

SOUTH AUSTRALIAN TOURISM COMMISSION  
EXPERIENCE NATURE TOURISM FUND

# PROGRAM GUIDELINES

ROUND THREE | 2024-2025 FINANCIAL YEAR



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

The purpose of the ENTF is to support the creation of new nature-based tourism projects 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*.

These 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 ENTF 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. There is \$550,000 available for Round Three (which includes unallocated funding from the previous rounds).

Applicants can request grants ranging from \$10,000 to \$50,000 (excluding GST) through a competitive assessment process across two streams.

### 1.1 FUNDING STREAMS

There are two funding streams through Round Three of the ENTF:

#### **STREAM 1 - QUICK ACTIVATION PROJECTS**

**GRANTS AVAILABLE FROM \$10,000 TO \$20,000 (EXCLUDING GST)**

- Small grants for projects that are ready for activation.
- Upfront funding upon execution of a grant agreement.
- Project completion by 30 June 2025.
- Unused funds to be returned post-project completion.

#### **STREAM 2 - INNOVATIVE DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS**

**GRANTS AVAILABLE FROM \$20,001 TO \$50,000 (EXCLUDING GST)**

- Larger grants for larger projects which may have a higher cost, be delivered with longer durations and/or multiple components.
- Funding disbursed after completion.(i.e. as a reimbursement of eligible expenditure).
- Project completion by 31 December 2025.

## 2. ELIGIBILITY

### 2.1 ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

Applications to the ENTF are open to legal entities, including:

- ✓ Individual / Sole Traders
- ✓ Partnerships
- ✓ Companies
- ✓ Trusts
- ✓ Not-for-Profit Organisations registered with the *Australian Charities and Not-for-Profits Commission*
- ✓ Incorporated Community and Progress Associations

#### **NOTE**

Recipients of ENTF grants from previous rounds are eligible to apply for Round Three and will be evaluated alongside all other applicants in this round. In cases where the Assessment Panel determines that projects demonstrate similar merit, preference will be given to applicants who have not previously received ENTF funding.

## 2.2 INELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

- ✗ 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
- ✗ Unincorporated Associations

### NOTE

Each applicant, including related entities under different ABNs, may submit only one application to the ENTF within each financial year/round.

## 2.3 MANDATORY ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

Applicants **MUST**:

- Operate a business with an Australian Business Number (ABN) for at least 12 months.
- Demonstrate financial viability.
- Be legal entities (capable of entering into a binding grant agreement with the Government of South Australia).
- Contribute a minimum of 20 per cent to the project cost, with up to 80 per cent sought from the Government of South Australia.
- Hold all relevant consents and authorisations (including development, regulatory and landlord approvals).
- Supply a Commercial Tour Operator or Marine Parks Permit, or a letter of in-principle from DEW, demonstrating approval to conduct the proposed activities (if applying to operate in a park).
- Only apply for new projects that have not commenced at the time of application and are able to commence after an approval letter has been issued by the South Australian Tourism Commission (SATC).
- Only apply for funding to support new projects that deliver demonstrated tangible benefits to South Australia and that create a new tourism product or experience.
- Clearly demonstrate sustainable practices (including environmental, social, cultural, and economic dimensions).

## 2.4 ELIGIBLE PROJECT LOCATIONS

Projects **MUST**:

- Deliver an experience that enters a national park.

### OR

- Be located within 20 kilometres of a national park, and clearly demonstrates visitation to a specified national park/s.

A list of the national parks is available for download on the *ENTF webpage*.

### 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. These projects must demonstrate the connection of visitors with the nominated national park.

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

## 2.5 ELIGIBLE PROJECT TYPES

The ENTF supports:

- The creation of new tourism products and experiences
- The development of new tourism infrastructure\* that will attract domestic and international visitors to national parks.

Applicants must clearly demonstrate how their project will encourage visitation to a park and/or natural assets, while demonstrating care for the natural environment and sustainable practices.

Eligible projects are restricted to the following initiatives:

- Purchase of equipment required to operate a new tour or experience (e.g. diving / snorkelling equipment).
- Purchase of vehicles/transportation to operate new tours or experiences. This could include a new tour vehicle or a vehicle to transport people/equipment to and within national parks (e.g. bikes, e-bikes, coaches, kayaks, boats, and aircraft).
- Development of tourism product located on private property, that connects visitors to national parks, including new accommodation, glamping, and tiny homes\*. Applicants for accommodation development projects that are not located immediately adjacent to or within walking distance of a national park, must clearly demonstrate how their accommodation will facilitate visitors' connection with the park. See the Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) document for more details.
- Professional services for product and experience development assistance.
- Staff training programs to support the development of appealing nature-based experiences (e.g. mentoring, coaching, tour guide training, Aboriginal cultural education, flora and fauna education, storytelling or interpretation expertise, responsible/sustainable travel best practice awareness).
- Marketing activities (e.g. website, content creation).

\* New accommodation or other permanent built infrastructure within a national park or reserve is not eligible.

## 2.6 APPLICATIONS FOR VEHICLES

For ENTF applications seeking funding toward a vehicle, the Assessment Panel will consider the vehicle type, purpose, and appropriateness throughout the assessment process. Applicants must only apply for funding to support vehicles required to run a new tour or experience.

Applicants applying for funding to support a vehicle, will need to demonstrate that the vehicle is intended to be used primarily for the purpose of the project and outline how the vehicle/s will be used (e.g. through providing tour schedules).

Approved vehicles must include external branding as part of the project and the branding can be claimed as expenditure under the grant.

Vehicles must be a fit for purpose tourism vehicle that is comfortable and safe to transport visitors. For vehicles purchased with finance, a condition of the grant approval will be that the grant is paid in full against the loan. Evidence of this payment will need to be provided at that time. Failure to meet this requirement would result in the grant to be repaid to the SATC.

## 2.7 ELIGIBLE EXPENDITURE

Eligible expenditure considered for ENTF funding support **MUST:**

- Directly contribute to delivering the project.
- Be incurred within the project period.

Expenditure before the approval letter issue date and after the project end date is ineligible expenditure. There is one exception, a deposit to secure a specific vehicle can be made prior to submitting an application and can be included as eligible expenditure, however this will be at the applicant's risk as there is no guarantee provided of any grant funding (see the FAQ document for more information).

\* New accommodation or other permanent built infrastructure within a national park or reserve is not eligible.

### 3. INELIGIBILITY

#### 3.1 INELIGIBLE PROJECTS

Projects deemed ineligible for funding include but are not limited to those which:

- Have commenced or been completed prior to the issue of an approval letter from the SATC.
- Are undertaken on behalf of third parties (i.e. not the business/entity applying).
- Require ongoing or recurring funding from the Government of South Australia to be sustainable.
- Have already received support from the Government of South Australia (or other relevant grant programs) to achieve identical project objectives.
- Fail to comply with relevant legislation or park management plans.
- Are not appropriate for the environment and/or propose to interfere with operational activities required to be undertaken by the park's relevant authority.
- Are standalone projects that deliver infrastructure, access, and signage (e.g. toilets, shelter, water harvesting, solar power generation, internal roads, driveways, access points, gateway signage, entrance signs, outdoor signage, etc.) and not a visitor experience.
- Include fixed infrastructure, like interpretive signage, within national parks.
- Do not align to the *South Australian Visitor Economy Sector Plan 2030* or the *South Australian Regional Visitor Strategy 2025*.
- Are events or festivals.

#### 3.2 INELIGIBLE EXPENSES

Certain expenses cannot be included in the total project value evaluated by the panel. These may include costs and fees associated with:

- Salaries and wages.
- General business administration or operational expenses.
- Preparation of the funding application and reporting requirements.
- Application for approvals, permits and licences (e.g. building approvals, Commercial Tour Operator (CTO) fees or other licences).
- Development of plans including feasibility studies, business cases, reports, and building development plans.

- Obtaining planning, environment, or other regulatory approvals through all tiers of governments and their referral partners.
- Purchase of land, property, or a business.
- Development of mobile applications (apps) unless solely for the 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.

Any project-specific works undertaken directly by the applicant (including provision of any labour and/or materials) will be deemed in-kind contributions and are ineligible to be included.

Applicants must ensure they have adequate funds to meet the costs of any ineligible expenditure associated with the delivery of the project, on top of their 20 per cent co-contribution.

### 4. SUPPORTING INFORMATION

#### 4.1 REQUIRED EVIDENCE

The following documentation is mandatory for all applications and must be included with the application:

- Copies 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 (*template available for download on the ENTF webpage*).
- Evidence of the applicant's financial co-contribution to the project (a minimum 20 per cent). All bank statements and or screenshots must include the date it was issued/captured and include the account name. Additionally, include a copy of the loan approval if financing is involved.
- Financial statements including profit and loss and balance sheet (with notes) for the past three financial years and including 2023-24 (*see FAQ for full details*).
- Copy of the applicant's Business Plan including marketing plan, or respond to all questions located in the Business Plan section of the online application form.



Depending on the type of project, the following additional documentation may be necessary to supply:

- For operations into a national park or marine park - written in-principle support from DEW or copies of existing *CTO licence* or *Marine Parks Permit* for the park and activities proposed in the project.
- Evidence of all other necessary approvals (e.g. landlord permission, development approval).
- Evidence of all other relevant operator licensing/certification and insurances.
- Any additional documentation supporting an application (including letters of support).

#### **NOTE**

The *FAQ document* provides additional information on what evidence is required.

Once submitted, applications cannot be amended, and only complete applications will be assessed. Applicants are advised to familiarise themselves with the ENTf Guidelines, FAQ document and other reference materials listed on the *ENTf webpage* to ensure they have supplied all necessary information to support their application.

## **4.2 REQUIRED APPROVALS**

Before lodging an ENTf application, applicants must consult with and receive written support from key stakeholders and landowners. Applications without the required written approvals will not be considered.

All applications for projects taking place on private land must include attachments demonstrating the necessary approvals have been granted (e.g. landlord/development approvals).

Applicants who already have the required permissions and approvals to deliver their project (e.g. *Commercial Tour Operator Licences*, *Marine Parks Permits*), should provide evidence to their application.

## **4.3 ENTERING A NATIONAL PARK**

Not all activities are permitted in all parks. If applicants are proposing to enter the parks system at any point as part of their project, they will require a *Commercial Tour Operator (CTO) licence* or *Marine Parks Permit* from the Department for Environment and Water (DEW).

Applicants without an existing licence/permit to operate or those proposing to enter a different national park or operate a different activity to what is covered in their existing licence/permit must receive in-principle support from DEW before applying.

An online *in-principle support application form* is accessible on the *ENTf webpage*. Requests for in-principle support must be made solely by the online form; applicants should not request letters of support from individual National Parks and Wildlife Service staff.

Applicants can determine if their project requires support from DEW via a downloadable flow chart available on the *ENTf webpage*. If applicants are in doubt of whether they require in-principle support, they should contact DEW directly via email on [DEWtourism@sa.gov.au](mailto:DEWtourism@sa.gov.au).

## **5. APPLICATION PROCESS AND CRITERIA**

### **5.1 APPLICATION TIMELINES**

Round Three, the 2024-2025 financial year application period, opens at: **9.00am (ACST) on Monday 8 July 2024** and will close at: **5.00pm (ACST) on Friday 16 August 2024**.

Applicants must note the closing date and allow for any potential technical issues, as late applications will **NOT** be accepted. Only complete applications will undergo assessment.

If the full amount of funding is not awarded in this round, the SATC may announce a subsequent round of funding for the 2024-25 financial year and/or roll over funds to the next financial year (Round Four).

## 5.2 APPLICATION PROCESS

Applications will only be received by an online application form, located on the South Australian Tourism Commission's corporate website on the *ENTF webpage*.

Applicants acknowledge that information provided may be used and shared outside the Government of South Australia for due diligence purposes and may be disclosed to third parties engaged by SATC for assessment, processing monitoring, reporting, auditing, and evaluation.

## 6. ASSESSMENT

### 6.1 APPLICATION ASSESSMENT PROCESS

Applications will undergo an initial eligibility review, followed by a financial review by the South Australian Government Financing Authority. The Assessment Panel will then review all eligible and financially sound applications. Applications will be evaluated based on a weighted criteria and compete with all eligible projects.

**Regional Tourism Managers (RTMs) of South Australia will be consulted during assessment. Applicants are encouraged to engage with the relevant RTM(s) prior to submission. Contact details are available at [Regions | Tourism SA](#)**

The decision to award ENTF grants rest solely with the SATC Chief Executive Officer at their absolute discretion.

### 6.2 ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

Projects will be assessed on the following weighted criteria:

- The extent to which the project connects the visitor with South Australia's national parks.
- The extent to which the project demonstrates innovation in nature-based tourism.
- The benefit the project delivers for conservation and sustainability of nature, parks and places, community, visitors, and Aboriginal peoples.
- The projected increase in visitation, visitor expenditure, job creation or retention, or the increase in quality accessible experiences into national parks.
- Alignment with the *South Australian Regional Visitor Strategy 2025* and the *South Australian Visitor Economy Sector Plan 2030*.
- Capability and capacity of the applicant to deliver the project.

## 7. GRANT AGREEMENT AND PAYMENT PROCESS

### 7.1 AGREEMENT MANAGEMENT

Applicants must agree to grant terms and conditions upon submission. SATC will not be obligated to disperse grants without an approval letter.

### 7.2 NOTIFICATION AND FEEDBACK

Applicants will be informed of the outcome of their application via email. Grant decisions are final, without the right to appeal.

Unsuccessful applicants may receive feedback to support preparation for future applications.

Successful applicants are bound by the grant terms and conditions they agreed to at the time of submitting their application, upon notification of their success.

### 7.3 AGREEMENT TERMS

The grant agreement will comprehensively detail all terms concerning the funding. It will adhere to the *Freedom of Information Act 1991 (SA)* and *Department of the Premier and Cabinet circular PC027 on Disclosure of Government Contracts*.

Additionally, applicants must commit, as stipulated in the grant agreement, to registering the business and new product or experience on the *Australian Tourism Data Warehouse (ATDW)* upon completion. They are also required to engage with the SATC's Destination Development team before project completion.

The grant agreement will specify the conditions based on the application details.

Recipients must fulfill the following:

- Complete the project as outlined in the application.
- Fulfill all key milestones and obligations.
- Obtain written approval from SATC for any project alterations.
- Acknowledge the Government of South Australia's contribution in promotional materials and provide opportunities for SATC (or its representative) to participate in project milestones, events, and launches.

## 7.4 PAYMENT PROCEDURES

Payments for both streams will only be made once the successful applicant has received notification from SATC and the applicant has provided SATC with evidence that they have the required *Commercial Tour Operator* licence or *Marine Parks Permit* (if applicable).

**Stream One** grant payments will be issued upfront in one payment after the applicant has provided SATC with a valid tax invoice. Should the total project cost fall below the agreed eligible expenditure, SATC will invoice the recipient for unutilised funds to maintain government support at no more than 80 percent of the total eligible project cost.

**Stream Two** grant payments will be reimbursed upon project completion, supported by paid invoices for approved project expenses. The applicant will need to present copies of paid invoices to the value of the approved project value, including the expenditure incurred by the applicant required to complete the project. Exceptions will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Grants are subject to GST and income tax. Successful applicants are advised to seek independent advice regarding these tax matters and other implications of grant support.

The Experience Nature Tourism Fund Program Guidelines have been issued for the 2024/2025 financial year – round three. 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 24 June 2024.

Below

Nilpena Ediacara Fossil Tour, Flinders Ranges & Outback





## CONTACT US

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