Regional Development Australia

Better Practice Guide

This guide provides information for members and staff of Regional Development Australia (RDA) Committees.

This document is to be used in conjunction with the 2013-16 Funding Agreement, and sets out the obligations which accompany RDA funding, administered by the Department of Infrastructure and Regional Development.

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RDA Committees should access rda.gov.au to ensure that the most up to date version of the templates is used.
INTRODUCTION

The Regional Development Australia Better Practice Guide
This Regional Development Australia Better Practice Guide (‘the Guide’) assists Regional Development Australia (RDA) Committee Chair, Deputy Chairs, members and employees to manage their RDA Committee and its business.

The Guide provides information and guidance on governance, administration and operational matters. It also provides more detail on aspects of the Funding Agreement (the successor to the Operational Funding Contract, known as the Operational Funding and Resources Contract in Queensland), which sets out the funding for RDA Committees provided by the Commonwealth and the obligations which accompany provision of this funding. As Funding Agreements may vary between states and territories and RDA Committees, this Guide should be read in conjunction with the Funding Agreement for each RDA Committee. Where there are differences between the Guide and the Funding Agreement, the Funding Agreement takes precedence. Where there are differences between the Funding Agreement and the Guide and state and territory incorporation legislation, the relevant legislation takes precedence.

The information in this Guide promotes principles of good governance. As RDA Committees receive Commonwealth funding, they must operate in an open and transparent manner that reflects their accountability for the expenditure of government funds.

The Department encourages RDA Committees to build on the information in this Guide and to make use of the suggested references. This Guide is designed to support your organisation to meet conformance and performance expectations, however it is not exhaustive. The Guide is a living document and may be updated from time to time to reflect changes in Commonwealth policies and programs or variations to the Funding Agreement.

If you have questions about any aspect of the Guide or the Funding Agreement, please contact your Liaison Officer for assistance.

The Australian Government’s Role in the Management of RDA Committees
The relevant Commonwealth Minister may be jointly responsible for government support of the RDA network with state and territory counterparts. RDA Committee Chair and Deputy Chair appointments are also made by the Commonwealth Minister, and this may be jointly, or in consultation with state and territory Ministers and other stakeholders. In South Australia, appointments are made on a tripartite basis, involving the Local Government Association of South Australia.

The Department of Infrastructure and Regional Development, or equivalent (the Department), assists the RDA network and monitors the expenditure of Australian Government funding and RDA Committee performance. It does this to help RDA Committees achieve their goals within the Government’s announced policy intentions and in accordance with the obligations set out in the Funding Agreement. The Department strategically develops and reviews the national governance framework for the RDA network, promotes the RDA network to other government agencies, assesses RDA Committee outcomes, and plans and distributes key messages.

The Department also provides some administrative and operational support to RDA Committees, including, providing advice about sound governance practices, and managing the Funding Agreement. A key part of the Department’s support is communication, both within the RDA network and about the RDA network. It maintains the RDA website and prepares promotional products from time to time.

Regional Development Australia Committees are known as Regional Development Australia Boards in South Australia.
The RDA website enhances communication and the dissemination of information between RDA Committees, regional communities and the Department. It contains RDA maps by state, territory and region, and provides up-to-date information on RDA Committee membership. One of the key features of the RDA website is the ‘members only’ area, which allows Committees to access important operational documents, such as insurance policies, branding guidelines and logos and this Guide. See www.rda.gov.au

Each RDA Committee will have various liaison points with the Department of Infrastructure and Regional Development. All departmental officers are bound to behave ethically and in line with Australian Public Service Values and Employment Principles, and the Australian Public Service Code of Conduct.

Officers within the Department undertake to:

- manage the Funding Agreement in a manner that is proactive and transparent;
- provide guidance on the provisions of the Guide;
- make any necessary variations to the Funding Agreement, including drafting and consulting RDA Committees;
- receive feedback on the Guide and amend it as necessary;
- remind RDA Committees of their Outcome requirements and Contract Deliverables as they arise; receive and assess these Deliverables, and advise the results of assessment in a timely manner;
- pay RDA Committees in accordance with the Funding Agreement and without unnecessary delay; advise when payments have been approved;
- monitor, support and assess the performance of RDA Committees in relation to the Outcomes and Key Performance Areas identified in the Funding Agreement and provide constructive feedback;
- provide timely responses to enquiries either verbally or in writing;
- manage Committee membership vacancies and the appointment process, including provision of a dedicated RDA Expression of Interest (EOI) helpline; 1800 505 938 (Monday–Friday 9am–5pm AEDST) and rdaeoi@infrastructure.gov.au; and
- provide open and regular communication, including through RDA Alert e-mails and the www.rda.gov.au website.

The Liaison Officer identified in the Funding Agreement is your primary point of contact with the Department and plays a facilitation role to link RDA Committees with other sections of the Department as appropriate.
SECTION 1 – REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT AUSTRALIA (RDA)

1.1 Overview
Regional Development Australia (RDA) is a national initiative which seeks to grow and strengthen the regions of Australia. Comprising 55 Committees, the RDA network covers metropolitan, rural and remote regions across the country. RDA Committees are strong advocates for their region and drivers of change and, as such, have a pivotal role in fostering regional economic development.

The RDA network strengthens partnership across all three tiers of government, regional business and the wider community to boost the economic capability and performance of regions. RDA Committees should be active in promoting Australian Government programs and shepherding communities towards appropriate funding sources that will assist projects that work towards economic development.

1.2 The Australian Government’s Regional Approach
The Australian Government’s approach to regional development is built on the understanding that stronger regions make for a stronger nation. The Government understands that Australia’s regions are vital to our national economy as drivers of key industries which generate the bulk of our export earnings.

Expertise from local governments, RDA Committees, businesses and community groups helps to ensure that government actions align with the needs of local communities.

Importantly, the Australian Government understands the power of partnerships. No one level of government alone can effectively respond to regional priorities and needs. Partnerships are integral to making the most of a region’s strengths. They ensure that regional development efforts are coordinated, complementary and aligned to the needs of local communities.

RDA Committees use a regional economic development framework to promote long-term regional economic growth and provide a practical focus for strengthening Australia’s regions. They can be grouped into five broad themes:

- **People and skills**—human capital, particularly the education and skills required to take advantage of a region’s comparative and competitive advantages;
- **Sustainable regional communities**—the combination of policies, and investment in services and social infrastructure that help deliver economically, environmentally and socially sustainable communities and population growth;
- **Connecting to markets**—access to international, national and regional markets, whether by road, rail, air, sea and the internet;
- **Comparative advantage and business competitiveness**—helping regions to make the most of their strengths or comparative advantages, including through economic diversification, to foster their national and international competitiveness;
- **Partnerships and planning**—effective partnerships that span sectors and the three levels of government, including integrated regional planning which aligns the objectives of government, business and the community to coordinate development efforts at different levels;

A focus on these themes is supporting the Government’s regional approach, backed by investments in regional communities and delivered in partnership with other levels of government, RDA Committees and local communities.
1.3 Regional Development Australia

1.3.1 What is RDA?
RDA Committees are incorporated not-for-profit community-based organisations (with the exceptions of the Victorian-based RDA Committees, which are not incorporated). Committee members are volunteers drawn from the region and who bring leadership, skills and experiences from the community, business, local government and not-for-profit organisations. Each RDA Committee has a broad and diverse skills base, with demonstrated networks and alliances.

RDA Committees are encouraged to work together where they have common interests and common boundaries.

1.3.2 RDA Committees—Outcomes
As prescribed in the Funding Agreement, RDA Committees are responsible for achieving five key Outcomes as set out below. Section 3.4 ‘Annual Report on Outcomes and Annual Audited Accounts’ discusses information on the three Key Performance Areas RDA Committees report across in providing evidence of achievement against each of the Outcomes. Locally relevant Key Performance Indicators may be set by RDA Committees in their Annual Business Plans and reporting against them will form part of Annual Reports on Outcomes.

Outcome 1: Regional Plan
A current three to five-year plan that focusses on economic development of Your region. Your plan must take into account any relevant Commonwealth, state, territory and local government plans.

Outcome 2: Critical issues
Advice to Us on critical issues affecting Your region.

Outcome 3: Priority activities
Advice to Us on priority activities that will drive regional economic development, on future economic opportunities and on Your region’s comparative advantages, based on consultation and engagement with community leaders.

Outcome 4: Project proposals
Assistance to local community stakeholders in order for them to develop project proposals; and referral of stakeholders to appropriate public and/or private funding sources - including the $1 billion National Stronger Regions Fund.

Outcome 5: Promote Australian Government Programs
Increased awareness of Australian Government programs in Your RDA’s region.

1.4 Partnership Arrangements
The Australian Government’s preference is for a tripartite arrangement in each jurisdiction to support the RDA Committees. South Australian RDA Boards continue to be supported in this way with significant financial support from the South Australian Government and the Local Government Association of South Australia. New South Wales and Victorian RDA Committees continue to be supported by state government funding. Queensland, Western
Australia, Tasmania, Australian Capital Territory and the Northern Territory Governments do not provide financial support to the RDA Committees but continue to collaborate on regional economic development activities with the RDA Committees.

1.5 Legal Framework

Note that this section does not apply to Victorian RDA Committees as they are not incorporated and receive funding from the Commonwealth via Regional Development Victoria.

1.5.1 Incorporation

To receive funding, RDA Committees must be incorporated bodies under the relevant state or territory incorporated association legislation. The exceptions are RDA Committees in Victoria, which are administered through Regional Development Victoria.

Incorporated association legislation takes precedence over this Guide and the Funding Agreement. It is the responsibility of RDA Committees and their employees to remain informed of their obligations and responsibilities under the relevant state or territory legislation and the Committee’s constitution. Such responsibilities may cover governance requirements, conflict of interest arrangements, record and account keeping, auditing obligations, and taxation arrangements.

1.5.2 RDA Committee Constitution and Rules of Association

In most jurisdictions, the legislation requires incorporated associations to develop a constitution. The constitution\(^2\) of incorporated RDA Committees includes the rules for running an incorporated legal entity.

It is the responsibility of each RDA Committee to periodically review its constitution and to make necessary amendments to ensure that it conforms to:

- current state and territory laws relating to incorporated associations, as these can be subject to regular changes;
- the Funding Agreement, including any variations made from time to time; and
- the requirements of this Guide, which also are subject to amendment.

To give effect to amendment to their constitutions (and rules of association), RDA Committees should:

- consult the Department (and state or territory and local governments, if appropriate) on any proposed significant changes to their constitution. In doing this, the RDA Committee should write to their Liaison Officer, as prescribed in the Funding Agreement;

- only alter the constitution (including an alteration to the Association’s name) by special resolution of the members.

RDA Committees should provide a revised copy of their amended constitution to the Department within 30 days of the amendments being registered with the relevant state or territory government authority.

Where an RDA Committee is considering a constitutional amendment or other means of changing its name, it should also give consideration to the following:

- ‘Regional Development Australia (RDA)’ should be retained in the name;

\(^2\) Called Rules of Incorporation or Rules of Association in some States and Territories.
the proposed new name should reflect the geography and characteristics of the region; generic names or names which do not reflect the nature and location of the RDA Committee are not appropriate;

newly established RDA Committees should not change their name for at least twelve months from the time of establishment.

Once the name change has been discussed with all parties, RDA Committees should undertake the necessary legal processes to formally change their incorporated name with the relevant state or territory bodies and advise the Department in writing within 30 days of the formal name change.

1.5.3 Funding Agreement

The Funding Agreement sets out the funding that the Commonwealth provides to each RDA Committee, the terms and conditions attached to the provision of funding, and agreed outcomes and contract deliverables. The Agreement sets out standard obligations for RDA Committees.

If an RDA Committee breaches its obligations under the Agreement, the Commonwealth may terminate the Funding Agreement and cease funding the RDA Committee. Grounds for termination are set out in the Agreement.

Arrangements with state and territory governments vary. In most jurisdictions the Agreement is between the Commonwealth of Australia (as represented by the Department) and each individual RDA Committee. In Victoria, a single Funding Agreement between the Department and Regional Development Victoria (RDV) covers all Victorian RDA Committees.

The Agreement sets out the commitments and obligations of all parties to that Agreement.

1.6 RDA Committee Funding

1.6.1 Funding Sources

RDA Committees receive funding from the Commonwealth under the Funding Agreement.

Subject to the provisions of the Agreement on termination with costs, the Commonwealth can change the level of funding it provides to an RDA Committee in response to administrative or government policy changes.

RDA Committees may also receive funding from state or territory governments and local government bodies, either in cash or in-kind form.

Subject to provisions of the Agreement on third party arrangements, RDA Committees may, at their own initiative, obtain contributions from other sources. This includes from Commonwealth agencies other than the Department of Infrastructure and Regional Development. As outlined in the Funding Agreement, RDA Committees must provide the Department with at least five business days’ notice in writing of significant proposed arrangements that they intend to enter into with a third party, including those involving major payments. A major payment is regarded as $50,000 or greater. RDA Committees should write to their Liaison Officer about such proposed arrangements.

1.6.2 Funding

Funding is provided to support the RDA Committees in delivering Outcomes and Contract Deliverables, as set out in Schedule A of the Funding Agreement. Funding amounts, any additional terms or restrictions and a payment schedule are set out under ‘Funding
Payments’ at A.6 of Schedule A of the Funding Agreement.

RDA Committees prepare annual budgets to use these funds in undertaking their Approved Annual Business Plan. The RDA Committee must submit the Annual Business Plan and Budget to the Department for approval. See the Annual Business Plan and Budget template in the Attachments to this Guide. The template must be used.

Expenditure must be clearly aligned with the Approved Annual Business Plan and Budget. The Department generally regards as reasonable expenditure costs such as accommodation, staff salaries, office supplies and equipment, marketing expenses, motor vehicle costs and travel costs, and providing for stakeholder consultation or information sessions.

Clause 6.15 of the Funding Agreement sets out that the RDA Committee must seek the Department’s approval if it wishes to transfer more than 15 per cent of the total Approved Budget from one Funding expenditure item to another Funding Expenditure item in the one financial year. The main purpose of this requirement is so that the Department is aware of any intention to substantially change the RDA Committee’s activities from those approved in the Approved Annual Business Plan and Budget.

It is generally a matter for an RDA Committee to decide whether costs to be incurred in achieving outcomes are reasonable, however the Department does not generally regard international travel as reasonable. Should a Committee believe that an exceptional case can be made for international travel, the RDA Committee should write to their Liaison Officer for consideration of approval. This should include a business case that demonstrates the relevance of the travel to the Outcomes and Approved Annual Business Plan and the implications for the rest of the work as set out in the Annual Business Plan, and provide any other information requested by the Department. The Department may impose terms and conditions.

End of Financial Year

Clause 6.16 of the Funding Agreement requires that an RDA Committee must write to the Department if more than 15 per cent of the total Budget remains unspent at the end of the financial year and the RDA Committee wishes to treat that unspent amount as Funding for the following Year (note: this refers to Funding to support your Committee to deliver the Contract Deliverables and achieve the Outcomes rather than specific Project Funding).

If you identify this unspent funding of more than 15 per cent when you are preparing your Annual Business Plan and Budget and you wish to treat that unspent amount as Funding into the new year, it should be identified in the Budget which forms part of the Annual Business Plan that you are submitting and submitted along with a business case.

Please note that it is the Department’s preference that you identify any unspent funding at the end of the financial year when you are preparing your Annual Business Plan and Budget. However, whether you present your business case to carry the funds over when submitting your Annual Business Plan and Budget, or later in the year after you have completed your Annual Audited Accounts, you should include the following information when writing to the Department with that request:

- the amount;
- the reason for delay in completing the approved activity;
- what the carry-over amount would be used for and by when if approved;
- the impact on achieving the Outcomes and Contract Deliverables;
- the benefit of the carry over to the RDA program as a whole and to the RDA Committee’s region.
1.6.3 Project Funding

Project Funding is provided by the Commonwealth to particular RDA Committees from time to time to undertake specified activities, as agreed by both parties and set out in a schedule to the Funding Agreement.

The broad requirements for the management of such funding are the same as for annual Funding, but the timing of payments and reporting requirements will be as specified in the relevant schedule(s) to the Funding Agreement. Acquittals and reporting may be additional to that provided for in the main body of the Funding Agreement.

1.6.4 RDA Committee Registrations

To facilitate the provision of funding by the Australian Government, all RDA Committees should:

- maintain an Australian Business Number (ABN);
- notify the Department within fourteen days if they cease to maintain an ABN; and
- correctly quote their ABN on all documentation to the Department and any other Commonwealth agency.
SECTION 2 – RDA COMMITTEE GOVERNANCE

2.1 Selection and Appointment Processes

2.1.1 Procedures for Chair, Deputy Chair and Committee Member Appointments

As provided for in the Funding Agreement, appointments of RDA Committee Chairs and Deputy Chairs are made by the Commonwealth Minister responsible for regional development; and, in some jurisdictions, by the state or territory Minister responsible for regional development. In South Australia, the South Australia Local Government Association is also a funding partner and will be a party to Chair and Deputy Chair appointments.

RDA Committee Chairs and Deputy Chairs appoint Committee members following consultation with and agreement from the relevant Commonwealth Minister and the relevant state or territory Minister and local government bodies where that state/territory/local government contributes significant financial or in-kind support to RDA Committees.

The Department has produced a booklet for Chairs and Deputy Chairs to refer to when appointing Committee members titled *RDA Guide for Appointing Committee Members*, accessible on the rda.gov.au website. It outlines the roles and responsibilities of Chairs and Deputy Chairs in making appointments and the assistance the Department will provide throughout the Committee member appointment process.

Applications for Committee membership are sought through a public Expression of Interest (EOI) process. For the appointment of Chairs and Deputy Chairs, this process is undertaken by the Department. Chairs and Deputy Chairs conduct an EOI process to appoint new Committee members with guidance provided by the Department. All EOIs are submitted to the Department and comprise a standard set of information to ensure that the Minister and Chairs and Deputy Chairs have sufficient information to consider each applicant. The EOI process ensures that RDA Committee Chairs, Deputy Chairs and Committee members:

- collectively bring a diverse range of skills, experience and expertise to the Committee;
- reflect the economic, social, gender and cultural diversity of their region; and
- possess a sound understanding of the economic, social and environmental opportunities and challenges facing their region.

Chairs, Deputy Chairs and Committee members are drawn from a variety of backgrounds, such as business, local government, industry, not-for-profit organisations, community groups, the education and health sectors, and environmental organisations. Women, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, people with diverse cultural backgrounds, people with disabilities and people from across every age group are encouraged to submit an EOI. All EOIs will be considered against the skills and expertise needed by RDA committees.

Appointments to Committees can vary in length, for up to three years.

2.1.2 Filling Vacancies

Interested community members can submit an EOI to become a Committee member, Chair or Deputy Chair of an RDA Committee at any time. From time to time EOIs for RDA Chairs and Deputy Chairs are advertised by the Department with a specific closing date,
usually when the terms of a significant number of RDA Chairs and Deputy Chairs are expiring. A similar process may be conducted by Chairs and Deputy Chairs, with the Department’s assistance, when advertising for new Committee members.

Submissions received after the closing date for advertised rounds may not be included during the specific appointment phase, but will still be considered for future Committee vacancies.

EOIs for Chair, Deputy Chair or Committee member positions must be submitted by completing the appropriate EOI form and submitting the form to rdaeoi@infrastructure.gov.au. The EOI form is available at http://rda.gov.au/join-your-rda for downloading. Alternatively, interested applicants can email a request for the EOI form and relevant documents from rdaeoi@infrastructure.gov.au.

The Department manages all administrative requirements concerning Chair and Deputy Chair appointments, including consulting individual RDA Committees on their skills needs and geographic representation requirements.

The administrative requirements for appointing Committee members will be shared between Chairs, Deputy Chairs and the Department as outlined in the RDA Guide for Appointing Committee Members. Chairs and Deputy Chairs will complete the process of assessing applications for new Committee members and finalise the proposed new Committee members after consultation with and agreement from the relevant Commonwealth Minister and the relevant state/territory Minister and local government bodies where that state/territory/local government contributes significant financial or in-kind support to RDA Committees.

Applicants for all positions will be considered against the identified skills and expertise requirements of the relevant RDA Committee, with priority given to applicants who best match the required profile. Account is taken of the geographic and cultural diversity and demographic profile of each region, gender balance and age ranges.

At the conclusion of every round, successful Chair and Deputy Chair applicants will be made an offer of appointment in writing by the Commonwealth Government Minister and where relevant the state or territory Minister and the appropriate local government organisation. The Department will write to unsuccessful Chair and Deputy Chair applicants, where appropriate, advising that their expression of interest may be considered for future vacancies.

Successful Committee member applicants will be made an offer of appointment in writing by the Chair and Deputy Chair, who should also notify unsuccessful applicants, and where appropriate, advise that their EOI may be considered for future vacancies.

The process to fill a casual vacancy is discussed at 2.4.4 below.

2.1.3 Public Sector Appointees to RDA Committees

There is no necessary legal impediment to a person holding a position as a member of an RDA Committee in an individual capacity (i.e. not ex officio) while they are a public servant or other paid employee in the public sector. However, they should take care to ensure that their duties as an RDA Committee member do not otherwise interfere with their duties and obligations to their employer and vice versa. This may include disclosing their appointment to their employer. They should also seek to avoid any conflict of interest, such as by not improperly using their employment to gain a benefit or advantage for the Committee through the provision of information that would not normally be available outside the organisation. The risk that membership of an RDA Committee raises such problems is
significantly greater if the employment is related to any policy field or issues relevant to the Committee.

Although a conflict may be more apparent than real, even the appearance of such a conflict may harm public confidence in the RDA Committee concerned. RDA Committee members who are public servants should ensure that any real or potential conflicts of interest are declared. The Australian Public Service Commission provides advice on such issues for Commonwealth public servants that may also be of broader interest to RDA Committees—see for example the publication *In Whose Interest?*, at http://www.apsc.gov.au/publications-and-media/current-publications/in-whose-interest

Further information on conflict of interest is at section 5.6 of this Guide.

### 2.2 Role of RDA Committee members

#### 2.2.1 Chairs and Deputy Chair

Committee Chairs and Deputy Chairs are members of the community committed to the development of their region. They:

- are knowledgeable about the region, including economic, social, cultural and environmental opportunities and challenges
- are strong advocates for their region
- have established networks
- bring together and present community views and interests, and
- are skilled in financial management, governance and leadership.

There are two key roles for the Chair of an RDA Committee—to provide strategic direction and leadership to the Committee, and to develop and ensure continued adherence to sound governance arrangements.

The role of the Deputy Chair is to assume the role and duties of the RDA Chair, as defined above, whenever the Chair is not available. The Deputy Chair also plays an important role in supporting the Chair in day-to-day matters, including the chairing of sub-committees, and will have similar skills to the Chair.

Chairs and Deputy Chairs share the key role of appointing suitable Committee members ensuring that the skills and experience of appointees adequately reflects the representation requirements and skills needs of their RDA.

#### 2.2.2 Committee Members

Committee members play an equally important role. They are expected to have or quickly gain a strong understanding of their region and the key issues it faces. They should be strong advocates for both their region and the Committee, and foster a region-wide view of issues. Members will also actively contribute to debate within the Committee and guide the preparation of reports, plans and other RDA Committee documents.

Under the strategic direction of the Chair, Committee members will:

- actively contribute to the RDA Committee’s performance and production of outputs;
- use their particular skills and experience to support the functions and operations of the RDA Committee;
- be aware of and comply with their responsibilities under the Committee’s constitution and rules, relevant incorporated associations’ legislation (where applicable), the Funding Agreement, and this Guide (especially in relation to appointment of Committee members and the Code of Conduct);
- provide a link from the community, local business, and/or local government to the RDA
Committee;
- contribute to sustainable economic development and foster the generation of practical solutions to address social, economic and environmental issues within their region;
- facilitate the prioritisation of issues at a regional level, including by resolving any conflicts between regional priorities;
- represent and promote the RDA Committee in its region;
- actively support and be accountable for RDA Committee performance outcomes as a Committee, an incorporated body (where applicable) and an employer; and
- commit to support the RDA Committee by attendance at RDA meetings.

RDA Committee members are expected to support the Chair and Deputy Chair by:
- actively contributing to and respecting the confidentiality of Committee debates, discussions and decision making, and
- respecting the contributions and views of fellow Committee members.

2.3 Committee Meetings
RDA Committees should hold regular meetings to discuss key issues and make decisions in accordance with the requirements of the Committee’s constitution and the Funding Agreement. Meetings should take advantage of teleconferencing facilities to maximise participation.

RDA Committee meetings should be based on an agenda that has been approved by the Chair. Committees should ensure that the following matters are addressed during their meetings:
- Reiterate conflict of interest procedures at the commencement of the meeting, and record all declarations of conflicts of interest in the Minutes and the action taken to address the conflict.
- Report on year-to-date expenditure against the operational budget;
- Report on progress against achieving Outcomes, Contract Deliverables and the Annual Business Plan and Budget;
- Record all RDA committee decisions and document any actions taken as a result of decisions; and
- Include informed strategic discussion of regional priorities, regional solutions, and the RDA Committee’s ongoing role in these.

RDA Committees should keep accurate Minutes of meetings, including action items, and may be required to provide these to the Department.

2.3.1 Attendance at RDA Committee Meetings by Departmental Staff
Clause 10.6 of the Funding Agreement provides for Departmental staff to attend RDA Committee meetings in an observer capacity. Clause 10.5 provides for RDA Committees to provide notices of meetings and agendas in advance of meetings if requested, as well as minutes, reports and financial statements. Departmental staff must provide adequate notice of their intention to attend and, in attending, will engage in such a way that provides support to the RDA Committees but does not inhibit RDA Committee discussions of strategic matters.

Departmental staff attend in an observer capacity only and should not participate in decision-making by RDA Committees on their internal management. They should provide factual advice relating to the obligations of the RDA Committee under the Funding Agreement, on wider Commonwealth policy or other matters for which the Commonwealth
may have information that will assist RDA Committees in achieving their objectives. Departmental staff should ensure they are in a position to provide advice that might be requested prior to attending the meeting and should actively follow up on advice requested by the RDA Committee after the meeting if they were not in a position to provide advice at the meeting.

2.4 Resignations, Absences and Terminations

2.4.1 Resignation of the Committee Chair, Deputy Chair or Committee Member

RDA Committee members may resign at any time, but should follow relevant procedures set out in the constitution/rules of their RDA Committee. This should include details of arrangements and procedures for advising the Committee about the resignation and the timing of acceptance. The Committee Chair and Executive Officer should ensure that all resignations are consistent with the Committee’s constitution/rules. The Chair should inform the Department of all resignations.

In addition, a Chair or Deputy Chair may resign at any time by providing written advice to the Commonwealth Minister and the state or territory Minister where relevant. The Department should also be advised.

2.4.2 Termination of Appointment

The Commonwealth Minister may, in accordance with the RDA Committee’s constitution/rules, terminate the appointment of a Chair, Deputy Chair at any time through the provision of written advice. The termination of appointments is taken seriously by governments and will normally be preceded by consultations and discussion about issues of concern.

Reasons for the termination of appointments could include, but are not limited to:
- breaching the Code of Conduct and Ethics for Committee members, as outlined in Section 5;
- concerns regarding the administration or performance of the RDA Committee; or
- a change in the Australian Government’s regional priorities and/or policies.

An RDA Committee Chair and Deputy Chair may, after consultation with the Commonwealth Minister and in accordance with the RDA Committee’s constitution or rules, suspend or terminate the appointment of a Committee member through the provision of a written notice. An RDA Committee Chair and Deputy Chair would be expected to demonstrate that they have applied procedural fairness in the suspension or termination of a Committee member.

2.4.3 Leave of Absence

During any absence of an RDA Committee Chair, the Deputy Chair is expected to assume the position and duties of the Chair. The Chair should notify the Department of all periods of leave.

For periods of leave over one month, the RDA Committee Chair should also write to the Commonwealth Government Minister responsible for regional development and, where relevant, the state or territory Minister (and in South Australia, the President of the Local Government Association), advising the period of leave and the Deputy Chair’s availability to fill the vacancy. In the case of absences exceeding six months, the appointment of the Chair may be reviewed.
2.4.4 Chair, Deputy Chair and Committee Member Vacancies

Committees across Australia will have vacancies from time to time. Committee member nominations received through EOI processes will be considered by Chairs and Deputy Chairs for appointment to fill such vacancies as they arise. As with all Chair and Deputy Chair appointments, nominations for vacant Chair and Deputy Chair positions, should they arise, will be considered by the Commonwealth Government Minister responsible for regional development in conjunction with state and territory Ministers and local government organisations where relevant. Nominations to fill vacant Chair positions will also need to be approved by the Prime Minister.

Committee Chairs, Deputy Chairs and members may approach members of their local community whom they consider have the skills and expertise to fill a vacancy. Consideration should be given to ensuring a breadth of experience and expertise, a balance of gender and age, and cultural diversity. Interested members of the community can apply to fill these vacancies at any time by completing an EOI form found at www.rda.gov.au.

The RDA Guide for Appointing Committee Members is provided by the Department to assist Chairs and Deputy Chairs and may be accessed in the members’ section of the rda.gov.au website. Appointments to fill vacancies for Chair, Deputy Chair and Committee member positions will be made as outlined at Section 2.1. RDA Committees can, in the manner permitted in their constitutions, fill a vacancy on an interim basis by appointing a temporary or casual member to a Committee position until such time as a member is appointed in accordance with Section 2.1.

2.4.5 Role and Functions of the Executive Officer

RDA Committees may appoint an Executive Officer to assist them in conducting the business of the Committee. The primary role of the Executive Officer, or equivalent, is to provide advice to the RDA Committee Chair about matters relating to the administration and operation of the RDA Committee, the Funding Agreement, and engagement with the community.

The Executive Officer, as an employee of the organisation, works under the authority of the RDA Committee and is accountable to the Committee. For day-to-day matters, the Executive Officer takes direction from and reports to the RDA Committee Chair. The duties of the Executive Officer of the RDA Committee should include:

- managing the day-to-day affairs of the RDA Committee and its personnel in a manner consistent with this Guide, the Committee’s Regional Plan and Annual Business Plan and Budget, the Funding Agreement, and its constitution (for incorporated committees);
- providing management advice and support to the RDA Committee consistent with the Funding Agreement and this Guide, including:
  - keeping the RDA Committee informed of the status and progress of its business
  - undertaking the accountable and transparent management of RDA Committee funds under the oversight of the Chair
  - ensuring that all RDA Committee reporting and compliance requirements are met
  - ensuring that the RDA Committee operates in accordance with the applicable state or territory incorporation legislation
  - ensuring that the RDA Committee meets its obligations under the Funding Agreement
  - implementing office policies and procedures, and
  - leading and developing RDA Committee personnel (where agreed by the
Committee) and being involved in the recruitment of staff;

- promoting the activities of the RDA Committee within the community and acting as a representative of the Committee as required, including building and maintaining stakeholder relationships;
- implementing decisions and activities as determined by the RDA Committee Chair or Committee;
- developing the RDA Committee’s Regional Plan; Annual Business Plan and Budget; Annual Report on Outcomes and Annual Audited Accounts; and associated management delivery strategies;
- responding to tasks or requests from regional stakeholders;
- assisting in the promotion and facilitation of whole-of-government responses to regional issues; and
- working in partnership with the all tiers of government.

As specified in the Funding Agreement, recruitment of the Executive Officer must be undertaken through an open and transparent recruitment process based on principles of merit and equal opportunity. It would be appropriate to include an independent third party on any panel which conducts interviews for an Executive Officer.

In developing the employment contract between the RDA Committee and the Executive Officer, RDA Committees could use the services of an independent employment expert, such as an industrial relations consultant, legal employment specialist or the Fair Work Ombudsman. The employment contract should include a duty statement and clearly outline the conditions of employment. The conditions of employment should be comparable to other similar positions, especially with regard to termination clauses – an independent employment expert can advise on these matters.

Details on performance measures and reviews and reporting requirements should be clearly stated. Recruitment should also take account of Section 5, Code of Conduct and Ethics for Committee Members and Personnel.
SECTION 3 – COMMITTEE CONTRACT DELIVERABLES: PLANS, REPORTS AND ACQUITTALS

3.1 Overview
The Funding Agreement requires each RDA Committee to submit documents to the Department as contract deliverables on due dates specified in the Funding Agreement. These are the RDA Committee’s:

- Regional Plan;
- Annual Business Plan and Budget;
- Annual Report on Outcomes;
- Annual Audited Accounts;
- Mid-Year Acquittal of Budget Report; and
- Ad hoc reports to the Department on critical and emerging issues.

Templates for each of the above (except for ad hoc reports) are provided as attachments to this Guide. As stated in the Funding Agreement, RDA Committees must use these templates in preparing these outputs.

As provided for in the Funding Agreement, the Commonwealth may request ad hoc reports on particular issues.

This section provides guidance to RDA Committees on the preparation of reports, acquittals and plans. All reports, budgets and acquittals of budgets submitted to the Department must be certified by the RDA Committee Chair prior to submission.

3.2 RDA Committee Regional Plans

3.2.1 What is a Regional Plan?
The Regional Plan is a living document and provides a wide range of stakeholders, potential investors and policy-makers with a better understanding of the region - including strengths, challenges, and needs - and strategic priorities that outline the region’s future ambitions. The audience for the Regional Plan includes communities, community organisations, private enterprise and all levels of government.

Regional Plans assist RDA Committees and their communities to identify comparative advantages, manage regional growth pressures, identify opportunities and address economic development and infrastructure needs. They take into account Commonwealth, state and territory and local government plans. Regional Plans also assist regions to make the most of future opportunities, the evolving Australian economy and changes in the demographics of Australian society.

A Regional Plan is a three-to-five year living document that should focus on the economic development of the region.

RDA Committees may adopt other state and local government agreed regional plans for their Regional Plan (for example the WA Development Commission Blueprints) if those plans analyse regional data and address the economic development and infrastructure needs that have been agreed with state, territory and local governments.

Regional Plans should be reviewed annually and revised when changing regional
priorities, updated regional data or critical issues imply the need for revision. Critical issues are those which are likely to have a significant impact on the current or future economic performance and growth of the region. Where possible, critical issues should be supported by evidence or data. See also below in 3.7 for further discussion on critical issues.

In revising the Regional Plan, RDA Committees must advise the Department of changes as they are made to ensure that the most recent version is available to stakeholders. RDA Committees should ensure that they place the most recent version of their Regional Plan on their website in a printable format. The Department may also request, recommend or advise RDA Committees to make amendments to their Regional Plans following significant policy change or review of the Plan.

The Regional Plan should articulate a clear vision for the region and identify strategic priorities. These guide RDA Committee activities and projects that are set out in the Annual Business Plan and Budget.

The Regional Plan will also serve as a major promotional tool for the Committee and its region, including by supporting investment attraction.

### 3.2.2 Best Practice Regional Plans

The following provides guidance on some critical elements of a best practice Regional Plan.

**Consultation**

- The best Regional Plans are underpinned by comprehensive consultation with key stakeholders to ensure complete coverage of economic development and other issues important to the region. This also ensures that they reflect the expectations of the community and give a strong sense of regional ownership. Stakeholder groups will vary between regions, but usually include governments, community organisations, business and industry groups, education institutions and the not-for-profit sector.

Plans should identify the format, method and outcomes of consultation, including contributions by stakeholders to the implementation of priorities.

*The International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) has developed a Public Participation Spectrum to demonstrate possible types of engagement with stakeholders and communities. This has been widely adopted by Australian Governments. See International Association for Public Participation Australasia: [www.iap2.org.au](http://www.iap2.org.au).*

Other sources of general advice developed by state and territory governments may have relevance to RDA Committees. These include:


Evidence base and data

- Plans provide an economic, social and environmental description of the region from a diversity of evidence sources. These include the Australian Bureau of Statistics, Australian, state/territory and local government data sources and publications, the private and not-for-profit sectors, universities and private research organisations and publications. RDA Committees are encouraged to ensure use of best available data for Regional Plans.

Strategic context

- Plans should outline the strategic context of the document, including the priorities of Australian, state/territory and local governments. This will assist the RDA Committee to identify complementary priorities and align with program and funding opportunities.

- The online budget resources of the Australian Budget and state/territory and local governments will assist RDA Committees with this part of Plan development.

Analysis

- All evidence and data should be accompanied by analysis whereby RDA Committees apply their knowledge of the region to identify its significance and how it supports their strategic vision and priorities. As the reputation and use of the Plans grow, it is important that the levels of analysis in the Plans continue to improve. The best Plans:
  - analyse how the evidence supports the RDA Committee’s regional vision;
  - identify regional strengths, weaknesses, potential threats and opportunities;
  - articulate the drivers of change and regional trends; and
  - outline the RDA Committee’s economic, social or environmental strategic priorities.

- High level actions to support priorities can be included in the Regional Plan and will support a detailed work plan in the RDA Committee’s business plan.

- See 1.2 The Australian Government’s Regional Approach in this Guide for information on the five key themes that provide a practical focus for strengthening Australia’s regions. (A copy of the Framework for Regional Economic Development can be found at: http://www.regional.gov.au/regional/publications/)

Priorities

- After conducting widespread consultations, research and analysis, and detailed consideration, each RDA Committee will determine a series of economic development priorities for the region.

- RDA Committees should seek the endorsement of regional priorities by local governments, and discuss how regional priorities align with or diverge from the priorities of local governments within the region.

- RDA priorities are critical to setting the RDA Committee’s agenda and work plan for the year ahead. They should broadly identify the role of the RDA Committee in achieving and/or influencing priorities and the expected outcomes that deliverables will provide to the region. Detailed arrangements for the implementation of these priorities will be included in the RDA Business Plan.
In developing a Regional Plan, the RDA Committee should seek to bring together and not duplicate existing regional planning documents developed by other organisations. There should usually be a close relationship between the Regional Plan and any state or territory regional business growth plan (or equivalent document).

Regional Plan presentation

Regional Plans are most effective in supporting stakeholders when they are no longer than 60 pages (in total). Lengthy Regional Plans can be difficult for stakeholders to navigate and identify key information about the region. The 60 page length is not compulsory and is only suggested as a guide.

All electronic versions of Regional Plans should be portrait layout (not landscape) and PDF or Word (read only) documents. Regional Plans should not be presented in PowerPoint-style or brochure-style.

All electronic versions of Regional Plans must be word-searchable.

RDA Committees may continue to use the style and branding of previous Regional Plans.

RDA Committees may separately prepare brochures (a regional prospectus or similar document) and online promotional tools but they will be in addition to the Regional Plan. Please note that any products with RDA branding should also be confirmed for branding compliance via rdacommunications@infrastructure.gov.au

The template for Regional Plans is at Attachment A to this Guide. Note some RDA Committees have made separate arrangements for the Regional Plan template to take into account their unique state requirements. RDA Committees must ensure that these Plans also comply with the Regional Development Australia Communications and Branding Guidelines (available at www.rda.gov.au). RDA Committees should confirm that their Plan is compliant prior to finalisation via rdacommunications@infrastructure.gov.au

3.3 Annual Business Plan and Budget

Each RDA Committee must prepare an Annual Business Plan and Budget. This is an operational document which brings together all aspects of the RDA Committee’s activities for the coming financial year, including its work program, priorities and resources. It is also a strategic document, which will underpin decisions of the RDA Committee. It provides operational parameters for the RDA Executive Officer and staff, and assists with determining staffing structures and required skill sets.

The five Outcomes that form part of the Funding Agreement at Schedule A must feature in each Annual Business Plan and Budget. A good Annual Business Plan and Budget will embed the RDA Outcomes, Key Performance Areas and the requirements of the Funding Agreement. It should also be underpinned by effective regional planning, and so needs to incorporate clear linkages to the RDA Committee’s Regional Plan.

RDA Committees may choose to set their own Key Performance Indicators as measurable targets. Activities and performance are reported against each of the five Outcomes in a quantitative, qualitative and narrative sense (Key Performance Areas) in the Annual Report on Outcomes. Refer to Attachment A.1.1 – Guidance in completing template for Annual Business Plan and Annual Report on Outcomes.
RDA Committees should consider discussing their draft Annual Business Plan with their Liaison Officer before sending in the final Annual Business Plan for Departmental approval. Changes to the Annual Business Plan can be proposed during the financial year but require the Department’s approval where they represent a significant shift in activity or focus (whether a shift is significant will be judged on whether the changes result in more than 15 per cent of the Annual Budget being moved between activities as a result of the change).

The template for the Annual Business Plan and Budget is at Attachment A to this Guide and must be used.

3.4 Annual Report on Outcomes and Annual Audited Accounts

The Annual Report on Outcomes presents RDA Committees with an opportunity to share their successes with governments, including how their activities relate to the strategic priorities of the region and of all levels of government. RDA Committees are required to report annually against each of the five RDA Outcomes. As with the Annual Business Plan and Budget, the Annual Report on Outcomes uses a consistent national performance and reporting framework.

For the Annual Report on Outcomes, RDA Committees are required to report to the Department across three Key Performance Areas by providing evidence of their achievement of each of the five Outcomes. RDA Committees are to collect this information and provide it to the Department as we request it and as the RDA Committee identifies critical issues in the region (see 3.7 for discussion on critical issues) as well as collating it for the Annual Report on Outcomes.

RDA Committees may also wish to set their own locally relevant Key Performance Indicators in their Annual Business Plans and report against them in the Annual Report on Outcomes.

Key Performance Areas:

- Quantitative evidence of RDA activity: “What (and how much) did You do? Provide quantified outputs as evidence of Your activities, aligned to each Outcome;

- Qualitative evidence of RDA process: “How well did You do it?” Provide descriptions of the quality of Your activities, including the process or methodology in achieving the Outcomes, and feedback from stakeholders as appropriate;

- Narrative evidence of RDA impact: “Did it have an impact?” Provide case studies demonstrating the impact of Your achievements against the outcomes, including feedback from stakeholders as appropriate.

Refer to Attachment A to this Guide for guidance and the template for completing the Annual Report on Outcomes. The template must be used.

The Annual Audited Accounts provide information for the Department to determine if expenditure by the RDA Committee matched what you said you would spend and is consistent with the provisions set out in the Funding Agreement. For the Annual Audited Accounts, refer also to Attachment A to this Guide for guidance and the template that RDA Committees must use for this report.

3.5 Mid-year Acquittal of Budgets Report

Guidance and the template that RDA Committees must use for this report is at Attachment A to this Guide. The Mid-year Acquittal of Budget Report provides information for the Department to determine if expenditure by the RDA Committee is occurring as set out in the Business Plan and Budget, is consistent with the provisions set out in the
Funding Agreement and as an indicator of progress towards achieving annual Outcomes.

3.6 Ad hoc reports to the Department on critical and emerging issues

One of the contract deliverables set out in Schedule A of the Funding Agreement is for ad hoc reports to the Department on critical and emerging issues.

The Department may request verbal or written information from the RDA Committee from time to time for the purposes of briefing content for the Minister, the Department or the wider Government, or for departmental engagement activities. If any particular format is needed with such a request, that will be conveyed to the RDA Committee by the Department. This contract deliverable also refers to information provided proactively by the RDA Committee in response to critical or emerging issues (positive or negative) identified by the RDA Committee, whether provided verbally or in writing. This is information that the RDA Committee considers the Minister, Department or Government should know in relation to economic development in your region.

3.7 Critical Issues

As well as for ad hoc reports on critical and emerging issues, one of the Outcomes RDA Committees are required to achieve, as set out in Schedule A to the Funding Agreement, is providing advice to the Department on critical issues affecting the RDA Committees’ regions.

As mentioned in the Regional Plan section above, critical issues are those which are likely to have a significant impact on the current or future economic performance and growth of the region. They can be positive or negative in nature. For example, identified critical issues could be those which:

- have a major impact on key industries in the region, or could have flow on impacts to related industries, which in turn have consequences on the comparative advantage and business competitiveness of the region;
- relate to infrastructure, which could affect access to key international, national and regional markets;
- have a relationship to human capital in the region, particularly education and skills;
- affect the sustainable growth of the region. This may include major changes in the political, physical or regulatory environment, which may impede economic growth;
- impact effective cross-sectoral and intergovernmental partnerships in the region.

Most regional plans and profiles include mechanisms which enable the scanning of the horizon. This is done in order to identify weak or emerging signs which may indicate emerging issues which, in turn, could become critical issues in the region. Where possible, critical issues should be supported by evidence or data.

RDA Committees can provide advice on critical issues in the following ways:

- Annual Business Plan and Annual Report on Outcomes;
- Regional Plans, when they are reviewed annually;
- through bi-monthly teleconferences with the Department. These issues will be collated and may be used to brief the Government on top issues by State/Territory, and top issues across the country;
- with your departmental Liaison Officer;
- through correspondence with the Minister and meetings with Ministers. Please provide a copy of the correspondence to the Department so that we are aware of the issues.

The Department will also bring issues to the attention of RDA committees, though the bi-monthly teleconferences, your departmental Liaison Officer, the rda.gov.au website and through other means, as appropriate.
3.8 Acquittal of Budget Report
The template that RDA Committees must use for this report is at Attachment A to this Guide and must be used.

3.9 Ad Hoc Deliverables
In addition to the contract deliverables detailed in Schedule A of the Funding Agreement, there are other particular events or requests that trigger a requirement for the RDA Committee to advise the Department. These include the following:

- an issue arises that may delay, stop or adversely affect the RDA Committee undertaking an Activity set out in any of the Schedules (Clause 2.3 (e) of the Funding Agreement);
- the Department reasonably requires information (Clause 2.3 (g));
- the Department requests (under Clause 10.1);
  - reports and performance information relating to the RDA Committee’s progress in undertaking the Activity (including progress in providing the contract deliverables), and
  - financial information (including bank statements, receipts and invoices) that demonstrate your receipt and expenditure of the Funding and Other Contributions
- the Department requests a written copy of notices of meetings, agendas, and minutes of RDA Committee meetings (including reports and financial statements) (Clause 10.5);
- the RDA Committee proposes to enter into a significant arrangement with a third party (Clause 10.5);
- the Department requests a copy of any insurance policy affected in accordance with the RDA Committee’s obligations to insure, and a certificate of currency of such insurance (Clause 16.4);
- the RDA Committee receives a request for Ministerial or Australian Government representation at launches and functions held by the RDA Committee (Clause 22.3).

3.10 Risk Management Strategy

3.10.1 Importance of Risk Management
Risk management is an important part of good corporate governance and sound management practice. The business of RDA Committees involves some degree of risk which must be managed. Identification and management of risk:

- provides a more confident and rigorous basis for decision-making and planning;
- creates a clearer understanding of opportunities and threats;
- improves the ability to manage uncertainty and variability;
- supports active consideration of change;
- supports effective allocation and use of resources;
- improves the security of assets; and
- improves stakeholder confidence and trust.

The methodology used to identify risk and procedures to be implemented for managing these should be documented and endorsed by the RDA Committee. Each RDA Committee must therefore develop a Risk Management Strategy and review it annually. Suggested tables for use are at Attachment B of this Guide. The Department may request a copy of your Risk Management Strategy.
3.10.2 Developing a Risk Management Strategy

When developing a risk management strategy, the RDA Committee should consider the following (not an exhaustive list):

- **financial matters**—procedures to authorise and monitor expenditure;
- **budget matters**—procedures to monitor expenditure against agreed budget items and identify unauthorised expenditure;
- **contractual matters**—procedures to ensure that funds are expended in accordance with the Funding Agreement, monitoring of the Agreement and prevention of breaches of the Agreement;
- **insurance coverage**—for litigation or professional misconduct, occupational health, safety and welfare, workers’ compensation and motor vehicle;
- **taxation matters**—procedures to ensure adherence with Australian Tax Office requirements and the maintenance of full records for the purposes of fringe benefits and other taxes;
- **assets**—procedures to ensure accurate recording of and accounting for assets, prevention of misuse of assets, and that leasing arrangements are entered into only after approval by the Committee;
- **administrative matters**—procedures to ensure that accurate financial records are kept, breaches of financial policies are identified and addressed, audit reports are obtained and supported by complete documentation, and that appropriate back-ups of electronic records are kept; and
- **employment of staff**—procedures and processes to ensure fair and transparent recruitment, workplace safety, and the use of employment contracts which meet government regulations and enable performance monitoring.

RDA Committees could draw on the *Australian Risk Management Standard (AS/NZS ISO 31000–2009 Risk Management—Principles and Guidelines)*. (The full text of this document is available only for purchase, but some websites provide summaries.)
SECTION 4 – COMMITTEE OPERATIONAL MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK

4.1 Corporate Governance

4.1.1 Definition of Good Corporate Governance

The Australian National Audit Office Better Practice Guide on Public Sector Governance (Volume 1, page 6) defines corporate governance as the “processes by which organisations are directed, controlled and held to account. It encompasses authority, accountability, stewardship, leadership, direction and control exercised in the organisation”.

Good governance arrangements are essential for an organisation to demonstrate to stakeholders that it can deliver what it is set up to do. Such arrangements inspire confidence in stakeholders that the organisation has the necessary skills and expertise to run its business, and that it has established robust administrative arrangements efficiently, effectively and ethically.

Good governance generally focuses on three main requirements of organisations:

- Performance—whereby the organisation uses its governance arrangements to contribute to its overall performance and the delivery of its goods, services or programs;
- Risk management—whereby the organisation manages risk and has contingencies in place to deal with identified risk (see section 3.4);
- Conformance—whereby the organisation uses its governance arrangements to ensure it meets the requirements of the law, regulations, published standards and community expectations of probity, accountability and openness.

4.1.2 Best Practice Corporate Governance Procedures

RDA Committees should adopt best practice corporate governance procedures, notably:

- clear definitions of responsibility, roles of the RDA Committee Chair, Deputy Chair, Committee members and personnel, with clear lines of reporting;
- transparent management processes and procedures for addressing conflicts of interest of those entrusted to manage resources and deliver outcomes;
- delegations must be clear, formalised and reviewed to ensure they are still appropriate;
- open, transparent and independent merit-based recruitment processes; and
- accountability in all operations, particularly in management of expenditure in accordance with the Funding Agreement.

Corporate governance is underpinned by a values system and code of conduct, which outline minimum standards of integrity and ethical behaviour and highlight the transparency and consistency in actions of RDA Committee members and staff. Good corporate governance also requires sound risk management and reporting to the Commonwealth on the findings of conformance reviews.

The basic responsibilities of individual Committee members include:

- understanding and complying with all formal obligations;
- meeting specific roles and responsibilities as outlined in governance documentation;
- formulating strategies, goals and business plans including Committee deliverables;
- reviewing progress towards achieving those goals;
- ensuring adequacy and efficacy of internal controls and reporting systems.

Further information and resources on good corporate governance is at Attachment B.
4.2 Financial Management

4.2.1 Financial Records
Each RDA Committee should implement financial management controls, guidelines and management information reports consistent with Australian Accounting Standards. They should also maintain financial records that comply with the requirements of the Funding Agreement.

4.2.2 Interest on Bank Accounts
Any interest earned on Funding should be used as if it were a part of the Funding. It should be recorded separately from interest earned from Other Contributions. An estimate of interest to be earned on Commonwealth funds should therefore be included in the relevant parts of the Annual Budget. Actual interest earned on Commonwealth funds should be included in the relevant part of the Acquittal of Budgets report.

4.2.3 Taxes, Duties and Government Charges
In resolving or clarifying any issues relating to taxation, it is the responsibility of RDA Committees to obtain financial and legal advice. This may include gaining advice or a Private Ruling from the Australian Tax Office on matters which are particular to the Committee. See www.ato.gov.au.

The Department does not include Goods and Services Tax on Funding Agreement payments, based on section 9–17(3) of the A New Tax System (Goods and Services Tax) Act 1999 which deals with payments made between government-related entities.

With regard to income tax, the Department refers RDA Committees to the Australian Taxation Office publication—Income tax guide for non-profit organisations (Product ID: NAT 7967-03.2007). Committees should also seek advice from a financial adviser.

4.3 Reimbursements, Honoraria, Sitting Fees and Travel Costs
Funding may be used, with Committee approval, to reimburse reasonable travel expenses incurred by Committee members and personnel when they attend meetings related to the work of the RDA Committee or perform RDA Committee activities. Reasonable expenses means items such as domestic travel and accommodation, meals and motor vehicle allowances. In all cases the RDA Committee must ensure that the principles of reasonableness, accountability and value for money are upheld. International travel is generally not regarded by the Department as a reasonable expenditure of Commonwealth Funding.

Funding may not be used for payment of Chair, Deputy Chair or Committee Member honoraria or sitting fees. Sitting fees or honoraria may be paid from funding sources other than the Department’s Funding where that source permits such fees to be paid from their funding, and where the RDA Committee’s Constitution or Rules of Association allow such payments.

See 1.6.2 Funding, above, for further information on reasonable expenditure and travel.

The current rates as set out in the Remuneration Tribunal’s determination can be found at www.remtribunal.gov.au under the determination concerning Official Travel by Office Holders.

An RDA Committee member, including the Chair and Deputy Chair, is not entitled to claim the cost of employing a person to look after their business while they are performing RDA Committee duties.

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3 In some States/Territories, a cap on expenditure which can be reimbursed to Committee members may be in place.
4.4 Other Contributions, Third Party Arrangements and Sponsorships

4.4.1 Contributions by Other Commonwealth Agencies

RDA Committees should also be alert to the very wide range of programs managed by other Commonwealth agencies which they may be able to access as support for specific activities. There may be opportunities, for example, for RDA Committees to obtain funding for investment and industry attraction. See http://australia.gov.au/topics/business-and-industry/grants-and-financial-assistance. Such funding is also subject to the advice in section 4.4.3 on third party arrangements.

4.4.2 Contributions from State or Territory Agencies

Other Contributions may be provided to an RDA Committee from a state or territory government. This may be for operational purposes or for specific activities. Advice about such funding should be set out in the state or territory columns of the RDA Committee’s Annual Budget and the Acquittal of Budgets reports. Such funding is subject to the following advice on third party arrangements.

4.4.3 Third Party Arrangements and Contracting

The Funding Agreement (clause 10.7) requires RDA Committees to provide the Department with advance notice in writing of any significant proposed arrangement that they intend to enter into with third parties. This does not cover the provision of day to day supplies or services. ‘Significant’ proposed arrangements include those with potential to have a notable impact on the RDA Committee’s activities, such as by involving major payments (regarded as $50,000 or greater), necessitating the reallocation of resources, taking up considerable amounts of Committee personnel time and/or having potential to alter the RDA Committee’s relations with stakeholders.

Third party arrangements often involve the provision of goods or services to the RDA Committee. Where this involves the performance of any of the RDA Committee’s obligations under the Funding Agreement, such an arrangement amounts to subcontracting, which requires the Commonwealth’s written approval in all cases.

Some third party arrangements may involve generating income for the RDA Committee. These activities should as far as practical be fully costed to the third party, including a proportion of office expenses (such as rent, telephone, equipment and salaries). Committees should ensure that any third party contracts do not require the support or use of RDA Funding from the Australian Government. Clause 6.5(g) of the Funding Agreement requires the Department’s written permission for any use of Funds to undertake any activity for which the RDA Committee receives Other Contributions.

RDA Committees should be confident that any additional business undertaken on behalf of other organisations does not compromise their activities, including those set out in the Funding Agreement, the Regional Plan and the Annual Business Plan and Budget.

RDA Committee’s party to income-generating arrangements with third parties must complete the ‘other’ funding column set out in the Annual Budget template and Acquittal of Budgets report, and submit this to the Department as part of the budget submission and the budget acquittal processes.

Clause 10.8 of the Funding Agreement prohibits RDA Committees from negotiating for or entering into any arrangement which may bring the Commonwealth into disrepute. This encompasses a very wide range of scenarios. These could be expected to cover anything perceived to be contrary to law, the policies of the Australian Government, or the values that it promotes. RDA Committees should consult the Department as early as possible if they have any concern that a prospective arrangement could raise any such concerns.
4.4.4 Sub-leasing of Premises

RDA Committees should advise the Department before sub leasing office space to third parties. The Department prefers such sub-leases to be with a ‘like’ body, particularly where there are opportunities to support and build networks or to build a relationship to progress the priorities identified in the Regional Plan.

4.4.5 Sponsorships

The provisions in the Funding Agreement at Clause 10 on arrangements with third parties include sponsorships. Sponsorship is a commercial arrangement in which a sponsor provides a contribution in money or in-kind to support an activity in return for certain specified benefits. Sponsorship can be provided by the corporate sector or private individuals in support of an RDA Committee’s activities, or may instead involve the RDA Committee itself granting sponsorship. This does not include unconditional gifts, donations, bequests or endowments. Sponsorship is not philanthropic—a sponsor expects to receive a reciprocal benefit beyond an acknowledgement.

Although there is no prohibition on RDA Committees entering into sponsorships, they should be mindful of any implications for their obligations under the Funding Agreement. This includes, but is not limited to, Clause 10.8 of the Funding Agreement concerning arrangements that may bring the Commonwealth into disrepute, and Clause 10.7 concerning third party arrangements. Entering into sponsorship arrangements either as a recipient of a sponsorship or as a sponsor involves potential risks for the RDA Committee. These can include conflicts of interest, or perceived conflicts of interest.

Prior to entering into any sponsorship agreement, the RDA Committee should have developed a sponsorship policy in accordance with the guidelines provided below, and have assessed the proposal against these principles. The principles should be published by the RDA Committee in advance or circulated to organisations interested in sponsoring or receiving sponsorship.

- a sponsorship agreement should not impose or imply conditions that would limit, or appear to limit, an RDA Committee’s ability to carry out its functions fully and impartially. Instead, sponsorship agreements should be of assistance to carrying out the activities in the RDA Committee’s Annual Business Plan and Budget;
- there should be no actual conflict between the objectives and/or mission of the RDA Committee (and the Commonwealth Government) and those of the sponsor;
- sponsorship should not be political or contentious;
- sponsorship of an RDA Committee activity should not involve explicit endorsement or advertising of the sponsor or the sponsor’s products;
- where sponsorship involves the sponsor providing a product to the RDA Committee, the Committee should evaluate that product for its fitness for purpose against objective criteria that are relevant to the RDA Committee’s needs;
- it is inappropriate for any employee or member of the RDA Committee to receive a personal benefit from a sponsorship;
- in most circumstances, the public interest is best served by making sponsorship opportunities widely known. To this end sponsorships should be sought and granted by using broadly based, open processes that are not limited solely to invited sponsors;
- a sponsorship arrangement is a contract and should be described in a written agreement;
- any sponsorship being granted by the RDA Committee should be within the RDA Committee’s budget;
- all sponsorship arrangements should be approved by RDA Committee and described in the RDA Committee contract deliverables (i.e. the Annual Business
Plan and Annual Report on Outcomes) in a form commensurate with the significance of the sponsorship.

For further information, it is suggested that RDA Committees refer to Sponsorship in the public sector—a guide to developing policies and procedures for both receiving and granting sponsorship, available at www.icac.nsw.gov.au

4.5 Insurance

The Commonwealth provides three types of insurance cover:

- Management Liability (also referred to as Not for Profit Organisation Liability) to a limit of $10,000,000 for each claim;
- Voluntary Workers/Personal Accident (also referred to as Personal Accident) to a limit of $100,000 for each claim; and
- Broadform Liability (also referred to as General and/or Products Liability) Insurance of up to $20,000,000 for each claim.

The policies for all three of these types of insurance coverage and the Certificates of Currency are available by contacting the RDA Helpline on 1800 505 938 and are on the RDA member website (www.rda.gov.au) under ‘Insurance’. It is important for all RDA Committees to familiarise themselves with the content of these insurance policies. Each of these forms of insurance includes coverage of RDA volunteers.

Note that there is no age limit for insurance coverage for Broadform Liability Insurance coverage and Management Liability Insurance however Voluntary Workers/Personal Accident Insurance is only provided for Committee members who are under 85 years of age.

Extraneous ‘out of pocket’ expenses incurred while undertaking RDA Committee activities, such as damage to or loss of personal property, should be managed within the RDA Committee’s budget where these incidents are not covered under the existing insurance policy. The Commonwealth will not pay for this type of additional cover.

It should also be noted that, under the terms of the insurance cover maintained by the Department for the benefit of RDA Committees, the ‘Insured’ (the RDA Committee) is required to pay the ‘Deductible Amount’ (the excess) specified in the policy. The Commonwealth will not pay the excess for any insurance claims. RDA Committees must also ensure that sub-contractors of the RDA Committee are covered by insurance under either the RDA Committee’s insurance policies or separate insurance policies.

If an RDA Committee has any questions when an incident arises, the matter should be discussed directly with the insurance broker, Arthur J. Gallagher Pty Ltd, whilst also informing the Department. Contact details for the insurance broker are:

Mr Ryan Gooley
Principle Client Advocate
Tel: (02) 9242 2036
Email: ryan_gooley@ajg.com

More information on insurance coverage is available in the members’ section at www.rda.gov.au.

RDA Committees will be advised by the Department of any updates to insurance coverage.
4.5.2 **Workers’ Compensation Insurance**  
RDA Committees are responsible for taking out and maintaining Workers’ Compensation Insurance under the relevant state or territory legislation to cover their employees. RDA Committees must be aware of and comply with their legal responsibilities regarding Workers’ Compensation Insurance and Workers Health and Safety.

4.5.3 **Asset Insurance**  
RDA Committees are responsible for taking out and maintaining comprehensive and contents insurance for all assets owned or controlled by the Committee. This would include contents insurance for the RDA Committee premises and specific cover for items not located within the premises.

4.5.4 **Motor Vehicle Insurance**  
RDA Committees are responsible for taking out and maintaining the insurance of any motor vehicle leased by the Committee (subject to the terms of the lease). The use of personal motor vehicles is not covered by the insurance which is procured by the Department, for example driving a personal motor vehicle to and from an RDA Committee meeting.

4.6 **Assets**  

4.6.1 **RDA Committee Responsibilities for Assets**  
The Funding Agreement requires RDA Committees to use assets for the purposes of the Activity, to safeguard their assets, to have regard to sections on assets in this *Guide* and follow any processes in it, and to maintain an Asset register. This also applies to assets that are owned by a third party and are under lease, hire or finance arrangements. Assets that are lost, damaged or destroyed should be promptly reinstated including from the proceeds of asset insurance referred to in clause 16 of the Funding Agreement.

RDA Committees are responsible for purchasing, leasing, managing and disposing of the assets which they acquire with Funding:

- the purchase or lease should be in accordance with the Funding Agreement, and not compromise the RDA Committee’s ability to comply with the Funding Agreement;
- all assets should be held securely to prevent theft, loss, damage or unauthorised use;
- RDA Committees should keep appropriate documentation of all assets, including of their purchase or lease, as well as an assets register.

Asset purchases or leases should also provide value for money, so competitive quotes should be obtained and kept on file. The Department may ask to see these quotes and your assessment of them.

The following provides an outline of good practice asset management that RDA Committees are encouraged to follow.

4.6.2 **Asset Management System**  
RDA Committees should implement an asset management system that sets out procedures to record, monitor and manage assets. Such a system should cover:

- purchasing assets;
- registering assets on the Asset Register (see below);
• testing the assets for impairment as per Australian Accounting Standard AASB 136 ‘Impairment of Assets’ www.aasb.gov.au/Pronouncements/Current-standards.aspx;
• monitoring and recording the replacement of assets; and
• disposal of assets.

4.6.3 Register of Assets
The Register of Assets should record details of all significant assets (such as those valued over $10,000) and all portable and attractive items. The following is an outline template for RDA Committees to follow:

• a description of the asset;
• the date of purchase or lease of the asset;
• the purchase or lease price of the asset;
• the amount of Funding used to purchase or lease the asset;
• details of lease arrangements (if applicable);
• the location of the asset;
• the amount of depreciation on the asset;
• details of disposal of the asset (such as the date and method of disposal, sum received and sales particulars);
• a separate addendum listing all portable and attractive items i.e. those with a high inherent risk of theft, are easily portable or transferrable, and are attractive in terms of their personal use or for resale. This includes mobile telephones, laptops, iPads, tablets, televisions, DVD players and other similar communication tools.

The Register of Assets should be updated whenever assets are acquired or disposed of by the RDA Committee. A copy of the Register of Assets must be provided as part of the RDA Committee’s Annual Audited Accounts.

4.6.4 Stocktake of Assets
RDA Committees should complete a stocktake of their assets every 12 months. This should involve:

• confirming that all items are correctly recorded in the Register of Assets and still in the custody of the Committee;
• checking on the condition of assets, including testing for impairment as per Australian Accounting Standard AASB 136; and
• adding any unrecorded existing assets to the register and removing assets no longer held.

4.6.5 Asset Replacement Account
An important part of asset management is making provision for the replacement of assets as their useful life expires. RDA Committees should budget for the replacement of assets from their Funding and, to support this, may maintain an Asset Replacement account. The dollar value of this account should reflect the accumulated depreciation recorded in the Committee’s General Ledger and needs to reconcile to the Register of Assets.

4.6.6 Asset Disposal
All RDA Committees should have clear procedures for the disposal of assets. Disposal can be sold through auction, tender, trade-in or via a second hand dealer. If sale is not practical, another option is to gift the asset to a charitable organisation, local school or library. To ensure a fair return to the RDA Committee and to avoid any actual or perceived preferential treatment, any disposal transaction should be transparent and at arm’s length from RDA Committee members and personnel. Assets should therefore not be sold to:

• the RDA Committee Chair or Deputy Chair;
• RDA Committee members;
• personnel or staff engaged by the RDA Committee;
• officers of the Department of Infrastructure and Regional Development;
• contractors; and
• friends or relatives of any of the persons set out above.

The sale process should be clearly documented. Profit from the sale of the asset (disposal price less accumulated depreciation) should be deposited into the RDA Committee’s operating account on receipt. That profit remains part of the Funding and must be used for the Activity.

When the Funding Agreement expires or if it is terminated, the Department may require the RDA Committee to deal with an asset in a particular way and would notify the RDA Committee in writing what it must do. This advice does not apply to assets that are owned by a third party.

4.7 Records Management
Records refer here to information in any form that is created, received and maintained as evidence and documentation by the RDA Committee or its personnel in pursuance of legal obligations, including undertaking RDA Committee Activities. Record keeping is an important part of transparency and accountability. RDA Committees should implement a records management system, keep accurate records of operations, and store records securely. Some information recorded may be considered sensitive or ‘in-confidence’, for which particular care should be exercised to ensure integrity and security.

RDA Committees must maintain records and documents consistent with relevant Commonwealth, state or territory legislation and the Funding Agreement. The Funding Agreement requires RDA Committees to make and keep full and accurate records of their conduct of Activities and retain them for a period of no less than seven years after the end of the Activity Period.

The Australian and international standard for records management, AS ISO 15489, provides guidance on records policies and procedures to help meet business needs, legal requirements and stakeholder expectations. It is widely used in Australia and internationally in both private and public organisations. AS ISO 15489 may be purchased from Standards Australia (www.saiglobal.com).

The National Archives of Australia also provides advice at www.naa.gov.au/records-management/agency/—although meant for Commonwealth agencies, much of this advice may also be useful for bodies such as RDA Committees.

Records may be subject to the Freedom of Information Act 1982 (Cth) and the relevant state or territory equivalent. Some RDA Committee records may also be deemed to be Commonwealth Records and must be treated accordingly. The Archives Act 1983 provides further details and clarification of responsibilities. See: http://www.austlii.edu.au/cgi-bin/download.cgi/au/legis/cth/consol_act/aa198398

4.8 Complaints Management Policy and Procedures
Complaints management is an important part of good corporate governance and sound management practice. All RDA Committees should have a complaints management policy that sets out how it will handle any grievances.

Feedback, including formal complaints, can be vital in improving the quality of services to a community. All formal complaints should be dealt with in a professional and accountable manner, even where the Committee believes a complainant is vexatious.

When developing a complaints management policy, Committees may find the

Complaints regarding RDA Committees should initially be directed to the Committee concerned.

If the RDA Committee is unable to resolve the complaint to a complainant’s satisfaction, the complainant may then contact the Department. The Department will investigate and may require the RDA Committees to account for how it:

- gave the complainant the opportunity to be heard by the full Committee;
- investigated the complaint, deliberated on the course of action and recorded the deliberations;
- chose to act in response to the formal complaint; and
- responded to the complainant.

Evidence such as minutes of meetings may also be sought.

Any feedback or complaints concerning the Department of Infrastructure and Regional Development itself can be made using the feedback facility located on the Department’s website – see: [www.regional.gov.au/utilities/contact.aspx#cac](http://www.regional.gov.au/utilities/contact.aspx#cac).

### 4.9 Privacy Requirements

RDA Committees should be aware of all their legal responsibilities under privacy legislation, as well as those specified in the Funding Agreement. The Funding Agreement requires that RDA Committees not do anything which, if done by the Department, would be a breach of an Australian Privacy Principle.

The Australian Privacy Principles that were introduced in March 2014 regulate the handling of personal information by Australian Government agencies, businesses with a turnover of more than $3 million or those trading in personal information and all private health service providers. For further information, see the Office of the Australian Information Commissioner’s website: [http://www.oaic.gov.au/privacy/privacy-news](http://www.oaic.gov.au/privacy/privacy-news).

Each RDA Committee should develop a privacy plan for handling Personal Information.⁴

Consistent with privacy legislation and good management practice, RDA Committees should:

- ensure that any RDA Committee personnel who are required to deal with Personal Information for the purposes of this Agreement are made aware of the privacy obligations set out in this Guide and the Funding Agreement; and
- immediately notify the Department if they become aware of a breach or possible breach of any of privacy obligations.

### 4.10 Disclosure

The Funding Agreement prevents RDA Committees from disclosing any material designated by the Commonwealth as confidential without its permission (except where that disclosure is required by law).

The Commonwealth will seek to use this power cautiously and with restraint. It will usually bear in mind the exemption provisions of Freedom of Information legislation in considering what sorts of documents are to be designated as confidential. The types of documents that

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⁴ Some good examples of privacy plans have been developed by NSW RDA Committees such as that used by RDA Northern Rivers, which can be viewed at [www.rdanorthernrivers.org.au](http://www.rdanorthernrivers.org.au/)
could feasibly involve RDA Committees include (but are not limited to) the following broad categories:

- personal privacy;
- business affairs;
- trade secrets or commercially valuable information;
- research by CSIRO or the Australian National University;
- enforcement of law and protection of public safety;
- documents subject to legal professional privilege;
- documents containing material obtained in confidence; and
- documents, disclosure of which would be in contempt of Parliament or in contempt of court.
SECTION 5 – CODE OF CONDUCT AND ETHICS FOR COMMITTEE MEMBERS AND PERSONNEL

RDA Committee members and staff are required to be people of good character who reflect accepted standards of behaviour. They need to be open, honest and accountable, and to act in good faith. Being an RDA Committee or staff member carries responsibilities which they need to be aware of.

This Code of Conduct chapter should be read in conjunction with relevant state or territory incorporated associations legislation. In some jurisdictions legislation may differ from the Guide, particularly with respect to the timeframe for reporting conflicts of interest. It is the responsibility of each RDA Committee to be familiar with the legal requirements in their jurisdiction.

Please also see section 8 Communications, in particular Public Comment and Public Comment on Political and Social Issues.

5.1 Principles
RDA Committee members and staff are expected always to act in the best interests of the community in their dealings with government agencies, the business sector, other organisations and individuals by:

- being honest and exercising all due care and diligence in the performance of their duties and functions;
- maintaining the confidentiality of information made available in the course of their duties and of RDA Committee decisions;
- never making improper use of their position, or the information gained through that position, to the unfair advantage of themselves or any other person;
- never taking any course of action that would bring into disrepute or otherwise disadvantage the RDA Committee, the Department of Infrastructure and Regional Development or the Australian Government, the relevant state or territory government department, the relevant state or territory Minister responsible for regional development or local government in the RDA Committee region;
- disclosing any material or personal interest in RDA Committee or regional economic development matters, and subsequently abstain from any discussion or vote on those issues;
- being bound by, and committed to, decisions legitimately taken by the RDA Committee, whether or not they agree with the decision;
- demonstrating loyalty to the public interest and to the standards set out in the Funding Agreement and this Guide; and
- providing authorised persons, fellow members and auditors when asked with complete, accurate and correct information, which is not misleading in any respect.

5.2 Personal and Professional Behaviour
Duties must be performed diligently, impartially and conscientiously to the best of each member’s ability. Members must comply with all relevant state or territory and Commonwealth legislation.
5.3 Fairness and Equity

It is important that the principles of fairness and equity are both complied with and are seen to be complied with. These principles are:

- taking all relevant information into consideration and not taking any irrelevant information or opinion into consideration;
- dealing with like situations in a consistent and fair manner, but treating each matter on its merits;
- acting in a reasonable, just and non-discriminatory manner;
- taking all reasonable steps to ensure that the information upon which decisions or actions are based is factually correct; and
- only acting for proper and relevant purposes, and on proper and relevant grounds.

5.4 Use of Information

Information provided to an RDA Committee may come with the understanding that the information will be treated as confidential, commercial-in-confidence and/or sensitive. It is important to ensure the integrity and security of official documents for which Committee members are responsible and to respect the rights of the providers of information. In accordance with Clause 13.2 of the Funding Agreement, RDA Committees should not disclose information that the Commonwealth has designated as confidential. Confidential information must not be released unless:

- required by law;
- freedom of Information / Right to Information legislation requires the release; or
- permission has been granted by the Commonwealth or, where relevant, the state or territory government, local government, or the provider of the information.

The above does not affect the application of specific contractual arrangements to particular confidential information under any contract entered into by the RDA Committee.

5.5 Conditions of RDA Committee Membership and Employment

RDA Committee members are expected to represent the Committees’ interests in the region, rather than those of any particular organisation(s), business or local council, and must be available to participate in Committee meetings and activities. Committee members and staff must:

- as a matter of principle, be excluded from tendering for consultancy or contract work for or on behalf of the committee (see also 5.6.5 below);
- comply with the relevant state or territory associations’ incorporation legislation, and the conditions stipulated by the Department of Infrastructure and Regional Development and the relevant state or territory government department in the Funding Agreement(s) with the RDA Committee regarding the allocation of administration and/or project funds; and
- be people of good character who reflect accepted standards of community behaviour. This includes, but is not limited to, not having a civil or criminal conviction punishable by a period of imprisonment and not being an undischarged bankrupt.

5.6 Conflict of Interest

5.6.1 Overview

Conflict of interest is one of the most important governance issues for RDA Committees. As recipients of Commonwealth funds, it is essential that RDA Committees undertake their activities in a fair, non-biased and apolitical manner, without actual or perceived conflicts of interest in their decision-making.
As some conflicts of interest may be unavoidable, RDA Committees need to manage all conflicts within an ethical, open and transparent framework that requires the Committee Chair, Deputy Chair, members and personnel to act with integrity, impartiality, good faith and in the best interests of the Committee at all times.

Transparency is fundamental to the principles of good governance and managing conflicts of interest. Committees should build an ethical culture by consistently requiring conflicts to be identified, recorded and dealt with properly. The Funding Agreement requires RDA Committees to take all reasonable steps to identify any conflicts of interest and to maintain a register of these. Declaration of conflicts of interest should be a standing item on all RDA Committee agendas.

Declaration and discussion of conflicts of interest should appear early on the RDA Committee agenda and prior to the discussion on any substantive issues.

### 5.6.2 Conflict Defined
A conflict is defined in the Agreement as an actual, potential or perceived conflict of interest or of role arising through an RDA Committee member or RDA personnel engaging in any activity or obtaining any interest that is likely to or has potential to conflict with or restrict the RDA Committee in engaging in the Activities fairly and independently. When assessing conflicts of interest, the Committee should always take a conservative approach and carefully consider the perception of a conflict by the general public. The test should always be: *Could a member of the community, on the face of it and with limited information, consider the matter to be a conflict of interest?*

### 5.6.3 Identifying a Conflict of Interest
A conflict of interest arises when an RDA Committee Chair, Deputy Chair, member or personnel:

- has a personal, business, or financial interest that could be considered to influence their work with the RDA Committee, their contribution to debates by the RDA Committee, and/or decisions taken by the RDA Committee; or
- uses information and/or contacts gained through working in a professional capacity for the RDA Committee to benefit their own personal business interests in any way, or inform other organisations that they are involved with outside the RDA Committee where those organisations could benefit directly or indirectly from the information.

Conflicts of interest can be direct or indirect, for example:

- the RDA Committee Chair, Deputy Chair, member or employees owning or having an interest in a business that is under consideration to provide goods or services to an RDA Committee;
- a close family member being employed by an organisation applying for support for a project;
- the RDA Committee Chair, Deputy Chair, member or employees participating in a decision that results in their gaining an economic or financial benefit or a non-financial benefit, such as a gift being given to the individual involved in making the decision;
- the RDA Committee employs a partner, relative or close friend of a Committee member or an employee, who is then responsible for approving benefits such as reimbursement of travel or salary increase for that person;
- progressing personal business or personal business relationships through the course of RDA Committee professional business.

RDA Committees should contact their Liaison Officer if they have any questions about conflict of interest arrangements or whether a particular activity constitutes a conflict.
5.6.4 Disclosing a Conflict of Interest

The Commonwealth expects all RDA Committees to have clearly documented principles and procedures for handling conflicts of interest, consistent with their constitution, the Funding Agreement and this Guide. In addition, declaration of conflicts of interest should be a standing agenda item for all RDA Committee and sub-committee meetings.

If, while performing RDA Committee business, the Committee Chair believes that he or she has a conflict or potential conflict of interest, he or she must disclose the nature of the conflict to the Committee. Similarly, the Deputy Chair, Committee members or personnel must disclose any real, perceived or potential conflict to the Chair of their RDA Committee as soon as that conflict or potential conflict becomes apparent. Such declarations should be made immediately after the Committee has received the agenda and papers for its next meeting. The interests of immediate family members and close associates should also be disclosed to the extent that they are known and could be considered to lead to a conflict of interest. All disclosures, discussions and decisions on conflicts of interest must be recorded in the Minutes of the relevant Committee meeting.

If a situation arises where any member of the RDA Committee (or employee) believes that there is an undisclosed conflict or potential conflict of interest, the matter should, in the first instance, be raised with the party who may be conflicted. Such a discussion should be sufficient to suggest that a potential conflict exists and the matter should then be listed for discussion by the Committee at its next meeting. If doubt continues to exist, the matter should be raised with the Chair of the Committee or with the Department if related to the Chair.

Following disclosure, the remaining RDA Committee members must determine whether or not there is a conflict of interest. Where it is determined that a conflict of interest exists, or may be perceived to exist, the RDA Committee must determine a course of action which ensures that any subsequent decisions and/or actions are, and are seen to be, free of undue influence or bias.

In doing this, the RDA Committee should refer to its Constitution, which may prescribe arrangements with respect to voting on decisions where a conflict or the perception of a conflict of interest exists. In the absence of such direction, the RDA Committee must take action to preclude the member with the identified conflict from:

- receiving any subsequent or related papers;
- being present and/or participating in the consideration, discussion or debate on the matter;
- voting on the matter;
- being counted in quorum for the vote on the matter; or
- being privy to the record of discussion of the matter, including the record which is set out in the Minutes of the meeting.

The decision of the RDA Committee (and the steps taken to resolve or deal with the perceived or actual conflict of interest) must be recorded in the Minutes of the RDA Committee meeting.

Where a conflict of interest arises or is perceived to arise, the Department may investigate the circumstances of the conflict to determine that the action taken to address the conflict is appropriate.

5.6.5 Managing an Ongoing Conflict of Interest

A different situation arises when a conflict of interest is ongoing and may continue to affect an individual’s ability to perform RDA Committee business or contribute to Committee discussions, deliberations and/or decision-making.
In the case of ongoing conflicts of interest, RDA Committees should conduct an initial investigation into the conflict, including the evaluation of any potential remedies, and a risk assessment which:

- identifies the risks;
- evaluates the nature of the risks (for example, if the risk eventuated, would the consequences be serious?);
- evaluates the likelihood of the risks (for example, is it probable that the risk will occur?);
- considers whether the risk may be acceptable to the Australian Government, relevant state or territory governments, and the public;
- determines whether the proposed remedies (if any) would adequately resolve or otherwise manage the risk; and
- leads to the RDA Committee notifying the Department immediately if it is determined that a conflict restricts the RDA Committee from undertaking activities in a fair and independent way, including advice of what measures are being taken to prevent any such restriction.

All action taken to address these situations must be documented and readily accessible. Where the risk cannot be mitigated, the RDA Committee Chair, Deputy Chair or Committee member should be excluded from all discussion on the matter, including receiving papers and records of discussion and decision.


Section 5.5 of this Guide requires that, as a matter of principle, Committee members and staff must be excluded from tendering for consultancy or contract work for or on behalf of the Committee. In rare cases, however, the RDA Committee may be able to substantiate that a Committee or staff member is the only provider that can reasonably provide a service in that region due to the nature of that service and the location of the RDA Committee. In such a case, the RDA Committee must follow the requirements of this section 5.6, including that the RDA Committee approves the work, the terms are reasonable and comparable with those elsewhere and that the selection process is open and transparent, documented and stored in the RDA Committee’s conflict of interest records.

5.7 Gifts, Benefits and Assets

A Committee member or employee of the RDA Committee must never demand or request any gift or benefit for the member or anyone else in connection with his or her Committee work. A member or employee should not accept any gift or benefit if he or she thinks, or a reasonable person would think that the person offering the gift is likely to expect the member or employee to be influenced in the way that he or she does his or her RDA Committee work as a result of the gift.

Generally, non-token gifts should be accepted only in exceptional circumstances. Where non-token gifts are accepted, it would be appropriate to inform the Chair of the RDA Committee or the next meeting of the Committee. If the member or employee is in any doubt about whether or not a gift is token, he or she should notify the Chair.

As set out in the guidance on asset disposal, RDA Committees should follow proper procedure for the disposal of assets, including not selling these to Committee members, RDA personnel, contractors, or to friends or relatives of any of the forgoing.
5.8 Corrupt and Unethical Conduct

If a Committee member or employee of the RDA Committee is aware of any possible corrupt or unethical conduct by another Committee member(s) or employee, it must be reported to the Chair of the Committee. The member or employee does not need to have proof that corruption or unethical conduct is occurring. He or she needs merely to suspect it on reasonable grounds. The RDA Chair can then seek specialist advice for managing the particular issue. Corrupt and unethical conduct can also be reported to the Department, or the relevant state or territory departmental manager responsible for regional development, where appropriate. This does not alleviate any right or obligation of the relevant Committee member or employee to also report the conduct to relevant authorities (for example, the police) as required under relevant legislation.

People who report possible corrupt or unethical conduct will not be penalised for reporting possible misconduct.

5.9 Breaches of the Code

RDA Committees should be vigilant for any actual or perceived breaches of the Code of Conduct and Ethics, and be prepared to take their own disciplinary action as necessary. Breaches of this Code of Conduct and Ethics (Code) are likely to result in disciplinary action. Sanctions, including termination of a Committee member’s appointment by the Chair and Deputy Chair or termination of a Chair or Deputy Chair’s appointment by the Minister(s), will be considered in the event of a serious breach of the Code of Conduct.

In addition, the Commonwealth can make use of formal powers under various provisions of the Funding Agreement to help ensure that RDA Committees meet the standards of this Code. In particular, Clause 17 of the Funding Agreement on Conflict requires RDA Committees to have regard to the Code, and specifies that the Department’s Secretary (or Secretary’s delegate) may investigate the Committee’s handling of conflict and then determine what action must be taken to resolve the conflict. Failure to do so can lead to removal of Committee members(s), removal of personnel, the withholding or recovery of funds, or the termination of the Agreement. Grounds for termination for default expressly include an RDA Committee undertaking any act, including relating to its internal management procedures, that the Commonwealth considers will seriously compromise the efficiency and effectiveness of the Committee’s conduct.

More broadly, Clause 2 of the Funding Agreement stating that ‘You Are Required to Carry out the Activity’ requires all RDA Committees to:

- comply with all relevant laws and, in particular, maintain robust practices and procedures regarding fraud control; and
- ensure that their internal management practices, including governance documents such as their constitutions, give effect to and remain consistent with their obligations under the Agreement.

Under Clause 6.1 of the Funding Agreement, Management of Funding; all RDA Committees are required to carry out the Activity in accordance with the Agreement and ‘diligently, effectively and to a high professional standard.’

Depending on the nature of the breach of the Code, referral to appropriate authorities may also be necessary.
5.10 Allegations of Impropriety

It is important that the conduct of RDA Committee members and employees is at all times perceived in the community to reflect the principles and ethical requirements set out in this Code. If allegations concerning the conduct of a member or employee are made or aired in the public domain that, if true, would constitute a breach of the Code, the member concerned must stand down from the Committee upon request by the Commonwealth and relevant state or territory governments and relevant state or territory local government association where appropriate.

Allegations made in the public domain include being:

- referred to in sworn evidence (either oral or written) in any court or tribunal proceeding in relation to an act of impropriety;
- the subject of or named as a person of interest in any investigation by a state or territory ombudsman or Commonwealth ombudsman; or
- the subject of or named as a person of interest in any investigation or proceedings by any other governmental or quasi-governmental body in any jurisdiction.

The member may resume his or her membership of the RDA Committee when the relevant court, tribunal or other body makes a finding of fact that the allegations are unfounded, or otherwise when the Australian and relevant state or territory governments and where appropriate the relevant state or territory local government association, so determines.
SECTION 6 – POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

6.1 Contesting Elections and Political Participation
The Commonwealth acknowledges the involvement of RDA Committee Chairs, Deputy Chairs, members and employees in community organisations and institutions, such as service clubs, Chambers of Commerce and local government. However, all levels of government expect that RDA Committees will ensure that their operations remain apolitical at all times. RDA Committees should be particularly alert to incidents that may compromise the apolitical nature of the RDA Committee’s operations leading into a federal, state, territory or local government election.

6.2 Campaigning by RDA Chairs, Members and Employees
Where RDA Chairs, Deputy Chairs, members or employees are playing a significant part in a political campaign there is potential for a perceived or actual conflict of interest between issues raised in the campaign and their involvement with the RDA Committee. Significant political campaigning includes, but is not limited to:

- running as a candidate in an election for public office;
- acting as a Campaign Director, or similar, for a candidate for public office; or
- providing full-time, or substantial part-time (over 15 hours per week), administrative or other support to such a candidate.

It may also be difficult for individuals who are involved in campaigning to maintain their commitment as an RDA Committee Chair, Deputy Chair or member. The Funding Agreement (Clause 17.5) provides for RDA Committee members or personnel who have a significant involvement in an election campaign for office in a federal, state or territory election to stand aside from the Committee from the date that caretaker conventions apply until such time as these conventions cease to be in force (caretaker conventions begin when the Parliament is dissolved and end when the result of the election is clear, or if there is a change of government, when the new government is appointed).

Where this circumstance arises the individual should advise the RDA Committee in writing. The RDA Committee should then write to the Department to confirm the date that a Committee member or employee has stood aside. Advice on alternative arrangements for employees should also be communicated to the Department. Where a Chair is aware that an executive Committee position may become temporarily vacated due to this provision, the Chair may offer a replacement at that time.

Committee members or personnel playing a significant part in a local government election campaign can maintain their involvement with the RDA Committee. However, they should be aware that in participating in an election for any level of government they need to avoid creating the impression that they are representing the RDA Committee. They should not, for example, use clothing, badges or letterhead featuring the RDA Committee name or logo, or introduce themselves as a Chair, Deputy Chair, member or employee of the RDA Committee.

6.3 Launches, Seminars or Other Public Events
RDA Committee launches, seminars or other public events that may take place during the caretaker period should avoid hosting ministers, other politicians or local government representatives. Flyers, speeches or media releases about the event should be apolitical.

RDA Committees should also take steps to address a situation where a politician has been invited to a public event prior to the election having been called, with the result that the event takes place during the caretaker period. This may involve cancelling the invitation,
deferring the event or inviting representatives of other parties that could form government.

6.4 Information Campaigns and Promotional Activities
Some information and promotional campaigns related to government programs and initiatives may need to be suspended or curtailed depending on the nature of the campaign and whether they are likely to affect voting. Caution should be exercised to ensure that material used on RDA Committee websites is not political material and printed material produced and distributed by RDA Committees is not electoral matter (that is, matter which is intended or likely to affect voting in an election). Information that is of a political nature should not be added to websites or included in RDA Committee printed material.

Events, items on websites and newsletter articles which highlight the role of particular ministers or other government representatives or which address issues which are matters of controversy between the major political parties should be avoided in the caretaker period.

6.5 Provision of Information
During the caretaker period, an RDA Committee Chair, Deputy Chair, member or employee should not give any member of any political party information that may be used for political advantage.

6.6 Fund Raising Events
RDA Committees are apolitical and should not, at any time (caretaker period or otherwise) contribute funds or resources towards any political party or candidate for election—this is either directly through a donation or attendance at or contribution to fund raising events. This is regardless of whether the funds utilised are Commonwealth monies or from other sources, as members of the public are unable to discern the source of funds and RDA Committees are clearly branded as a government initiative.

The provision of equal contributions to all parties is not an acceptable use of Committee funds and clearly not an RDA Committee activity. RDA Committee Chairs, Deputy Chairs, members or employees may make a contribution to a campaign in a personal capacity but not from RDA Committee funds.

6.7 Advertising
RDA Committees can advertise consultation meetings in the press where such advertisements relate to their usual business. The RDA logo and the Australian coat of arms can be used. The coat of arms should be used without tag lines such as “a government initiative”.

6.8 Use of RDA Facilities
RDA Committee assets and premises must not be utilised for support of any political party or candidate. This includes producing or disseminating political material using Committee equipment or resources, for example photocopiers, fax machines and office supplies. Party political material should not be put on the RDA Committee’s website and requests from political candidate to visit RDA Committee premises for electioneering purposes should be declined. Party political meetings must not be held on RDA Committee premises.

See Section 8.4 Communications and Branding Guidelines. Display of party political material including posters, leaflets and badges is not permitted on RDA Committee premises or on the RDA Committee website.

6.9 Practical Application of Pre-Election Guidelines
When the Commonwealth assumes its caretaker role, the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet normally issues “Guidance on Caretaker Conventions” which will
apply during the caretaker period and is available on its website www.dpmc.gov.au.
Several of these conventions apply to the operations of RDA Committees, and assist in the
maintenance of the RDA Committee’s apolitical status during the pre-election time.

As the employer of the EO and other staff, the RDA Committee needs to develop a policy,
and/or operational arrangements that reflect these guidelines, and which set out actions to
be taken when a member of the Committee or other employee is significantly involved in
election campaigning.
SECTION 7 – RDA COMMITTEE AS AN EMPLOYER

This section only applies to incorporated RDA Committees.

Drawing on operational funding provided by the Commonwealth, RDA Committees may employ an Executive Officer (or equivalent) and such other staff as they require to provide management skills and support to deliver outcomes.

7.1 Legal Obligations as an Employer

Each RDA Committee, as a separate legal entity, is required to meet its contractual and legal obligations as an employer. What follows here is a summary of such obligations and where RDA Committees can obtain further advice. This is not definitive - Committees should as necessary seek professional and/or legal advice on human resource management issues, such as recruitment and management (including contracting), wages and conditions, workplace relations, performance reviews and grievance procedures, workplace health and safety, staff training, and superannuation.

7.1.1 Legislation

Commonwealth legislation that applies directly to the workplace includes:


Various state and territory legislation also applies to workplaces. All state and territory governments have websites that provide further practical information on employer responsibilities, many of which can be accessed via the Australian Government Business Entry Point website, see: [http://www.business.gov.au/business-topics/employing-people/Pages/Pages/default.aspx](http://www.business.gov.au/business-topics/employing-people/Pages/Pages/default.aspx)

7.1.2 National Employment Standards

Most Australian workplaces are governed by the system created by the Fair Work Act 2009. On 1 January 2010, the National Employment Standards (NES) replaced the Australian Fair Pay and Conditions Standard. Together with modern awards (also applicable from 1 January 2010), the NES make up a safety net for employees covered by the national workplace relations system. In addition to the NES, an employee’s terms and conditions of employment generally come from an award or agreement.

The NES are set out in the Fair Work Act 2009 and comprise a safety net of ten minimum conditions for all employees in the national workplace relations system. The NES apply to all employees covered by the national workplace relations system (but only certain entitlements apply to casual employees). Employer obligations under the NES include
giving every new employee a copy of the Fair Work Information Statement before or as soon as possible after they start work.

Further information is available at these websites:


7.2 Management of RDA Committee Personnel

7.2.1 Main Obligations as an Employer

RDA Committees should aim to position themselves as employers of choice, capable of attracting and retaining skilled staff in a competitive labour market. They should provide a safe and supportive work environment, and present staff with learning and development opportunities. For further information regarding general good practice see the following website – [www.fairwork.gov.au/resources/best-practice-guides/pages/default.aspx](http://www.fairwork.gov.au/resources/best-practice-guides/pages/default.aspx)

All staff are to be engaged under an employment contract. In developing the employment contracts between the RDA Committee and its employees, RDA Committees could use the services of an independent employment expert, such as an industrial relations consultant, legal employment specialist or the Fair Work Ombudsman.

Each RDA Committee should maintain a human resources policies and procedures manual that is provided to all personnel. This could cover the following:

- recruitment procedures;
- employment conditions, including probation, remuneration and leave;
- workplace health and safety, covering general provisions and also workplace specific security and safety procedures;
- policies and legislation on ethical behaviour, including privacy, harassment, discrimination and conflict of interest;
- management of funds;
- workplace grievances;
- appropriate use of workplace technology by employees; and
- staff resignation and termination.

7.2.2 Job Description and Duty Statement

The RDA Committee should develop job descriptions and duty statements for all staff positions. Job descriptions should reflect the core business of the RDA Committee and the Committee’s role as defined by the Funding Agreement and Annual Business Plan. These should also set out the role of the employee, duties and responsibilities and reporting arrangements. RDA Committee staff may not be members of the RDA Committee.

When advertising a position, by law employers should not use discriminatory language that may exclude potential employees on the basis of race, age, sex, marital status, family status or responsibility, pregnancy, religious and political beliefs, disability, gender history or sexual orientation.

7.2.3 Selection of Committee Personnel

The selection of all RDA Committee personnel should be based on the merit principle and follow a transparent and public process. This means that selection decisions are based on merit having regard to the qualifications, skills and experience of candidates in relation to
the duties of the position and that the process is, and is seen to be, fair and open with all candidates having an equal opportunity for success.

Positions should be advertised and interviews conducted by a panel. It is desirable that this panel includes a person who is independent of the RDA Committee.

7.2.4 Employment Arrangements

The RDA Committee should agree to the terms and conditions of employment of the Executive Officer, or their equivalent, and of all other Committee employees prior to the positions being advertised and appointments made.

Although the Funding Agreement does not prohibit RDA Committee staff employment contracts extending beyond the completion date of the Agreement, RDA Committees should however take their known and anticipated budget into account when employing staff.

All RDA Committee employees are to be engaged under a formal employment contract that has been developed independently of the employee (for example by an independent organisation such as the Fair Work Ombudsman, an industrial relations consultant, a legal employment specialist, or as agreed by the Department) and endorsed by the RDA Committee Chair, Deputy Chair and/or the RDA Committee.

Employment arrangements should be clearly recorded and documentation retained. RDA Committees should ensure that each employee has a copy of the agreed terms and conditions prior to commencement of his or her employment.

As specified in 2.4.5, the employment contract for the Executive Officer should include a duty statement and clearly outline the conditions of employment. The conditions of employment should be comparable to other similar positions, especially with regard to work arrangements, pay, leave, notice and termination clauses – an independent employment expert can advise on these matters. Details on performance measures and reviews and reporting requirements should be clearly stated.

7.2.5 Remuneration, Leave and Entitlements

RDA Committees should determine and document remuneration rates and processes, including non-cash items and reimbursement of expenses for employees. Increases in remuneration should be in line with industry standards and clearly linked to performance assessments.

As an employer, each RDA Committee is responsible for complying with all relevant legislative requirements for employees such as annual leave, sick leave, long service leave, maternity leave and superannuation. RDA Committees are provided with funding to cover all employment costs, from which it is recommended each Committee maintain an employee entitlement account. This is an account established to hold funds to meet accrued employee liabilities including for long service leave and accrued annual leave, but excluding employee redundancy entitlements, in accordance with Australian Accounting Standards.

RDA Committees should allocate a portion of their budgets for staff training and development. Individual staff development plans should be negotiated between the RDA Committee Chair and the Executive Officer, or between the Executive Officer and other employees as appropriate. Specific training and development activities should be linked to each employee's performance agreement.

7.2.6 Employee Performance

RDA Committees should have a staff performance management framework in place. Individual performance agreements should be negotiated between the RDA Committee
Chair and the Executive Officer, or between the Executive Officer and RDA Committee employees as appropriate, and be linked to training and development activities.

Performance reviews should be conducted at least every six months throughout the employment contract. Performance reviews are an opportunity to provide two-way performance feedback, assess a staff member’s overall performance, identify strengths and weaknesses, develop a plan to address weaknesses, reward performance and to manage performance where it does not meet expectations or agreed outcomes.

7.2.7 **Grievances**

Organisations with an effective formal grievance procedure that is open and accessible to staff will encourage the early reporting of grievances. This means that grievances can be resolved early and will be less likely to escalate into more difficult management problems. Unresolved grievances can be financially expensive to organisations because they result in increased absenteeism, increased leave due to stress, low morale within the workplace, high turnover of staff and underperformance. RDA Committees should implement a documented formal grievance procedure which is open and accessible to all their employees.

7.2.8 **Termination of Employment Contracts**

If the employment contract of an RDA Committee’s employee is terminated before the end of a funding period, the liability to meet the early release costs will have to be met by the RDA Committee out of its Operational Budget. It is recommended that each Committee maintain an employee redundancy account to hold funds to meet employee redundancy entitlements, in accordance with Australian Accounting Standards.

Although management of such staff is up to RDA Committees, Clause 23.4 of the Funding Agreement provides the Commonwealth with the power to give notice in writing requiring an RDA Committee to remove RDA Committee Personnel from activities relating to the Agreement. This is subject to reasonable grounds and relevant legislation. Without limiting this power in any way, it is expected that Clause 23.4 will only be used where there is a compelling case for removal and after consultation with the RDA Committee concerned.

7.3 **Work Health and Safety (WHS)**

As the Department and RDA Committees share duties relating to the Agreement, each has a joint responsibility to consult, co-operate and to co-ordinate their activities as they relate to Workplace Health and Safety (WHS). To achieve this, RDA Committees should prepare an annual WHS risk assessment and plan, and also report against this plan. The risk assessment, plan and report should only focus on RDA Committee activities that fall under the RDA Funding Agreement, and RDA Committees and personnel should consider WHS matters when undertaking these activities.

Under the *Work Health and Safety Act 2011* (WHS Act), the Department and RDA Committees share responsibility for WHS. Section 46 of the WHS Act provides that;

> If more than one person has a duty in relation to the same matter under this Act, each person with the duty must, so far as is reasonably practicable, consult, cooperate and coordinate activities with all other persons who have a duty in relation to the same matter.

As part of these shared responsibilities, RDA Committees are to:

- comply with all duties under applicable work health and safety laws;
- undertake risk assessments of all safety issues for their workers arising from the carrying out the Activities that fall under the Funding Agreement; and
- implement appropriate control measures, including putting in place an appropriate management system to address health and safety;
• provide the Department with a copy of their risk assessment and plan and a copy of their implementation report, if requested by the Department.

To this end, the Department has provided a template at Attachment B to this Guide that RDAs may wish to use for their assessment, planning and reporting purposes.

At any time, the Department may wish to discuss with RDA Committees risks associated with undertaking activities relating to the Agreement, and revisions to any activities which have been identified in the RDA Committee’s WHS risk assessment, plan and reports as posing unmanageable risk.

More information on the WHS Act is available by accessing the Comcare website, see: www.comcare.gov.au/WHS, or the Safe Work Australia website, see: www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au/sites/SWA.
SECTION 8 – COMMUNICATIONS

8.1 Public Comment
It is understood that Committee members and other RDA Committee personnel as members of the community have the right to make public comment and enter into public debate on regional political and social issues. Where they are speaking in a personal capacity, care should be taken not to convey the impression that they are doing so in their capacity as an RDA Committee member or employee. The Committee member or staff should make it clear that he or she is speaking personally and not as a representative of the RDA Committee.

Constructive feedback and criticism by RDA Committees of the operations of RDA (or of government) can be raised directly with the Department. The Chair has the role of channelling comments of this nature to senior staff of the relevant government agencies.

With respect to activities funded by the Commonwealth or by state, territory or local governments, the Committee should not make any statements or give any undertaking that could be interpreted as committing the Commonwealth Minister or relevant state or territory Minister or any governments to a particular action or expenditure. This position should be made clear in any negotiations which the Committee, its members, staff or representatives undertake with any company, firm or other body, or member of the public.

8.2 Public Comment on Political and Social Issues
It is understood and welcomed that RDA Committee Chairs or their appointed delegate will make public comments on issues relating to regional economic development and programs in their region and that this may include advocating support for or opposing a change in Commonwealth law, policy or practice. Nothing in the Funding Agreement or this Guide is meant to inhibit this. In commenting publicly, Committee members and personnel should consider the opportunities for RDA Committee to promote Government programs and facilitate the take-up of appropriate funding opportunities to progress regional economic growth. Public comment should complement the role of the RDA Committees, be constructive in resolving an issue, and recognise the contribution that the RDA Committee is seeing to make to progress an issue for the community.

Committee members and personnel should also take care when they are speaking on behalf of the RDA Committee to uphold its status as an apolitical organisation that is not aligned with any particular political party. The conduct of operations of RDA Committees should remain politically neutral at all times, and be undertaken in an impartial and professional manner.

8.3 Regional Development Australia Website—www.rda.gov.au
The Regional Development Australia website is maintained by the Department to enhance communication and the dissemination of information between RDA Committees, regional communities and the Department. The website contains RDA maps by state, territory and region, and has up-to-date Committee membership information. One of the key features of the website is the 'members only' area, which allows RDA Committees to access important operational documents, such as insurance policies, branding guidelines and logos.

8.4 Communications and Branding Guidelines
The Communication and Branding Guidelines for RDA Committees is available on the member’s area of the RDA website, see: www.rda.gov.au

This is a living document that provides information on the use of logos and protocols surrounding communications activities.
Queries on communications and branding issues can be emailed to rdacommunications@infrastructure.gov.au

8.4.1 RDA Committee Public Website

Each RDA Committee must maintain a public website, updating it from time to time. The website should include:

- information about the RDA Committee’s role and activities, in terms of the Activity as set out in the Funding Agreement;
- a list of Committee members and the RDA Committee contact details;
- a link to the Australian Government website on Regional Development Australia at www.rda.gov.au;
- a copy of the RDA Committee’s Approved Regional Plan; and
- any other information that the Department may ask you to include from time to time.
SECTION 9 – LEGAL PROCEDURE

The Department will post information about new or changed Commonwealth policies that it identifies as relevant to RDA Committees on the secure RDA Committee members’ website and provide notification via the RDA Alert email.

9.1 Variations to the Funding Agreement

The Department may from time to time seek to vary the Funding Agreement. It will endeavour to give RDA Committees adequate prior notice of all proposed variations.

Copies of a formal deed of variation document will be sent to the RDA Committee or RDA Committees concerned, with a request that they be signed by a delegated officer of the RDA Committee and then returned to the Department for signature by a representative of the Commonwealth. The variation will come into effect once both parties have signed. A copy of the fully signed version will be returned to the RDA Committee.

Deeds of variation should normally be accompanied by covering correspondence from the Department clearly explaining the aims of the proposed variation.

9.2 Applicable Law and Jurisdiction

Australian Capital Territory laws apply to the Funding Agreements. This only concerns interpretation of the Funding Agreement in and of itself. This should not be taken to mean that RDA Committees are subject only to A.C.T law on other matters. The relevant Commonwealth, state and territory legislation still applies to RDA Committees in the normal manner on matters such as workplace relations, occupational health and safety, planning and the environment.

More broadly, Commonwealth and state and territory legislation that RDA Committees typically will need to be aware of include (but are not limited to):

**State and Territory Legislation and Regulations**
- Associations Incorporation
- Planning and Development Act and Environmental Protection
- Equal Opportunity
- Fair Work or Industrial Relations
- Occupational Health, Safety and Welfare
- Whistleblowers Protection
- Workers Rehabilitation and Compensation
- Anti-Discrimination
- Freedom of Information, and
- Regional Development.

**Commonwealth Legislation**
- Age Discrimination Act 1975
- Archives Act 1983 (for Commonwealth records only)
- Competition and Consumer Act 2010
- Copyright Act 1968
- Disability Discrimination Act 1992
- Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999
- Equal Opportunity for Women in the Workplace Act 1999
- Fair Work Act 2009
- Freedom of Information Act 1982 INDIRECT: s6c documents required under the Commonwealth Funding Agreement are FOIable (can't assume they are confidential)
- Privacy Act 1988
9.3 Amendment of This Guide
The Department will undertake a formal review of this *Guide* annually, at the start of each calendar year. In addition, the Department may amend this *Guide* at any time by providing written notification of changes to all RDA Committees. This notification should normally provide fifteen working days advance notice of changes, to give RDA Committees an opportunity to provide comment in advance of their application. A minimum of five working days such notice will be provided in all cases.
## Attachment A.1.0 – Requirements: Annual Business Plan & Budget and Associated Reports

### 1. Annual Business Plan & Budget

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Requirements</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Introduction</strong></td>
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Summary of Key Achievements and Learnings from the Previous Year  
Provide a summary of significant events and achievements of the previous year.  
Outline activities which were not achieved and require ongoing work.  
Describe lessons learnt and implications for the coming year. |
| **Overview of Committee Members and Staff** |  
Is the RDA website information up-to-date with regard to Committee Members and Staff?  
Include roles and responsibilities of executive positions. |
| **Operational Parameters for the Coming Year** |  
Provide a summary of the RDAs budget, including all sources of funding.  
Identify and explain any anticipated out-of-the-ordinary costs.  
Detail significant third party contracts, including for each the level of funding, implications for operational costs and obligations arising. |
| **Strategic Context** |  
State how the Regional Plan and RDA Business Plan activities relate to regional development and other priorities of all three levels of government.  
Identify the RDA Committee’s major stakeholders. No more than half a page. |
| **Risk Management & Workplace Health and Safety** |  
Confirm the RDA maintains current plans. Suggested format at Attachment. B.1. & B.2. |

### Identification of RDA activities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Requirements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a) Regional priorities</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Provide a summary of key regional priorities (from Regional Plan)  
Have the regional priorities changed in the last year? |
| b) Analysis |  
Include a discussion of the key & emerging issues, their nature & impact, and the role of the RDA in mitigating or taking advantage of these.  
Has the RDA undertaken analysis to identify where the RDA can best make a difference, i.e., the RDA’s “value add” role in the region? If so please set out the results and identify how they shape the activities in this Plan. |
| c) RDA activities |  
Provide a summary of the process used to identify RDA priority activities, i.e., those with an economic focus where the RDA takes a lead or supporting role. Was the RDA’s capacity to influence taken into account? |

---

5 Note: The Risk Management Plan and Workplace Health and Safety Plans do not need to be provided as part of the Business Plan. However, they remain a requirement, as set out in the RDA Better Practice Guide.
Table of Outcomes, Activities and Key Performance Areas
List intended activities (identifying if the RDA is taking a lead or supporting role) in column A of the table at Attachment A.1.1. In developing activities, you should consider how you could subsequently measure their contribution to meeting KPIs and Outcomes — see Attachment A.1.2. for guidance on activities and their measurement (Columns B, C & D) are to be filled out as part of the Annual Report on Outcomes.

Annual Budget
Complete Annual Budget Template at Attachment. A.1.3. (Chair to certify)

2. Annual Report on Outcomes

1. Summary of Key Achievements Over the Past Year (approximately two pages in length)
This should start with a short overview assessment of progress the RDA Committee has made in implementing its Regional Plan. It should then list key achievements according to the particular RDA Outcome that they each relate to. The summary should also include short details of:

- external funding received by the RDA Committee;
- work undertaken in partnership with Commonwealth agencies, other levels of government, the private sector and non-governmental organisations;
- involvement in cross-regional activities with other RDA Committees or other entities;
- any notable shortcoming in performance or other significant problems experienced; and
- what lessons these issues provide and challenges for the next twelve months.

2. Table of Outcomes, Activities and Key Performance Areas
RDA Committees should describe their activities and analyse their performance against each Outcome using columns B, C & D of the template at Attachment. A.1.1. (column A will have been completed as part of the approved Annual Business Plan). Refer to Attachment. A.1.2 for guidance in completing the template.

3 Arrangements with Third Parties
List all significant such arrangements in force during the year, as required at clause 10.7 of the Funding Agreement. This includes all sponsorships and contracts to provide and receive services

3. Mid-year Acquittal of Budget Report
The template at Attachment. A.1.4 is for the Mid-year Acquittal of Budget Report required at Schedule A of the Funding Agreement, and covers the period, 1 July to 31 December, of each financial year. Dates should be amended as appropriate for future financial years.
4. Annual Audit of Accounts

As specified in the Funding Agreement (Schedule A at A.4.), each set of Annual Audited accounts must be carried out by an Approved Auditor and must comply with Australian Auditing Standards (in addition to certification by the RDA Chair). The Annual Audited Accounts must include:

- an audited statement that shows the RDA Committee’s receipt and expenditure of the Funding separately to receipt and expenditure of Other Funding (if any) for the previous Financial Year, which must include a definitive statement made by an Approved Auditor as to whether:
  - the statements of receipts and expenditure are fair and true; and
  - Funding and Other Funding (if any) were held and expended by You in accordance with the Funding Agreement.

- a certificate that all Funding and Other Funding (excluding in-kind) received for the previous Financial Year was held and expended by the RDA Committee for the purpose of the Activity in accordance with the Funding Agreement

- a statement of the balance of all accounts in which the Funding and Other Contributions was held

- a copy of the RDA Committee’s Asset Register.

Complete the Annual Budget & Annual Audited Accounts template at Attachment. A.1.3.

*Your auditor must be provided with a copy of the Funding Agreement and any executed variations.*
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcome 1. Regional Plan[^6]</th>
<th>A current three to five-year plan that focuses on economic development of the region taking into account Commonwealth, state, territory and local government plans.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>What will we do?</strong></td>
<td><strong>What did we do?</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>List in this column planned activities to meet the Outcomes. You may choose to set KPIs as measurable targets.</td>
<td>Provide quantified outputs as evidence of RDA activities.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>What will we do?</strong></td>
<td><strong>What did we do?</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcome 3. Priority activities[^8] (i.e. those activities with an economic focus where the RDA takes a lead or supporting role).</th>
<th>Advice on priority activities that will drive regional economic development, on future economic opportunities and on the region’s comparative advantages, based on consultation and engagement with community leaders.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>What will we do?</strong></td>
<td><strong>What did we do?</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcome 4. Project proposals[^9]</th>
<th>Assistance to local community stakeholders in order for them to develop project proposals; and referral of stakeholders to appropriate public and/or private funding sources - including the $1 billion National Stronger Regions Fund.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>What will we do?</strong></td>
<td><strong>What did we do?</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>What will we do?</strong></td>
<td><strong>What did we do?</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

[^6]: Previous related Outcome: Outcome 2. Informed Regional Planning & Outcome 1. Consultation and Engagement with the Regional Community
[^8]: Previous related Outcome: Outcome 5. Improved Community and Economic Development
[^9]: Previous related Outcome: Outcome 4. Enhanced Awareness of Government Programs
[^10]: Previous Related Outcome: Outcome 4. Enhanced Awareness of Government Programs
Attachment A.1.2 – Guidance: Table of Outcomes, Activities and Key Performance Areas

The table below provides guidance on completing the table at Attachment A.1.1 for both the Business Plan and Annual Report of Outcomes. Activities and performance are reported against each of the five RDA Outcomes in a quantitative, qualitative, and narrative sense. Column A is completed for the Business Plan & columns B, C & D are completed for the Annual Report on Outcomes. The examples provided are for illustrative purposes only and are not exhaustive or definitive and RDAs are encouraged to identify activities that meet the priorities and needs of their regions. Provide at least three case studies demonstrating the impact of RDA achievements against the outcomes as part of the Annual Report on Outcomes. The RDA may determine which outcomes the case studies address.

**Guide to completing Table of Outcomes, Activities and Key Performance Areas**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Complete A as part of Annual Business Plan</th>
<th>Complete B, C &amp; D as part of the Annual Report on Outcomes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**OUTCOME Overview:** each of the five RDA Outcomes are listed here for reporting against.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>A</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>C</th>
<th>D</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>ACTIVITIES</strong></td>
<td>Report against Activities</td>
<td>Analysis of Performance</td>
<td>Analysis of Value Added</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>What will we do? Activities &amp; KPIs</strong></td>
<td>What did we do? Outputs</td>
<td>How well did we do it? Quality of outputs</td>
<td>Did it have an impact? Value-add of outputs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>List in this column planned activities to meet the Outcomes. You may choose to set KPIs as measurable targets</td>
<td>Provide quantified outputs as evidence of RDA activities.</td>
<td>Provide descriptions of the quality of RDA activities, including the process or methodology employed in achieving the Outcomes, and feedback from stakeholders.</td>
<td>Provide a broad statement of achievement against the Outcome, summarising what the RDA did and how well it was done. Describe any evidence of impacts to date or the logic that underlines expectations of impacts in the future.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is important to identify if RDA is taking a lead or supporting in an activity.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

57
**Outcome 1: Regional Plan** - A current three to five-year plan that focuses on economic development of the RDA region taking into account Commonwealth, state, territory and local government plans.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What will you do?</th>
<th>What did we do?</th>
<th>How well did we do it?</th>
<th>Did it have an impact?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Activities</strong></td>
<td><strong>Outputs</strong></td>
<td><strong>Quality of outputs</strong></td>
<td><strong>Value-add of outputs</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name data sets used to update regional profile</td>
<td>Describe how the data has been analysed, eg, trends and comparisons</td>
<td>Provide a broad statement of achievement against this Outcome, summarising what the RDA did and how well it was done. Describe any evidence of impacts to date or the logic that underlines expectations of impacts in the future.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>List consultation activities initiated, numbers of participants, geographic spread</td>
<td>Describe how the participants were targeted</td>
<td>For example, outline the history of regional planning in your region and the impact that the RDA has had on this, e.g.: Historic evidence of gaps in regional planning prior to RDA activity; Growing status/recognition of Regional Plan since inception (stakeholder survey/testimonials); Instances of regional stakeholders and government referencing Regional Plan.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Describe process used to align with other plans</td>
<td>Evidence of alignment with other levels of government</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Describe changes that sharpened the focus on economic development</td>
<td>Describe how the data was analysed to highlight economic drivers, e.g.: Human capital; Sustainable communities; Access to markets; Comparative advantage; Business competitiveness.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>List marketing activities.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# Outcome 2: Critical issues - Advice to the Government on critical issues affecting the RDA region.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What will you do? Activities</th>
<th>What did we do? Outputs</th>
<th>How well did we do it? Quality of outputs</th>
<th>Did it have an impact? Value-add of outputs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Critical issues are issues which are likely to have a significant impact on the current or future economic performance and growth of the region. They can be positive or negative in nature. Examples are included in the glossary at Attachment A.3.0. Where possible, critical issues should be supported by evidence or data. Methodology used to identify issues including those in the Regional Plan. Regular, accurate and up-to-date local advice is provided to Government, including through formal reports and ad hoc briefings. Number, timeliness and nature of consultations and research conducted by the RDA to gather information for use by governments. List marketing activities.</td>
<td>Methodology used to reality check identified issues. Methodology used to prioritise issues with broad regional consensus. Evidence of advocacy by RDA for top priorities. Evidence of any response to critical issues raised.</td>
<td>Provide a broad statement of achievements against this Outcome, summarising what the RDA did and how well it was done. Describe any evidence of impacts to date or the logic that underlines expectations of impacts in the future.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Outcome 3: Priority activities

Advice on priority activities that will drive regional economic development, on future economic opportunities and on the RDA region’s comparative advantages, based on consultation and engagement with community leaders. *(Priority activities are those with an economic focus where the RDA takes a lead or supporting role. RDAs should identify if they are taking a lead or supporting role.)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What will you do?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evidence of consultation and engagement with community leaders to agree on regional priority activities (identified in Regional Plans).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Priority activities identified in RDA Business Plans (inc KPIs).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activities to bring parties together for collaborative projects.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number and nature of interactions with stakeholders to determine and progress priority activities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>List marketing activities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic development indicators:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Value of investment by businesses assisted by RDA priority activities;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Number of jobs created/retained by businesses assisted;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Value of exports by export businesses assisted;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Number and value of infrastructure projects assisted;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Participant numbers for RDA initiated employment programs;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Participant numbers for RDA initiated business development activities.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What did we do?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Outputs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demonstrate links between priority activities and economic drivers, e.g.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Human capital</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Sustainable communities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Access to markets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Comparative advantage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Business competitiveness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identification of barriers to economic growth and mitigation strategies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How well does the Business Plan define the role of the RDA within the priority activities? Is this realistic given the resources?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has a gap analysis been undertaken to identify RDA role and activities?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How well do RDA activities align with Regional Plan?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What was the logic for choosing RDA priorities?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How well are the economic outcomes attributable to the priority activities?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How well did we do it?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Quality of outputs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did it have an impact?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Value-add of outputs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Provide a broad statement of achievements against this Outcome, summarising what the RDA did and how well it was done. Describe any evidence of impacts to date or the logic that underlines expectations of impacts in the future.

For example, describe how RDA activities, linked to regional priorities, have led to economic outcomes.
### Outcome 4: Project proposals – Assistance to local community stakeholders in order for them to develop project proposals; and referral of stakeholders to appropriate public and/or private funding sources - including the $1 billion National Stronger Regions Fund.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What will you do?</th>
<th>What did we do?</th>
<th>How well did we do it?</th>
<th>Did it have an impact?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Activities</strong></td>
<td><strong>Outputs</strong></td>
<td><strong>Quality of outputs</strong></td>
<td><strong>Value-add of outputs</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evidence of RDA assistance provided through actions, including:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- working with eligible organisations to develop applications for government programs;</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- removing impediments;</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- facilitating relationships between key stakeholders;</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- supporting the development of an evidence base;</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- shepherding proposals to appropriate public and/or private funding sources;</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- community capacity building (e.g., number and spread of grant writing workshops conducted); and</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- developing the business case.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Show that proposals that are developed with RDA assistance are engineered to enhance economic development opportunities in the region.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evidence of proposals developed with RDA assistance that are successful in receiving funding.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality of assistance provided, e.g., through stakeholder surveys.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Methodology for allocating effort:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- workshop approach;</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- most strategic projects get greatest effort;</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- most capable proponents get least effort.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Methodology for building partnerships around project proposals.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide a broad statement of achievements against this Outcome, summarising what the RDA did and how well it was done. Describe any evidence of impacts to date or the logic that underlines expectations of impacts in the future.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What will you do? Activities</td>
<td>What did we do? Outputs</td>
<td>How well did we do it? Quality of outputs</td>
<td>Did it have an impact? Value-add of outputs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number and nature of activities undertaken by the RDA to promote awareness of government programs (e.g., website, newsletters, media releases, forums, focus groups, information sessions). Linkages to Government service delivery. List marketing activities.</td>
<td>Evidence of stakeholder awareness of Australian Government programs (stakeholder survey). Accuracy and timeliness of information provided by RDA Committees. Methodology for targeting promotion activities to specific stakeholders and targeting only those programs that are relevant to the implementation of the Regional Plan.</td>
<td>Provide a broad statement of achievements against this Outcome, summarising what the RDA did and how well it was done. Describe any evidence of impacts to date or the logic that underlines expectations of impacts in the future.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Suggested Case Study Template Questions  (guide only - not exhaustive or definitive)
Choose at least three outstanding RDA achievements, documenting them with a one to two page description using the questions below as prompts.

Regional Plans - Case Study
- Describe the evolution of regional planning in your region. For example, did a regional plan exist prior to the RDA plan?
- How has the Regional Plan achieved growing recognition in your region?
- Has the Regional Plan been referenced in any other key documents or policies?
- What has been the most valued part of the Regional Plan for stakeholders?

Priority Activities - Case Study
- Provide a brief description of the project or initiative.
- Purpose/key objective for the case study project or initiative.
- Which Regional Plan priority does the project/initiative align with?
- Which LG areas does the project/initiative cover?
- Who are the key partners/stakeholders?
- What stakeholder consultation events or publicity has occurred to support the project/initiative? Please list involvement of any ministers.
- What specifically has been the role of the RDA e.g. a catalyst? initial seed funding? What have been the key benefits of the RDA’s involvement?
- Could the project have occurred without the involvement of the RDA?
- Name a key stakeholder/partner who would be able to provide the Department with a testimonial (if requested by the Department):
- What have been the key outcomes/achievements from this project or initiative?

Project Proposals - Case Study
Provide a brief description of the titles of a project(s) that your RDA has provided advice on.

- Which key funding sources did the RDA identify for the project proponent(s)?
- How did your RDA add value to the process?
- Which Regional Plan priority does the project align with?
- Which LG areas is the project relevant for?
- Who are the key partners/stakeholders or affected regional communities?
- How effective was the advice? What expected or actual outcomes were achieved? Please provide evidence if possible.
Critical Issues - Case Study
Provide a brief description of the critical issue on which your RDA provided advice (also name any relevant policies, programs or initiatives).

Why is the issue on which your RDA provided advice considered to be critical for your region? What evidence base supports this assertion?

- What did the RDA aim to achieve in providing advice to Government?
- Which Regional Plan priority does the advice align with?
- Which Local Government Areas is the advice relevant for?
- Who are the key partners/stakeholders or affected regional communities?
- How effective was the advice? What expected or actual outcomes were achieved? Please provide evidence if possible.

Promote Australian Government Programs - Case Study

- Outline how your RDA has promoted Australian Government programs e.g. this could be through information sessions or information contained in newsletters.
- Did the RDA target any particular stakeholders in promoting Australian Government Programs?
- Has this promotion of Australian Government programs resulted in any tangible outcomes that your RDA is aware of?
- What did the RDA aim to achieve in providing advice to Government?
Attachment A.1.3 – Template: Annual Budget & Annual Audit of Accounts

This template is to be completed for both the Annual Business Plan and Budget and for the Annual Audited Accounts (A.4.3 of Schedule A of the Funding Agreement.) Dates should be amended as appropriate for future financial years.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RDA Name</th>
<th>(Insert RDA name here)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Funding Sources and Budget</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Commonwealth Funding (incl. All $ in FA &amp; Schedules)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Budget 1/7/15-30/6/16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GST Exclusive Amounts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Income</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Surplus Funding carried forward from previous period (See note 1 below)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project Funding carried forward from previous period (As outlined in Schedules B &amp; C)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Insert new lines- If multiple projects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Funding for this Period</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project Funding (Project 1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project Funding (Project 2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project Funding (Project 3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interest on Commonwealth funds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Income (A)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note 1: Clause 6.16 of the Funding Agreement requires that an RDA Committee must write to the Department if more than 15% of the total Budget remains unspent at the end of the financial year and the RDA Committee wishes to treat that unspent amount as Funding for the following year. This refers to Funding to support your Committee to deliver the Contract Deliverables and achieve the Outcomes as opposed to Project Funding. Please identify below the estimated Carry-Forward from previous years as a percentage of your previous year’s Funding. The actual carry-forward is to be confirmed in your Annual Audited Accounts. The RDA Better Practice Guide provides advice on the process for approval of Carry-Forwards greater than 15%.

% Funding Carried Forward

Please refer to the RDA Better Practice Guide for advice on the process for approval of any Carry-Forward greater than 15% of your previous year’s Funding (excluding Project Funding).
### Chair’s Certification:
Annual Budget / Annual Audited Accounts (indicate which) Certified as Correct by:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of RDA Chair:</th>
<th>.................................................................</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Signature:</td>
<td>.................................................................</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date:</td>
<td>.................................................................</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Independent Auditor’s Statement to accompany the Annual Audited Accounts:
I certify that the statement of receipts and expenditure are fair and true, and that Funding and Other Contributions (if any) were held and expended by the RDA Committee in accordance with the Funding Agreement.

| Name of Auditor: | ................................................................. |
| Auditor’s Company: | ................................................................. |
| Signature: | ................................................................. |
| Date: | ................................................................. |

### Expenditure Major Budget Items

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GST Exclusive Amounts</th>
<th>Commonwealth Funding (incl. All $ in FA &amp; Schedules)</th>
<th>Commonwealth 3rd Party Projects</th>
<th>State/Territory Operational</th>
<th>State/Territory Projects</th>
<th>Other</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Budget 1/7/15-30/6/16 Actual to 31/6/16</td>
<td>Budget 1/7/15-30/6/16 Actual to 31/6/16</td>
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</table>
This template is for the Mid-Year Acquittal of Budget Report required at A.4.3 of Schedule A of the Funding Agreement, and covers the 1 July to 31 December period of each financial year. Dates should be amended as appropriate for future financial years.

### Funding Sources and Budget

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RDA Name</th>
<th>(Insert RDA name here)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Commonwealth Funding</strong></td>
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<td>(incl. All $ in FA &amp; Schedules)</td>
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<td>Income</td>
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<td>Surplus Funding carried forward from previous period</td>
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<td>Project Funding (Project 1)</td>
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<td>Project Funding (Project 2)</td>
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<td>Project Funding (Project 3)</td>
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<td>Interest on Commonwealth funds</td>
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<td><strong>Total Income</strong></td>
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**Chair’s Certification - Mid-Year Acquittal of Budget Report Certified as Correct by:**

**Name of RDA Chair:** .................................................................

**Signature:** .................................................................

**Date:** .................................................................
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GST Exclusive Amounts</th>
<th>Commonwealth Funding (incl. All $ in FA &amp; Schedules)</th>
<th>Commonwealth 3rd Party Projects</th>
<th>State/Territory Operational</th>
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<td></td>
<td>Budget 1/7/15-30/6/16 Actual to 31/12/15 Estimate for 1/1/16-30/6/16</td>
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<td>Budget 1/7/15-30/6/16</td>
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<td><strong>Expenditure – Major Budget Items</strong></td>
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</table>
1. Message from the RDA Chair

**Purpose of this section**
- RDA Chairs outline the role of the RDA Committee and the Regional Plan for the region.
- An endorsement of the Regional Plan by the RDA Chair.

**General guidance**
- It should not be a summary of the Regional Plan (which is to be provided in the Executive Summary).
- This section should be no longer than one page.

2. Executive Summary

**Purpose of this section**
- A very short summary of the Regional Plan priorities.
- A very short overview of the region.
- A very short analysis of the region’s:
  - strengths
  - challenges
  - needs, and
  - opportunities.

**General guidance**
- The Executive Summary should have a clear line of sight and connection to all other parts of the Regional Plan.
- RDA Committees are encouraged to think about the following when preparing this section:
  - Key messages to regional stakeholders including:
    - local governments;
    - local communities;
    - community organisations;
    - other regional development bodies; and
    - potential investors in the region.
  - Key messages to provide to ministers (at all levels), government departments and agencies, and local government representatives and authorities.
- This section in total should be no more than three pages.
3. Vision for the Region

**Purpose of this section**
- A vision statement that outlines the RDA Committee’s future ambitions for the region.

**General guidance**
- a. Most existing Regional Plans already provide a short vision statement.
- b. RDA Committees should clearly articulate a long-term vision for the region (in reference to Attachment. A.2.1 Template: Regional Profile).
- c. In developing or reviewing the vision for the region, RDA Committees should consider the current state of the region and what its potential development options are.
- d. The individual RDA should define the exact period of a long-term view. However it should be for a period longer than the three to five year duration of the Regional Plan.
- e. This section should be no longer than three pages in total and should have strong links to other areas of the Regional Plan, including the attachments to the Regional Plan.

4. Role of the RDA

**Purpose of this section**
- The role of RDAs and the strategic context the RDA Committee is working within.

**General guidance**
- a. Most existing Regional Plans currently outline the role of the RDA and the strategic context they are operating within. They can therefore adapt existing wording to the updated template.
- b. This section should discuss the policy context that the RDA is working within, including Australian, state/territory and local government policies and the RDA focus on regional economic growth.
- c. The role of the RDA Committee and the Regional Plan in achieving the RDA’s long-term vision for the region should be discussed.
- d. This section should be no longer than three pages in total and should have strong links to other areas of the Regional Plan, including the attachments to the Regional Plan.
5. Analysis of the Region

**Purpose of this section**

- Analysis of the region using four key components of long-term regional economic growth:
  1. human capital;
  2. sustainable (economic, environmental and social) communities and population growth;
  3. access to international, national and regional markets; and
  4. comparative advantage and business competitiveness.
- Identification and discussion of regional strengths, challenges, needs and opportunities.
- Regional analysis will support the identification of regional priorities.

**General guidance**

a. Regional analysis will be developed in reference to:
   - Attachment. A.2.1. Template – Regional Profile,

b. The section should analyse key issues to support the identification of regional priorities. RDA Committees will consider:
   - policy priorities at a national, state/territory and local government level;
   - key themes and trends;
   - identified needs of the region; and
   - key outcomes of stakeholder consultation.

c. References to relevant national, state/territory and local government policy and planning documents should be made where appropriate.

d. RDAs should also include analysis of issues which are not within their direct influence but which are significant to the region.

e. Analysis of the region:
   - should be strategic;
   - support the identification of regional priorities; and
   - does not need to provide complex regional planning details that are more properly the role of state/territory and local governments.

f. It is suggested that this section should be no longer than ten pages in total.

6. Regional Priorities

**Purpose of this section**

- Identification of a clear set of regional priorities.
- Discussion of how priorities were identified and relate to regional strengths, challenges, needs and opportunities.
- Identification of how each priority will support the RDA Committee’s vision for the region.
- Discussion of how the regional priorities align with, complement or are distinguished from local government priorities in the region.
General guidance

a. Regional priorities are agreed by RDA Committees and major stakeholders as the key agenda items for the development of their region. RDA Committees should seek the endorsement of regional priorities by local governments and discuss how regional priorities align with or diverge from local governments’ priorities within the region.

b. They are identified after considering the information contained in attachments:
   - A.2.1 Template – Regional Profile
   - A.2.2 Guidance – Stakeholder Engagement and Consultation, and
   - Section 5 – Analysis of the region.

c. The Regional Plan should highlight how priorities were identified within the current strategic context for the RDA, including:
   - key components of long-term regional economic growth:
     1. human capital
     2. sustainable (economic, environmental and social) communities and population growth
     3. access to international, national and regional markets, and
     4. comparative advantage and business competitiveness.
   - stakeholder consultation outlined in Attachment A.2.2 Guidance – Stakeholder Consultation and Partnership.

RDA Committees and influencing regional priorities

- RDA Committees do not need to be able to directly influence each priority. The identification of a priority by the RDA may be sufficient to draw stakeholder attention to its regional importance. However, the Regional Plan will benefit from outlining the actions being taken in relation to priorities, including mechanisms to draw stakeholder attention to the priority.

Please note – It is suggested that this section in total should be no longer than three pages. High-level references to regional priorities should be included in the Executive Summary.

7. RDA Activities/Projects/Initiatives

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Purpose of this section</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Summarise how each regional priority will be progressed and achieved.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support the development of a detailed Business Plan.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

General guidance

a. The section should highlight how each regional priority will be progressed through activities/projects/initiatives.

b. This section should provide a strategic framework to assist RDA Committees to develop their Business Plan.

c. It should be no longer than five pages.
8. **Sources**

*Purpose of this section*

- Identification of all sources and references used in the development of the Regional Plan.

**General guidance**

a. **Revising the Regional Plan (Plan):** The Plan is a three to five year living document. It should be reviewed annually and updated when significant socio-economic changes, changing regional priorities, updated regional data or critical issues imply the need for revision. Critical issues are issues which are likely to have a significant impact on the current or future economic performance and growth of the region. They can be positive or negative in nature. Examples are included in the glossary at Attachment. **A.3.0.** Where possible, critical issues should be supported by evidence or data.

b. **Length of the Plan:** As a guide, Regional Plans should be no longer than 60 pages. All electronic versions of Regional Plans must be word searchable.

c. **Reference style:** The Department does not specify a reference style, however it would like RDA Committees to adopt a consistent approach throughout the Regional Plan e.g. Harvard referencing style.
Attachment A.2.1 – Template: Regional Profile

**Purpose of this section**

- An overview description of the region.

- Regional Profile structured by four key components of long-term regional economic growth:
  1. human capital
  2. sustainable communities and population growth
  3. access to international, national and regional markets, and
  4. comparative advantage and business competitiveness.

**General guidance**

a. All information sources must be appropriately presented, including:
   - headings applied to graphs and tables;
   - labelling of data and data descriptions (for example $ or %); and
   - identification of data sources.

b. Each RDA Committee should consider the level of information necessary to support their:
   - regional characteristics and needs;
   - vision for the region;
   - regional priorities; and
   - supporting activities.

c. The Regional Profile should be sourced from a diversity of evidence bases including:
   - the Australian Bureau of Statistics;
   - Australian, state and local government data sources and other publications;
   - government-funded bodies, such as regional development boards and natural resource management organisations;
   - data and publications from universities, private research organisations, the private sector and the not-for-profit sector; and
   - community and local government consultation (in reference to Attachment A.2.2 Guidance - Stakeholder Consultation and Partnership).

**Overview description**

- A concise description of the region. This should include:
  - a map and explanation of the location and geographic coverage of the region, and
  - relevant local government boundaries.

**Regional profile**

- Structured using four key components of long-term regional economic growth as a framework for analysis.
- The Department has identified the content that RDA Committees may include in each section of this description.
- These examples are only a guide and RDA Committees should use their judgement to identify the relevant information to support their vision for the region and priorities.
- RDA Committees may also choose to provide additional information within these
categories which they consider to be significant to their region.

1. **Human capital:**
   - regional workforce challenges and workforce development priorities (including skill shortages);
   - education profile of the workforce;
   - skills, training and education challenges (including education and training infrastructure, needs and attainment); and
   - factors that may affect the demand and skill profile going forward, for example growing/declining industry activity.

2. **Sustainable (economic, environmental and social) communities and population growth:**
   - **Economic:**
     - socio economic profile (including average household/individual incomes, participation rate, unemployment rates, income support dependency and the challenges these pose for the region);
     - changes in industry composition and challenges these present for the sustainability of the region; and
     - priorities and opportunities (including current challenges and how the region plans to address them i.e. supporting regional innovation).
   - **Environmental:**
     - water management (including, where relevant, reference to Murray Darling Basin Plan); and
     - proactive action (already in place) to reduce carbon emissions (including promotion, take up/use of alternative energy generation and innovative regional approaches).
   - **Social:**
     - urban growth pressures (including housing, land and water management issues);
     - cultural diversity (including overseas migration to the region and settlement services);
     - health and ageing (including access and demand for services and the health of the region); and
     - quality of life issues (including desirability to live in the region).

3. **Population:**
   - regional demographic change (including the impact of an ageing population and migration to or from the region).

4. **Access to international, national and regional markets:**
   - understanding current and future trade patterns;
   - regional infrastructure challenges, ‘bottlenecks’ and infrastructure priorities (including road, rail, maritime, air, and intermodal);
   - regional communications challenges and opportunities (including rollout of the National Broadband Network and current or expected benefits/utilisation); and
   - human infrastructure, including regional networks and industry clusters.

4. **Comparative advantage and business competitiveness:**
   - regional economic strengths (including, if applicable, current and future transition issues);
   - regional comparative advantages and regional economic opportunities, including ‘new’ and ‘green’ economy opportunities, and;
   - regional arts, creative and sporting industries (including infrastructure, participation and priorities).
Attachment A.2.2 – Guidance: Stakeholder Consultation and Partnership

**Purpose of this section**

- Identification of effective cross-sectoral and intergovernmental partnerships (including through place-based approaches) and integrated regional planning.
- Engagement, consultation and partnership building activities over the previous financial year and the outcomes.
- Stakeholder involvement in the development of Regional Plan priorities, including with local governments.
- How the RDA will review the priorities over the duration of the Regional Plan.

**General guidance**

a. The Regional Plan should identify how the RDA Committee is supporting effective cross-sectoral, intergovernmental partnerships and integrated regional planning, including opportunities for future collaboration.
   - For example, partnership activities within the region or identification of potential joint activities.

b. Stakeholder relationship building during the previous financial year e.g. meetings, conferences and workshops.

c. How stakeholders contributed to the Regional Plan:
   - which stakeholders were involved in the development of the Regional Plan and identification of priorities e.g. local governments, business, industry, peak bodies, not-for-profit organisations, educational institutions, arts, sports and environmental groups;
   - how information was collected e.g. surveys, workshops, roundtables, focus groups; and
   - the outcomes and key themes.

d. How the RDA will review regional priorities, supporting activities and achievements throughout the financial year, including:
   - the role of stakeholders in the review of the Regional Plan; and
   - the use of data to measure achievement of goals and desired outcomes.
## Term

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Meaning in the context of the RDA Better Practice Guide</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Activities</td>
<td>These are actions, initiatives and projects undertaken by RDAs to achieve the Outcomes. Activities can have KPIs associated with them under column A of the Outcomes and Key Performance Areas Table. It is important to identify if the RDA is taking a lead or supporting an activity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Case studies</td>
<td>This is a real life RDA led action, initiative or project which can be examined in detail to demonstrate the 'value add' of RDAs. These case studies will be aggregated on a national basis to enable a macro examination of the cumulative impact of the RDA Committee program. These case studies may also be helpful for the independent review of the program.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Critical Issues</td>
<td>Critical issues are those which are likely to have a significant impact on the current or future economic performance and growth of the region. They can be positive or negative in nature. For example, identified critical issues could:</td>
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<td>• have a major impact on key industries in the region, or could have flow on impacts to related industries, which in turn have consequences for the comparative advantage and business competitiveness of the region;</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• relate to infrastructure, which could affect access to key international, national and regional markets;</td>
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<td>• have a relationship to human capital in the region, particularly education and skills;</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• affect the sustainable growth of the region. This could include major changes in the political, physical or the regulatory environment which may impede economic growth; or</td>
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</table>
- impact effective cross-sectoral and intergovernmental partnerships in the region.

Most regional plans and profiles include mechanisms which enable the scanning of the horizon in order to be able to identify signs which may indicate emerging issues which could then become critical issues in the region.

Where possible, critical issues should be supported by evidence or data.

### Key Performance Areas (KPAs)

This is an umbrella term which covers the three key questions which RDAs need to report against in Annual Reports on Outcomes. The three KPA key questions are:

- What (and how much) did we do? (column B)
- How well did we do it? (column C)
- Did it have an impact? (column D)

### Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

KPIs are activity related targets which are ideally **Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time specific.**

### Outcomes

Outcomes (something that follows as a result or consequence of activities) were set by the Deputy Prime Minister under the areas of:

1. Regional Plan
2. Critical Issues
3. Priority Activities
4. Project Proposals
5. Promote Australian Government Programs.

These areas form the outcomes for the RDA initiative.

Long-term outcomes for the RDA Budget Statement, which are:

- *Enhanced engagement with Commonwealth, state, territory and local governments, and regional communities, which better identify issues affecting, and opportunities for, regional Australia; and*
- *Regional communities have developed infrastructure improving economic and social resources.*
| Outputs | Outputs are what RDAs produce i.e. the result of their work, eg, consultation activities, marketing materials, regional profiles, website updates, grant writing workshops, stakeholder engagement activities, input to government policy, promotion of government programs. Outputs also include contract deliverables, viz. Regional Plans, Annual Business Plans, reports, budgets and Annual Audited Accounts. |
| Priority Activities | RDA-specific priority activities are listed in the Business Plan. They will have an economic focus, where the RDA takes either a lead or supporting role. |
| Regional Priorities | Regional Plans identify the regional priorities, typically a mix of issues, challenges and opportunities, and the regional responses to them. |
| Value Add | The RDA products/outputs demonstrate additional benefits or value for the region due to the actions of the RDA. RDAs could ask ‘what difference did we make’ to ascertain their value add to a process. |
ATTACHMENT B: GOVERNANCE

The RDA Committee’s Risk Management Plan and Workplace Health and Safety Plans do not need to be provided to the department unless requested. However, they **must** be maintained by RDA Committees and reviewed annually to ensure they are current. These Plans must also be made available to the Department on request.

Attachment B.1: RDA Risk Assessment Template

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Risk – what it is and how it might happen</th>
<th>Likelihood (a)</th>
<th>Consequence Rating (b)</th>
<th>Risk Rating (a x b)</th>
<th>Strategy to mitigate risk</th>
<th>Timeframe to implement mitigation strategy</th>
<th>Residual Risk Ranking, taking account of mitigation strategy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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|                                                |                |                        |                     |                          |                                             |                                                          |

|                                                |                |                        |                     |                          |                                             |                                                          |

|                                                |                |                        |                     |                          |                                             |                                                          |
## Risk rating table

(This table should be used to rank individual risks. Risks rated ‘Severe’ MUST be mitigated (Controls) to no more than ‘High’.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>Likelihood</th>
<th>1 Insignificant</th>
<th>2 Minor</th>
<th>3 Moderate</th>
<th>4 Major</th>
<th>5 Extreme</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Severe</strong></td>
<td>5 Almost Certain</td>
<td>5 Low</td>
<td>10 Medium</td>
<td>15 High</td>
<td>20 Severe</td>
<td>25 Severe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4 Likely</td>
<td>4 Low</td>
<td>8 Low</td>
<td>12 Medium</td>
<td>16 High</td>
<td>20 Severe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3 Possible</td>
<td>3 Low</td>
<td>6 Low</td>
<td>9 Low</td>
<td>12 Medium</td>
<td>15 High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2 Unlikely</td>
<td>2 Very Low</td>
<td>4 Low</td>
<td>6 Low</td>
<td>8 Low</td>
<td>10 Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 Rare</td>
<td>1 Very Low</td>
<td>2 Very Low</td>
<td>3 Low</td>
<td>4 Low</td>
<td>5 Low</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Action required

- **Severe**: Controls and monitoring processes are inoperative or do not exist and it is likely that the circumstances will occur and cause major disruption to or failure of the Department’s ability to deliver a major service. The risk MUST be avoided unless effective controls can be established.
- **High**: If realised, the risk, is likely to cause significant disruption or failure of the Department’s ability to deliver a major service. The risk must be mitigated, effective control measures MUST be implemented and monitored, including regular reports to executive management.
- **Medium**: Existing controls and monitoring are not completely effective and may benefit from improvement/replacement. Controls are actively managed as part of an existing process and exception or failure reporting processes to next management level exist.
- **Low**: Existing controls and monitoring are mostly effective and managed (ALARP Principle). Continuous improvement is an accepted part of monitoring to determine cost effectiveness of additional treatments. Incident reporting is part of normal process.
- **Very Low**: Existing controls and monitoring are effective and actively managed. Additional treatment is unlikely to be cost effective.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>Impact description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Reputation</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Extreme</td>
<td>• Formal inquiry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Complete loss of stakeholder confidence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Committee/personnel resignation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Adverse media reports</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Major</td>
<td>• Inquiry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Serious loss of stakeholder confidence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Adverse national media report on inefficiency/ inadequacy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Environmental disaster emergency with incidental adverse media coverage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Serious embarrassment to RDA Committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Moderate</td>
<td>• Substantial adverse publicity or loss of some stakeholder confidence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Air/Sea/Road accident</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Minor</td>
<td>• Some adverse publicity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Major review of current policies and procedures instigated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Minor loss of stakeholder confidence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Commonwealth response</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Managed by existing policies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Insignificant</td>
<td>• Internal impact only</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• No adverse publicity or ministerial involvement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• No stakeholder conflict</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Resources</th>
<th><strong>Impact description</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Greater than 10% impact on budget</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Establishing an indemnity exceeding $100m which is not approved by insurer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Up to 5% impact on budget</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Unable to attract any skilled staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Political decision to cut programs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Death or serious permanent disablement of staff or client</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Establishing an indemnity of $20m–$100m which is approved by insurer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Up to 3% impact on budget</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Skilled staff shortages leads to significant additional cost</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Work accident leads to staff/client hospitalisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Establishing an indemnity of $10M–$20M which is approved by insurer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Up to 2% impact on budget</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Staff member sustains severe sprain or broken bone requiring medical attention</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Staff absences increase sufficiently to cause delays</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Establishing an indemnity of less than $10m which is approved by insurer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Staff member sustains minor cuts or abrasions requiring time off work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• No impact on targets</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Business Continuity</th>
<th><strong>Impact description</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Loss of service capacity for more than 1 week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Destruction or disastrous long-term damage to most assets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Epidemic causes long-term, large scale staff absences, death or disablement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Loss of service capacity for up to 4 days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Loss of large number of staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Destruction or serious damage to key physical or information assets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Loss of service capacity for up to 3 days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Permanent loss of key staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Damage to physical and information assets including backups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Loss of service capacity for up to 2 days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Temporary loss of key staff</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Security/Compliance</th>
<th><strong>Impact description</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Breach of Constitution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Security incident causes death and destruction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Breach of law and regulations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Permanent disability to staff/clients because of improper work practices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Undetected long-term fraud (discovered by accident rather than process)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Sensitive information leaks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Failure to comply with directions and instructions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Systemic fraud of significant value</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Failure to comply with guidelines</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Security systems or processes not being adhered to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Risk Assessment for coming year</strong></td>
<td><strong>Plan for coming year</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Type of activity/work undertaken by the RDA Committee to fulfil requirements of Funding Agreement</strong></td>
<td><strong>Who manages/is directly responsible for this activity?</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e.g. travelling to an RDA event/forum identified as an activity to fulfil requirement of Funding Agreement.</td>
<td>e.g. RDA Committee member or staff member travelling. Person who approved attendance at the event (e.g. RDA Chair and committee members and/or staff managers).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Further Guidance on Corporate Governance

High Performing Boards—Key Components

High performing boards typically demonstrate skills in the following four key areas. RDA Committees should consider how their management and operations demonstrate these skills.

People—RDA Committee members hold a combination of skills and expertise including strong social interaction and interpersonal skills. Committees should have strong, but clearly defined relationships between board members and executive staff and clear KPIs and expectations for members and staff. The committee should promote independence of thought amongst its members.

Information—RDA Committees should develop clear and concise agendas and agenda papers. All information should be provided in a timely manner and appropriately checked before distribution. Committees should have adequate systems and manage resources efficiently, effectively and in an appropriate manner.

Monitoring—RDA Committees should regularly monitor the implementation of strategy and set clear goals and objectives. They should evaluate performance against agreed outcomes and KPIs as well as undertaking robust assessment of committee member and senior executive staff performance. Committees should develop and adhere to a complex stakeholder management plan and risk management framework.

Decision process—RDA Committee members and RDA personnel should have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities in the decision making processes and follow clearly developed and agreed processes for decision making. Good decision-making typically takes account of the following:

- Will anyone be adversely affected by the decision?
- Is there legal authority for the decision?
- Who has legal authority to make the decision?
- Why is the decision being made?
- Has natural justice been observed?
- Do the supporting papers identify the individual merits of the decision?
- Is the decision based on facts, or on generalisations?
- What is the critical or turning factor in the decision?
- Has the decision been made expeditiously?
- Is it appropriate to review the decision?
- Avoidance of informal decision-making; informal discussion of matters
on the agenda often happens outside meetings, but decisions should be taken formally at the meeting after all members have had the opportunity to receive information and put their views.

**Effective Committee Meetings**

Effective committee meetings can typically involve:
- clear agreement on the way the committee conducts its business;
- a carefully prepared agenda indicating the purpose of each item (i.e. for decision, for discussion, for information);
- preparation of papers relevant to particular agenda items, which are circulated in good time before meetings;
- frank and open discussion, in which everyone has a say;
- rules about access to information;
- meetings which are as short and “tight” as possible;
- alternation of largely procedural meetings with planning meetings to allow time for a full discussion of strategic issues; and
- accurate, timely records of decisions, discussion and dissent, that make clear what has been decided.

**Resolving Differences**

RDA Committees must produce the required Deliverables to a standard acceptable to the Department. Such quality implies rigorous and sometimes robust interaction, but also the harnessing of the experience and creativity of all members and staff. Strong performance over time implies good working relations between members and staff.

Disagreement is an expected part of discussion between committed members of RDA Committees. However, disputes can become unhealthy if they start to become costly in terms of delays, uncertainty and stress on relationships.

**Toolkit for Resolving Differences**

- Refer to the Code of Conduct and Ethics.
- Clarify roles and boundaries.
- Tackle issues through support and supervision.
- Focus members on their commitment to the organisation.
- Review how meetings are run.
- Plan a team-building exercise.
- Seek advice and guidance from third parties.

**Techniques for Separating People from the Problem**

Responsible assertion:
- Accurately describe what has happened.
- State your feelings about what has happened.
Say what you would prefer to happen now.

Common interests:
- Use open questions—what, when, who, why.
- If someone states a position, summarise it i.e. employ active listening; and then ask why (i.e. what’s behind the position).

Address the problem not the person:
- Listen to concerns—active listening e.g. summarise the main points the speaker has made.
- Use responsible assertion.
- Revisit the agenda.
- Emphasise areas of agreement.
- Use the ‘ladder of inference’—where observable data is the bottom rung.

Generating creative options:
- Raise options, not positions.
- Ask hypothetical questions.
- Avoid critical comments—brainstorm instead.
- Be patient, don’t give up at the first acceptable option—go on improving it.

Resources on Corporate Governance

There are a number of available resources on corporate governance that committee managers may find helpful to draw on in developing procedures and reviewing their own practices. Those available from public sector sources include:


• State Services Authority Victoria provides extensive governance advice for small entities (noting these are public sector entities not incorporated associations)—

• from the Department for Social Development in Northern Ireland—

  Best Practice in Finance and Governance in the Voluntary and Community Sector—
  www.dsdni.gov.uk/finance_and_governance_for_vcu.pdf

  Best Practice in Finance and Governance in the Voluntary and Community Sector is a directional and support aid developed in Northern Ireland by government with sector representatives—
  www.dsdni.gov.uk/index/voluntary_and_community/vcni-guidance.htm

There are also numerous sources of advice available from private sources, including:

• http://betterboards.net/articles/good-governance/

• www.womenonboards.org.au/

• www.boardcheckup.com

• www.effectivegovernance.com.au

• Australian Institute of Company Directors, Director Tools provides clear and comprehensive guidance on four key aspects of Board operations— www.companydirectors.com.au/

• St James Ethics Centre, Guidance on ethical decision making, is a concise guide to the key considerations you can use to assist decision-making in an ethical framework—
  http://www.ethics.org.au/about/what-is-ethics
  http://www.ethics.org.au/content/ethical-decision-making

• The Good Governance Code is a toolkit to accompany the British Good Governance Code can be downloaded free—
  www.ncvo-vol.org.uk/governanceandleadership

• Crowe Horwath Corporate Governance Framework™ is a model of the interaction between the many elements of governance—
  www.crowehorwath.net/crowe-horwath-global/services/risk/Corporate_Governance.aspx?terms=Corporate%20Governance%20Framework%e2%84%a2
• **DIY Committee Guide, UK** site was originally developed in 2005 by the Volunteer Development Agency (now Volunteer Now) in partnership with other organisations. It provides a central point of access to a wide range of resources developed by groups across the sector and beyond— [www.diycommitteeguide.org/quick-reference](http://www.diycommitteeguide.org/quick-reference)

• **The Australian Institute of Community Practice and Governance,**

• **Standards Australia** provides many resources (but note that users are required to pay for access to these publications)— [www.standards.org.au/Pages/default.aspx](http://www.standards.org.au/Pages/default.aspx):
  - AS ISO 10002-2006 Complaints Handling
  - AS 8000-2003 Corporate governance—Good governance principles
  - AS 8002-2003 Corporate governance—Organizational codes of conduct
  - AS 8003-2003 Corporate governance—Corporate social responsibility
  - AS 8004-2003 Corporate governance—Whistleblower protection programs for entities
  - AS 8015-2005 Corporate governance of information and communication technology
  - HB 254-2005 Governance, risk management and control assurance
  - HB 407-2006 Corporate governance for small business
  - AS 8001-2008 Fraud and corruption control
  - ISO 31010-2009 Risk Management—Risk assessment techniques
  - HB 266:2010 Guide for managing risk in not-for-profit organizations
  - AS3806:2006 Compliance Programs
  - AS8000:2003 Corporate Governance: Good Governance Principles, and