

Territory benefit policy review summary

Introduction

In January 2023 the Department of Industry, Tourism and Trade finalised its first review of the Territory benefit policy (TBP). The aims of the review were to:

- assess awareness of the policy
- examine how the policy is implemented
- review the process of developing a Territory benefit plan
- identify opportunities for improving the policy and processes.

Due to the long lead time of projects requiring a Territory benefit plan and the small number of plans approved since the policy was introduced, the review did not include an evaluation of the effectiveness of the policy in improving employment outcomes for Territorians or delivering economic or social benefits to the NT.

Significant stakeholder consultation was undertaken as part of the review, and DITT extends its gratitude to everyone who contributed their time.

Overview of review findings

Overall, stakeholders support the Territory benefit policy, noting it is reasonable to expect project proponents receiving NT Government support to maximise the benefits of their project for Territorians and to demonstrate these benefits in a Territory benefit plan.

Some stakeholders raised concerns about transparency in the process of developing a Territory benefit plan; and managing compliance with agreed Territory benefit plan commitments. The review also identified a lack of awareness of the policy in some organisations and agencies consulted.

The review recommendations and sub-recommendations address these findings and aim to strengthen administration of the policy and streamline the process of developing a Territory benefit plan.

Recommendations

Recommendation 1: Identify the appropriate work unit and department to administer the TBP.

This recommendation has been completed.

The Territory Benefit Policy will continue to be administered by the Industry Strategy team within the Department of Industry, Tourism and Trade.

Recommendation 2: Increase awareness of the Territory benefit policy.

This recommendation has largely been completed, with an online training module for NTG project managers currently under development.

- **A dedicated Territory benefit policy web portal has been established** to host guidance material and templates; links to organisations available to assist with community engagement, information, support and advice on Territory benefit plan contents and actions; case studies of successful Territory benefit plan initiatives (as more plans are implemented and the outcomes become available); and importantly, links to the online publication of project proponents' Territory benefit plan commitments.

The web portal will support the process of developing a Territory benefit plan by providing guidance for project proponents, and also strengthen compliance and transparency by providing a location for Territorians to access information about the projects requiring a Territory benefit plan.

- **Existing guidance material will be updated and made available online in accessible formats.**

The guidance material includes links to organisations able to support project proponents with information to inform actions in the Territory benefit plan, such as the Industry Capability Network and Indigenous Business Network.

- **Templates have been developed.**

- o The *Territory benefit plan template* will streamline the process of developing a Territory benefit plan by clarifying the essential elements that must be included; and providing examples of other elements that may relate to a specific project. The template is customisable to provide the flexibility to adapt to the unique characteristics of each project.
- o The project proponent *Monitoring template* will identify the components of the Territory benefit plan that project proponents are required to report on to the NT Government project manager on a regular basis (minimum annually) to monitor compliance with agreed Territory benefit plan commitments.

The *Monitoring template* can be used by project proponents to meet their obligations for online reporting of progress in achieving the agreed Territory benefit plan commitments.

- **An online training module is being developed for NT Government project managers** to help them understand their role and responsibilities in supporting the project proponent.
- **Awareness raising across government is being undertaken** to ensure new and existing project managers are aware of the policy and how and when it applies.

Recommendation 3: Amend the Territory benefit policy to strengthen compliance.

This recommendation has been completed.

- **Specify that for projects where a Territory benefit plan is mandated, the plan must be produced by the time the project's final investment decision is reached.**

This amendment establishes a timeframe for proponents and NT Government project managers to work towards and provides ample time to plan, develop and finalise the Territory benefit plan.

- **Require proponents to report on implementation of Territory benefit plan commitments to the NT Government project manager at agreed intervals.**

The Territory benefit policy already requires project proponents to publicly communicate Territory benefit plan commitments. Amending the policy to also require proponents to report regularly (minimum annually) to the NT Government project manager on progress in achieving the commitments establishes a formal process to identify issues or concerns that could impact implementation.

- **Incorporate a Territory benefit plan review and amendment process.**

This policy amendment relates to the requirement for project proponents to report to the NT Government project manager on implementation of Territory benefit plan commitments and will ensure any commitments that are unable to be delivered are reviewed in a timely manner and amended if required.

The intention is not to penalise proponents if they are unable to achieve Territory benefit plan commitments – for whatever reason. The purpose of this amendment will ensure Territory benefit plan commitments are reasonable and achievable and if they are not able to be achieved, the commitment(s) will be amended.

- **Require annual project updates to be reported to NT Government executives.**

This policy amendment will incorporate the regular Territory benefit plan implementation updates required by project proponents and NT Government project managers to inform annual reports to NT Government Chief Executive Officers.

- **Clarify the roles and responsibilities of all parties.**

This policy amendment will enhance understanding by project proponents and NT Government project managers of their responsibilities under the policy; and improve transparency.

Recommendation 4: Amend the Policy to exclude grant funding.

[This recommendation has been completed.](#)

NT Government grant funding typically supports service delivery for Territorians that is better suited or more appropriately provided by the funding recipient than by the government. The nature of the grant funded service is generally aimed at benefiting the community or specific sections of the community.

Existing grant administration processes, including agency- and program-specific terms and conditions, impose compliance and reporting obligations on grant recipients. Requiring additional demonstration of benefit to Territorians through development of a Territory benefit plan was considered to be duplicating this process.

Stakeholders consulted

- Australian Government's Department of Industry, Science and Resources
- Chamber of Commerce and Industry NT
- Department of Corporate and Digital Development
- Department of Education
- Department of Health
- Department of Industry, Tourism and Trade
- Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Logistics
- Department of Territory Families, Housing and Communities
- Department of the Chief Minister and Cabinet
- Department of the Environment, Parks and Water Security
- Group Training NT
- Industry Capability Network NT
- Industry Skills Advisory Council NT
- Local Government Association of the NT
- NT Buy Local Industry Advocate
- NT Indigenous Business Network
- Supply Nation