
3. eligible business and industry partners must have an Australian Business Number and must be registered as a company, other entity or individual that will agree to form a company to enter into a funding agreement.

EOI Proposals must include significant leveraged cash and in-kind contributions as follows:

1. at a minimum, matched cash contributions to the requested cash amount. Higher cash contributions will be highly regarded in the assessment of EOIs. Contributions may be from a range of sources including government (federal, state, local), industry, not for profit or for-profit social enterprises, community organisations etc.
2. at a minimum, matched in-kind contributions to the requested cash amount. Higher in-kind contributions will be highly regarded in the assessment of EOIs. In-kind includes services, materials, use of equipment and facilities and staff time to perform duties required to deliver the project

3. SELECTION CRITERIA

Proposals will be assessed against the following criteria:

1. THE PROJECT: Demonstration of how the proposal will advance the circular economy in NSW and Australia by providing solutions that are scalable in NSW.
2. PROJECT TEAM: Level of technical knowledge regarding the circular economy, track record in the proposed field of research, and evidence of engagement with partners appropriate to scale the project outcomes in the future.
3. COLLABORATION: Level of genuine collaboration between universities, business, industry and government partners to solve an end-user defined problem.
4. BENEFITS: Applicants should indicate how the project will deliver socio-economic, environmental or other benefits to NSW, including reference to any reduction of greenhouse gas emissions and the use of raw material resources.

4. ASSESSMENT

1. The NSW Circular Research Assessment Panel will assess EOIs against the Selection Criteria in section 3.
2. The Panel will be chaired by Professor Margaret Harding (NSW Circular Chair) and include research leaders selected from NSW Universities and research organisations. The Panel may seek additional expert review from end-users.



3. The Panel will make a recommendation on the preferred Project(s) to the NSW Circular Board and provide feedback on the proposal and any areas relevant to their decision.
4. The Panel may elect to not recommend any projects for funding; or recommend adjusted funding to achieve successful delivery of project outcomes; or identify EOIs in complementary or similar research areas that would benefit from working together.
5. The NSW Circular Board will approve the Project(s) and notify the Office of the Chief Scientist and Engineer for endorsement.
6. The NSW Circular Board may seek additional expert advice or information in making a final decision.
7. A detailed project plan with milestones and deliverables will be developed with the selected project team, following the EOI process.

5. FUNDING

1. The total funding available is \$600,000 in FY 2021/22. The funding may be used to support a single iconic Project, or up to three Projects (\$200K minimum).
2. NSW Circular Funding can be used for the following:
 - a. DIRECT SALARY COSTS FOR STAFF MEMBERS (including chief investigators, early career researchers, research assistants) of the applicant universities. Where chief investigator salaries are claimed, this must be specifically justified and is subject to approval.
 - b. ON-COST SALARY EXPENSES up to a maximum of 30% of direct salary costs and consistent with the university policy. On-costs must be itemised in the application and can only include the following items: superannuation, payroll tax, payroll tax on superannuation, workers compensation, long service leave, and maternity leave. Universities must submit their on-cost salary expenses itemised by each category in the budget template.
 - c. EQUIPMENT, SOFTWARE, MATERIALS AND CONSUMABLES that are specifically related to the project.
 - d. DOMESTIC TRAVEL COSTS that are specifically related to the project.
 - e. STIPENDS for HDR students working on the project.
3. NSW Circular Funding can not be used for the following purposes:
 - a. SALARIES OF INDUSTRY PARTNER working on the project.
 - b. COSTS NOT DIRECTLY RELATED TO THE PROJECT including but not limited to conference fees and travel, workshop expenses, entertainment costs, professional membership fees and courses, visas, relocation costs, insurance and other indirect costs.
 - c. EQUIPMENT AND CONSUMABLES that are considered to be for broad general use or already held by the university.
 - d. INFRASTRUCTURE (OVERHEAD) COSTS related to the general operations of the university shared amongst projects and functions.



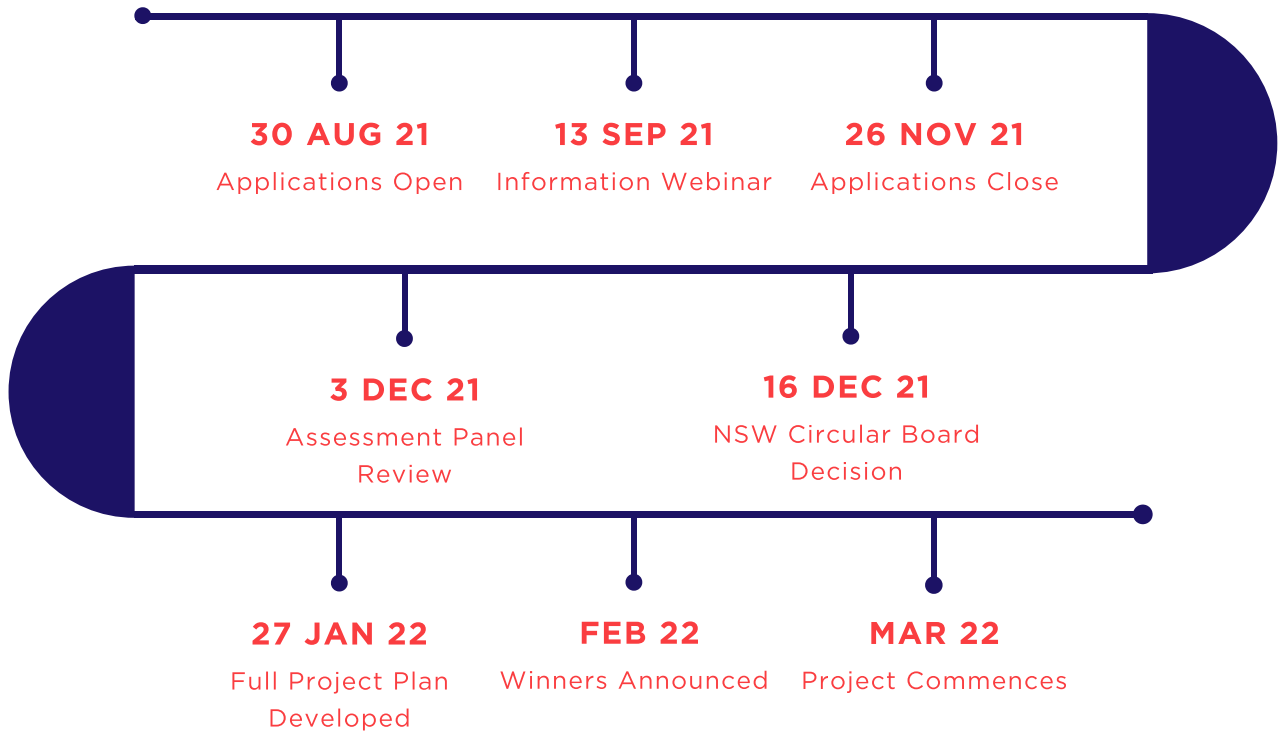
4. Partner cash funding must be:
 - a.in cash and transferable to the university project partners from the government or industry partner (University cash contributions will not be considered).
 - b.new funding, specific to the proposed project.
5. Partner in-kind funding contributions can include:
 - a.services, materials, use of equipment and facilities and staff time to perform duties required to deliver the project.
6. All expenses must be itemised in the budget template. Funding must be spent in accordance with the budget, and any requests for variations must be made to NSW Circular in and approved in advance.
7. Funding will be paid to the Lead University in a single tranche specified in the funding contract. The Lead University is responsible for distributing funds to collaborating Universities.
- 8.Where an industry partner is part of a project, a separate agreement between the industry partner and the lead University has to be signed.
- 9.NSW Circular must be acknowledged as a funder in any publications or reports resulting from the Project.

6. INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY

The IP relating to each project will be negotiated on a project-by-project basis at the time of contract negotiation. However, NSW Circular encourages discussion of IP expectations between partners as soon as practicable in the project planning process.

7. APPLICATION PROCESS

1. Applications must be submitted through the prescribed [EOI form](#) with a completed [budget template](#). Note: all budget items are exclusive of GST.
2. Applicants must submit an electronic copy of the [EOI form](#) and [budget](#) by the due date to caitlyn@nswcircular.org.
- 3.Following assessment of the EOIs a full project plan and milestones will be developed by the winning team.
- 4.The Scheme key dates are provided below.



8. CONTACT

NSW Circular Project Officer, Caitlyn Touzell caitlyn@nswcircular.org.

**We're
planet
positive.**

We're on a mission to
fast track our transition
to a circular economy

