Go for Gold Fund Round 2: School Sports Infrastructure

Frequently Asked Questions

Purpose

The purpose of this Frequently Asked Questions document is to address questions that may arise as a result of public interest or high-level government enquiries into the Go for Gold Fund Round 2: School Sports Infrastructure program (the Program).

Evaluation

What measures were taken to ensure a fair, equitable, consistent and transparent approach?

- Quality assurance measures undertaken in the initial assessment consisted of:

    o Triage meetings during the first 2 weeks of assessment to provide guidance and promote consistency of assessment among members of the Evaluation Team;

    o Recording of all advice and decisions to promote consistency of decision making during the evaluation process; and

    o A minimum of 10% of applications in each Category (1, 2 and 3) were selected at random to receive a quality assurance check.

- To ensure equal opportunity and consideration for each applicant, assessment of applications considered the strength/merit of the proposal, not the applicant school or sector. Sector was not a factor in any assessment or prioritisation metric.

- Applications deemed ineligible during assessment were reassessed by the Program Manager to confirm ineligibility. Where the outcome was unclear, the decision was escalated to the Program Director for resolution.

Were any issues or areas for improvement identified as a result of quality assurance checks?

- With just one application requiring re-assessment, confidence in the quality, and fair and equitable approach applied during assessments was assured.

Due Diligence

Why were due diligence checks undertaken?

- Due diligence assessment was undertaken to gain greater confidence in the deliverability of an application, including an appreciation of planning risks and issues, project costs, project delivery capability, and delivery timeliness.

- As an additional step for state schools, officers within the Department of Education (DoE) undertook a review of applications to identify issues with strategic alignment over the planning horizon and ensure the project presented no conflicts. Service Planning was not a requirement for non-state schools.

How were these checks factored into the overall assessment of an application?

- The outcomes of due diligence assessment served to highlight potential risks and issues associated with the delivery of proposed projects and inform prioritisation of assessed projects recommended for funding consideration by the DDG Committee. In turn, this provided the DDG Committee with insight and assurance that the project could be delivered as outlined in the application.

- The outcomes of due diligence assessment were incorporated in the evaluation of applications and informed projects recommended to engage as QS to validate project cost estimates.

- Further information regarding due diligence rating and the effect upon prioritisation of recommended projects is contained in Appendix A.

If due diligence identified a project as 'high risk', was it progressed for further consideration?

- Yes. All projects (even those with high-risk elements) were progressed to the Deputy-Director General (DDG) Committee, ensuring each project was provided an equal opportunity for consideration, noting high-risk elements of the project were highlighted to the DDG Committee for their review.

Governance

What governance mechanisms were in place to uphold integrity across the Program?

- Probity: An independent Probity Advisor was engaged to provide assurance that the evaluation and prioritisation process was fair, equitable, consistent, transparent and incorporated appropriate safeguards against fraud, unlawful activities and other inappropriate/unethical conduct. The Probity Advisor was an observer at all governance meetings, ensuring best

practice processes were undertaken regarding the numerous responsibilities of the relevant members.

- Conflict of Interest: All persons interacting with the program were required to sign an Acknowledgement of Obligations (AoO) form. The AoO documents any actual or perceived conflicts of interest (conflicts) at the time of signing. Additionally, if any conflicts arose throughout the duration of the program, the Program Manager was notified and an updated AoO was signed.

- Review Panel (the Panel): Comprising of state and non-state school representatives, the Panel's role was to moderate the evaluation process, in particular providing assurance that the process had integrity, was undertaken in a consistent and transparent manner, and in accordance with the Go for Gold Fund Round 2 Evaluation Plan.

  o The published Go for Gold Round 2: Schools Sports Infrastructure Guidelines (the Guidelines) indicated the Panel would undertake a decision-making responsibility. Due to the large volume of applications received, a DDG Committee was introduced as the decision-making body and the Panel's responsibility was changed to an assurance role only.

  o The Panel's role supported the DDG Committee to efficiently and confidently make decisions pertaining to Program approvals.

  o The Panel was provided information following each step of the evaluation process to demonstrate how the Program Guideline had been applied as intended. Following each stage, the Panel provided their assurance and endorsement of the process.

- DDG Committee: Comprising of Deputy Directors-General of three state departments, the DDG Committee's role was to be the key decision-making forum for Go for Gold Round 2: School Sports Infrastructure, including deciding upon and approving the final list of successful grants applications for school sports infrastructure projects.

Prioritisation

How did the Prioritisation Process differ to that indicated in the Guidelines?

- A comprehensive prioritisation process was documented to ensure a fair, equitable, consistent, transparent, and robust approach was applied to each application throughout the Evaluation stage.

- The Process (summary of metrics applied at **Appendix A**) expanded and clarified the information contained within the published Guidelines, and provides deeper insight into all considerations applied across all applications to reach a final list of prioritised projects for endorsement by the DDG Committee.

- The Process was unanimously endorsement by both the Review Panel and the DDG Committee.

Why was there a deviation from the Guidelines regarding the exclusion of ICSEA appreciation during prioritisation?

- The Guidelines indicated that ICSEA would be factored into the prioritisation of projects to be considered for funding (Appendix 2, p.23).

- While documenting the Prioritisation process, it was noted that as ICSEA had already been factored as part of the assessment process. To be considered again as part of the prioritisation process would disproportionately skew the scoring, impacting the weighting of other essential criteria.

- ICSEA was removed as a prioritisation metric to ensure that application of the measure was applied fairly throughout evaluation and did not compromise the integrity of the prioritisation process.

- The removal of ICSEA as a prioritisation metric was endorsed by both the Review Panel and DDG Committee.

How was ICSEA considered in the assessment process?

- Below is a summary of how ICSEA has been applied in previous and subsequent phases, offering insight into its degree of influence:
  - Funding limitations were applied to applications with an ICSEA ≥1042 (the Guideline, p.8)
  - A weighted scoring of 40% was applied to indexed ICSEA scores in the assessment process
  - 75% of Category 1 applications with an ICSEA <1042 will be awarded funding (the Guideline, p.7).

Outcomes

Why were some high ICSEA schools funded over low ICSEA schools?

- While ICSEA had a weighting of 40% of the total assessment criteria, evaluation was undertaken as a multi-stage process with ICSEA being only one measure of evaluation. Applications that strongly met the assessment criteria, including value for money and capacity to deliver, had the ability to score well and progress to the next stage of evaluation, where degree of remoteness, planning due diligence and project risk were factored.

- Applications rating well against remaining evaluation criteria had the potential to be prioritised for funding consideration.

Why weren't more schools funded?

- The competitive application process, the overwhelming interest in the funding, and the limited funding available impacted the number of applications that could be funded.

- Applications were funded according to the prioritisation ranking order, within the available funding. No application was skipped or overlooked in order to maximise the funding allocated.

Will there be further funding allocations?

- The announced funding allocations have maximised the total investment under the Go for Gold Fund. It is not expected that further funding will be made available as part of this fund.

Where do I find the program guidelines?

- The Program Guidelines can be found at
  https://qed.qld.gov.au/programsinitiatives/department/Documents/go-for-gold-guidelines.pdf

Can schools be reimbursed for expenses incurred to prepare an application (e.g. QS Estimates, Architect Drawings, grant writing fees)?

- No. Fees incurred to prepare a submission are at the expense of the applicant school. The exception to this is for projects prioritised under Categories 2 or 3 that were requested by the Department to obtain quantity surveyor costs. DoE may refund costs associated with obtaining a quantity surveyor at the Department's request up to $5,000, at its discretion.

Can schools request feedback on their application?

- Yes. Principals of unsuccessful schools wishing to receive feedback on their application can contact the Priority Program team by email at PriorityPrograms.StrategicInvestment@qed.qld.gov.au.

Can schools have their outcome reviewed?

- If applicants are dissatisfied with how their application has been handled, or a decision about their application, they can find information about the department's Customer Complaints Management System here.

Appendix A

Summary of Prioritisation Process metrics

Process	Description	Outcome
Assessment	Eligible applications were assessed and scored on the strength of responses as per the assessment criteria stated within the Guideline (P.22), giving a final weighted score	Initial ranked list of applications informed short listing of projects for further evaluation consideration.
QBuild Due Diligence	A desktop due diligence conducted by QBuild on short listed projects for all categories. This included a review of town planning, delivery options, development approval history and a review of environmental legislation.	Risk rating of: High Medium Low
DoE IDO Due Diligence	DoE IDO undertook due diligence assessment, considering buildability and feasibility of the proposal.	Confidence rating of: Very high High Medium Low Very low
Service planning	The Strategy and Service Planning team undertook a review to identify issues with strategic alignment over the planning horizon. Note: Service planning consideration was only applied to state schools.	Projects that present a lack of alignment, resulting in significant site planning constraints may be removed from consideration for funding under Go for Gold Round 2.
Accessibility/Remoteness Index of Australia (ARIA+)	Considered the official leading Australian indicator of remoteness. This metric breaks down into five areas, Very Remote, Remote, Inner Regional, Outer Regional, Inner City. All projects were evaluated to ensure, where possible, an even split of projects between city and regional/remote areas.	Scale as follows: Very Remote Remote Outer Regional Inner Regional Major Cities

Process	Description	Outcome
Variety of sports	A program level appreciation was undertaken of the variety of sports included in the prioritised list.	Potential to influence number of projects of a particular sporting discipline recommended for funding.
Location	A program level appreciation was undertaken of the locational distribution of projects included in the prioritised list. This included a map appreciation of prioritised school locations and ARIA categorisation (degree of remoteness).	Where possible, the program aims to achieve a spread of funded projects across the State (with a desirable target of not less than 50% of projects in each category awarded to regional and remote areas).
Stage 2 QS Assessment	Prioritised projects for which funding was sought under Categories 2 or 3 (that is over $500,000 (excluding GST), on a location-adjusted basis) were subject to a second stage of assessment. Applicants for funding for prioritised projects were requested to obtain quantity surveyor (QS) confirmation of costs.	Informed the total grant value for projects that were identified as having a low cost confidence at the due diligence stage. The outcomes of the QS process had no impact on the ranking of prioritised projects.
Total		Overall prioritisation ranking of: Does not meet Low Moderate Strong