

SOUTH AUSTRALIAN TOURISM COMMISSION
EXPERIENCE NATURE TOURISM FUND

PROGRAM GUIDELINES

2022/2023 FINANCIAL YEAR



[TOURISM.SA.GOV.AU](https://tourism.sa.gov.au)

The Government of South Australia has announced the establishment of the \$2 million Experience Nature Tourism Fund (ENTF) to revitalise nature-based tourism.

The purpose of the ENTF is to support tourism projects which create nature-based tourism experiences that enhance the visitor experience and encourage visitors to enjoy and learn more about South Australian national parks.

For the purpose of the ENTF, national parks include, national parks, reserves, wilderness protection areas and marine parks as defined by the *National Parks and Wildlife Act 1972*, the *Wilderness Protection Act 1992* or the *Marine Parks Act 2007*.

National parks, reserves, wilderness protection areas and marine parks are protected because of their unspoilt landscapes, outstanding or representative ecosystems, Australian native plants and animals, and places of natural or cultural significance.

Successful projects will demonstrate care for the natural and cultural heritage of these national parks, and will operate in accordance with licence requirements specified by the Department for Environment and Water (DEW). These projects will also showcase South Australia's natural beauty to both domestic and international tourists.

1. AVAILABLE FUNDS

The Government of South Australia has committed \$2 million over four financial years. Grant funding will be made available from 2022-23, with up to \$500,000 available in each financial year via a competitive-round process.

Applicants can seek grants from \$10,000 to \$50,000 (excluding GST) in:

STREAM 1

Quick Activation Projects
from \$10,000 to \$20,000

STREAM 2

Innovative Development Projects
from \$20,001 to \$50,000

2. ELIGIBILITY

2.1 WHO IS ELIGIBLE TO APPLY?

Applications to the ENTF are limited to entities, including:

- ✓ Sole traders
- ✓ Partnerships
- ✓ Companies
- ✓ Trusts
- ✓ Not-for-profit organisations
- ✓ Community and progress associations

Applicants **must** be:

- ✓ Financially viable
- ✓ Registered for GST
- ✓ Operating a business with an Australian Business Number (ABN) for a minimum of 12 months
- ✓ Legal entities (i.e., with which the Government of South Australia can enter into a legally binding grant agreement)
- ✓ Able to demonstrate the capability and capacity to complete the project

Applicants can submit one application to the ENTF per financial year.

2.2 WHO IS NOT ELIGIBLE TO APPLY?

- ✗ Local Government and Councils
- ✗ Local Government Associations
- ✗ Regional Development Australia
- ✗ Regional Tourism Organisations (one of the eleven recognised regional tourism authorities)
- ✗ Industry Associations
- ✗ State or Federal Government Agencies and / or Departments
- ✗ Superannuation Funds including Self-Managed Super Funds

2.3 WHAT TYPES OF PROJECTS ARE ELIGIBLE?

The ENTF will provide funding for the creation of new or improved tourism product and experiences and the development of new or improved tourism infrastructure that will attract domestic and international visitors to national parks.

Applicants must be able to clearly demonstrate how their project is encouraging visitation to the park and/or natural assets, and demonstrate care for the natural environment.

Eligible projects are limited to the below initiatives:

- Projects that expand an existing tourism offering, including product and experience development.
- Projects that develop new or support existing tourism offerings, e.g. off grid accommodation and tour equipment storage.
- Purchase of equipment to operate a tour. e.g. diving, and snorkelling equipment.
- Vehicles to transport people to and within national parks and reserves (e.g. bikes, e-bikes, coaches, kayaks, boats, and aircraft).
- Training programs for staff to support the development of engaging nature-based experiences. e.g. mentoring, coaching, tour guide training, Aboriginal cultural training, flora and fauna education, storytelling and interpretation expertise and responsible/sustainable travel awareness.
- Marketing activities including but not limited to website and content creation.

Applicants can apply for a mixture of the above initiatives. For example, under one application to operate a new guided bike tour through a national park* - an applicant could apply to purchase five new bikes in addition to website development including content creation, implementation of an online booking system, and storytelling training for its tour guides.

The maximum grant available for all components of one project is \$50,000 (excl GST).

2.4 EXAMPLES OF ELIGIBLE PROJECTS

- Purchase of equipment to support the delivery of nature-based tourism and tour experiences such as: diving, snorkelling, wading, walking, photography, stargazing, fishing, climbing, riding, birdwatching/whale and wildlife viewing, underwater viewing, virtual reality, kayaking, canoeing and stand-up-paddling, surfing, and fitness/yoga/meditating.
- Catering and picnic supplies (non-consumables) such as hampers, crockery, cutlery, serving ware, blankets, cushions, and portable cooking equipment.
- Safety equipment such as satellite phones and radios.
- Temporary accommodation including tents and swags.
- New accommodation including off grid builds, glamping, and tiny homes[#].
- Refurbishment or renovations of existing accommodation including sustainable upgrades[#].
- New or upgraded transportation including, but not limited to: vehicles (see 2.5), bikes and e-bikes, boats, food trucks, trailers, aeroplanes, helicopters, campervans (for use of visitors) and quad/motorbikes.
- Infrastructure including toilets, shelter, water harvesting and solar power generation[#].
- Storage and transportation for tour equipment[#].
- Staff training related to the tourism product including cultural awareness, tour guiding, storytelling, 4WD/ specialist driver training, wildlife protection and responsible and sustainable tourism.
- Tourism experience and product development including but not limited to customer journey mapping, tourism distribution, pricing, social media, and packaging.
- Website development including online booking engine functionality and website management training.
- Content creation including photoshoots, copywriting, marketing collateral and storytelling.

* This activity needs to be envisioned or consistent with the plan of management for the nominated national park or parks.

[#] New accommodation or other permanent built infrastructure within a national park or reserve is not eligible.

2.5 APPLICATIONS FOR VEHICLES AND EQUIPMENT

The assessment panel will consider the vehicle type and purpose of use for transport ENTF applications. It is required that applications incorporating a vehicle will be primarily used for project purposes i.e., to transport tourists to and from destinations. Applications will be required to estimate passenger numbers and the intended level of use (e.g. tour schedules). All approved vehicles must include external branding as part of their project.

2.6 WHICH LOCATIONS ARE ELIGIBLE FOR FUNDING?

To be eligible for funding, your project **MUST**:

- ✓ Be within 20km of a national park under the care and control of National Parks & Wildlife Service. A list of the most visited parks is located on parks.sa.gov.au. OR
- ✓ Operate an experience that enters a national park.

2.7 WHAT WILL THE GRANT FUND?

- Funding will be provided for projects that deliver demonstrated tangible benefits to South Australia.
- Only new projects are eligible for funding and must not have commenced prior to lodging an application.
- Successful projects can commence after the approval letter has been issued by the SATC.

2.8 WHAT IS CONSIDERED ELIGIBLE EXPENDITURE?

Eligible expenditure considered for funding **MUST** be:

- ✓ Incurred by the applicant within the project period (between the approval letter issue date and project end date noted in the grant agreement). Expenditure incurred prior to an approval letter issue date will not be eligible.
- ✓ A demonstrable direct cost of delivering the approved project.

3. INELIGIBLE PROJECTS

3.1 INELIGIBLE PROJECTS

Projects which are ineligible for funding include but are **NOT** limited to projects which:

- Have commenced or been completed prior to the issue of an approval letter.
- Require ongoing or recurring funding from the Government of South Australia to be sustainable.
- Are undertaken on behalf of third parties.
- Have already received assistance from the Government of South Australia or other relevant grant funds to achieve the same project outcomes.
- Relate to non-tourism activities.
- Are not compliant with relevant legislation or parks management plans.
- Are not appropriate for the setting.
- Propose to interfere with activities that are required by the relevant authority for its operation.
- Do not align to SATC's target markets.
- Do not align to the *South Australian Visitor Economy Sector Plan 2030* or the *South Australian Regional Visitor Strategy 2025*.
- Are events and festivals.

3.2 INELIGIBLE EXPENSES

- Salaries and wages
- Internal roads and driveways or access points (as a standalone project)
- Gateway signage, entrance signs or other outdoor advertising signage (as a standalone project)
- General business administration or operating costs
- Costs associated with the preparation of the application and reporting requirements
- Costs associated with applying for approvals, permits and licences, e.g., building approvals and Commercial Tour Operator (CTO) or other licences
- Plans including feasibility studies, business cases, reports, and building development plans

- Fees paid to Commonwealth, State, Territory or local governments to obtain development, environment or other regulatory approvals
- Purchase of land, property or a business
- Development of mobile applications unless it is for the sole purpose of supporting the tourism product or experience
- Insurance premiums, registration fees, Compulsory Third Party insurance and on road costs
- Expenses incurred from a related entity

Applicants must ensure they have adequate funds to meet the costs of any ineligible expenditure associated with the project.

4. FUNDING LIMITS AND PROJECT TIMEFRAMES

4.1 HOW WILL THE FUNDING BE ALLOCATED?

Applications to the ENTF will be assessed competitively. The 2022-2023 financial year application period opens at 9.00am on Monday 5 September 2022 and will close at 5.00pm on Friday 21 October 2022.

It is important for applicants to note the closing date and allow for any technical issues, as late applications **WILL NOT** be accepted. Only complete applications will be assessed.

If the full amount of funding is not awarded in this round, the SATC may announce a second round of funding for the 2022-23 financial year.

4.2 WHAT ARE THE FUNDING STREAMS?

There are two funding streams through the ENTF:

STREAM 1 – QUICK ACTIVATION PROJECTS

GRANTS AVAILABLE FROM \$10,000 TO \$20,000

Small grants provided for projects that are ready to be activated. These grants could include one-off purchases.

- Funding is paid upfront, upon execution of a grant agreement.
- The project must be completed by 30 June 2023.
- Any unused funds will be required to be returned after project completion.

STREAM 2 – INNOVATIVE DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS

GRANTS AVAILABLE FROM \$20,001 TO \$50,000

Larger grants provided for bigger projects which may have a longer duration and multiple elements.

- Funding will be provided in arrears after completion of the project.
- The project must be completed by 31 December 2023

4.3 WHERE CAN PROPOSED PROJECTS BE LOCATED?

Proposals will be considered on the following land, water, and air:

- In and around South Australia's national parks, reserves, wilderness protection areas and marine parks (under care and control of National Parks & Wildlife Service).
- Aboriginal owned or controlled lands and where First Nations peoples have shared access rights under Native Title.
- Private land, as long as the project includes some element of a visitation to, or activation of a national park or reserve as part of the tourism experience.
- Sightseeing air charters that operate over a national park.

NOTE

Projects 'around' a national park must offer a tourism experience within 20 kilometres of the national park or within a marine environment that connects to a national park.

There may be exceptions based on remoteness. This is assessed on a case-by-case basis.

NOTE

For the purpose of the ENTF, national parks include, national parks, reserves, wilderness protection areas and marine parks as defined by the [National Parks and Wildlife Act 1972](#), the [Wilderness Protection Act 1992](#) or the [Marine Parks Act 2007](#).

4.4 WHAT APPROVALS DO I NEED TO APPLY?

Applicants must consult with and receive written support from key stakeholders and landowners before lodging an application. Applications without written support will not be considered.

Not all activities are permitted in all parks. If applicants are proposing to enter the parks system as part of their project, they will require a Commercial Tour Operator licence (CTO) or Marine Parks Permit from the Department for Environment and Water (DEW). If applicants enter a national park, they must have in-principle support from DEW prior to commencing an application.

The online in-principle support application form is available on the [ENTF webpage](#).

Each submission for in-principle support is different depending on the nature and location of the proposal. In support of the assessment, DEW may ask you to provide additional information and address specific components of your proposal.

Applicants without an existing CTO licence or Marine Parks Permit are able to submit an ENTF application with written in-principle support from DEW. Approved projects of this nature will be required to apply for a CTO licence or Marine Parks Permit after receiving their approval letter (which must be approved prior to receiving any funds).

Proposals will not be considered where the project would require a lease on public (Crown) land, including national parks.

Any funding secured through the ENTF does not constitute automatic authority to undertake activities in South Australia's nature, parks, and places. Please note that proposals that have approved funding may be subject to other development, environmental and regulatory approvals.

If you are operating on private land, all necessary approvals must be obtained and attached to your application (e.g. landlord approvals, development approvals if required).

Applicants who already have relevant permissions and approvals including CTOs and Marine Parks Permit should attach evidence to their application.

4.5 WHAT IS THE GRANT CRITERIA?

- Funding must include a minimum 20 per cent co-contribution to the project from the applicant, with a maximum of up to 80 per cent of the total project cost from the Government of South Australia.
- Projects must be 'shovel ready' (ready to commence) and must hold any relevant consents or authorisations required to commence (i.e. from all necessary landowners) prior to applying (e.g., landlords if on private leased land) and applicants operating in parks require in principle support from DEW (if not already holding a CTO or Marine Parks Permit in that park).
- All other necessary approvals and reports to commence the project must be obtained prior to applying and supplied with the application.
- The project must be completed by 30 June 2023 for Stream One projects and 31 December 2023 for Stream Two projects.
- The minimum grant application is **\$10,000 (excl GST)**.
- The maximum grant application is **\$50,000 (excl GST)**.
- As part of the grant criteria, eligible applicants will also need to demonstrate:
 - o That the business and new product or experience is (or will be) registered on the Australian Tourism Data Warehouse (ATDW) when completed.
 - o Engagement with the SATC's Destination Development team prior to project completion.
 - o Their ability to be available for visitor product information and enquiries year-round.
 - o The project has not commenced prior to the application being submitted.
 - o That they have an Australian Business Number (ABN), have been operating for a minimum of 12 months and are registered for Goods and Services Tax (GST).

NOTE

In-kind support is not considered as part of the applicant's 20 per cent co-contribution.

4.6 HOW CAN I APPLY?

Applications will only be received by an online application form, located on the South Australian Tourism Commission's corporate website: tourism.sa.gov.au.

Potential applicants should note that information received in connection with an application may be used and communicated outside the Government of South Australia for due diligence purposes and may also be provided to third parties engaged by SATC to assist with the assessment and processing of the applications received, together with program monitoring, reporting, auditing, and evaluation purposes.

4.7 WHAT EVIDENCE DO I NEED TO PROVIDE?

Once an application is submitted, applicants will not be able to provide additional information and only complete applications will be assessed.

Applicants should read all supporting documentation including the Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) document and the Example Online Application Form to ensure all necessary information to support the application has been supplied.

The following documentation is required as part of the application:

- ✓ Written in-principle support from all relevant land managers from DEW (if operating into parks).
- ✓ Copy of your existing CTO licence or Marine Parks Permit (if applicable).
- ✓ Evidence of all other necessary approvals (landlord, Development Approval etc) and written confirmation if Development Approval is NOT required (if relevant).
- ✓ Evidence of all other relevant operator licensing/certification and insurances.
- ✓ Copy of all third-party quotations outlining the costs to deliver the project (quotations must not be from an entity related to the applicant).
- ✓ A completed 'Quote Summary' document determining the final project cost (document template available for download on the ENTF webpage).
- ✓ Documentation confirming evidence of minimum 20 per cent co-contribution to the project.

- ✓ Independently prepared financial statements including profit and loss and balance sheet (with notes) for the last three years and including 2021/22. Provide your available financial statements if you have been trading for less than three years (to also include 2021/22). If 2021/22 financial statements are not yet completed, applicants should supply management (internal) statements.
- ✓ Any additional supporting documentation to support your application including letters of support.

The FAQs document provides additional information on these documents.

5. ASSESSMENT

5.1 WHAT IS THE ASSESSMENT CRITERIA?

Projects will be assessed on the following criteria:

- The extent the project connects the visitor with South Australia's natural assets and how the project demonstrates innovation in nature-based tourism.
- The projected increase in visitation and/or visitor expenditure in the area.
- The benefit the project delivers for conservation of nature, parks and places, community, visitors, and First Nations peoples.
- Alignment with the *South Australian Regional Visitor Strategy 2025* and the *South Australian Visitor Economy Sector Plan 2030*.
- Job retention and creation.
- Capability and capacity of the applicant to deliver the project.

5.2 HOW ARE THE APPLICATIONS ASSESSED?

Applications will initially undergo a review to determine the applicant's eligibility. A financial review will be undertaken based on the information provided in the application. This will be conducted by the South Australian Government Financing Authority prior to being considered by the Assessment Panel.

Applications will then be assessed against a weighted criteria and compared to all eligible projects submitted in that competitive round.

The Regional Tourism Managers (RTM) will be consulted during the assessment period. It is recommended for applicants to engage with their relevant RTM(s) prior to submitting their application. RTM contact details can be found here: [Regions | Tourism SA](#)

Applications will be assessed on a merit basis against the fund's criteria as a competitive process and remain subject to the remaining available funds. Grants will be awarded by the Chief Executive of the SATC at their absolute discretion.

Only one application per applicant, per financial year will be accepted.

6. GRANT PROCESS

6.1 HOW WILL THE GRANT PROCESS BE MANAGED?

Applicants will be required to agree to grant terms and conditions at the time of application stipulating obligations and conditions under which grant funding will be given to eligible applicants. SATC will not be legally obliged to pay any grant monies to an applicant without an approval letter issued by the South Australian Tourism Commission.

6.2 NOTIFICATION AND ADVICE

After your application is assessed, you will be notified of the outcome by email in advance of the funded activity commencement date for the round. Grant decisions are not subject to appeal.

Unsuccessful applicants will be provided with feedback to assist with future applications.

Successful applicants will be bound by the grant terms and conditions once they have received notification from SATC that their application has been successful.

6.3 GRANT AGREEMENT

The grant agreement will outline all the conditions of the provision of the funding. The agreement will be subject to the [Freedom of Information Act 1991 \(SA\)](#) and Department of the Premier and Cabinet circular [PC027 Disclosure of Government Contracts](#).

6.4 RECEIVING PAYMENT

Stream One grant payments will be made upfront in one payment after applicants have received notification from SATC that their application has been successful and upon receipt of a valid tax invoice. The agreement will require that if the total cost of a project is less than the agreed eligible expenditure (i.e. support must remain at not more than 80% of the total eligible project cost) SATC will invoice the grant recipient for any unspent funds.

Stream Two grant payments will be made on a reimbursement basis after the project has been completed and upon presentation of paid invoices for the approved project expenditure, including evidence of eligible applicant contributions required to complete the project. Exceptions on a case-by-case basis will be considered.

Approved projects which require a Commercial Tour Operator licence or a Marine Parks Permit, must have their Licence/permits issued by DEW prior to receiving any grant funds.

The grant agreement will specify the conditions of the assistance based on the information supplied in the application. Broadly, the following conditions will be required to be met by the grant recipients:

- Completion of the project as stated in the application.
- All key milestones and obligations are met.
- Prior consideration and approval in writing from SATC prior to making any changes to the project.
- The contribution of the Government of South Australia must be acknowledged on any promotional material and opportunities must be provided for SATC (or a representative) to take part in any formal project milestones, events, and project launches.
- Grants are subject to GST and income tax. Successful applicants should seek their own advice on these matters and other tax implications stemming from the grant support.

The Experience Nature Tourism Fund Program Guidelines have been issued for the 2022/2023 financial year round. The information contained in these guidelines and/or FAQs is for general information purposes and is provided in good faith. The South Australian Tourism Commission (SATC) and its employees do not warrant or make any representation regarding the use, or results of the use, of the information contained herein as regards to its correctness, accuracy, reliability and currency or otherwise. The SATC and its employees expressly disclaim all liability or responsibility to any person using the information or advice.

Program Guidelines were issued on Monday 8 August 2022.

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