



FRRR

Foundation for Rural
Regional Renewal

Investing in Rural
Community Futures
Victoria

Request for Proposal



Key Details

Request for Proposal Closing Date and submission method	Thursday 30 Jan 2025, 5pm AEDT. Proposals must be lodged via: j.kemp@frrr.org.au		
Interviews:	Shortlisted applicants will be offered interviews during week of 24 February 2025		
Contacts:	<table border="0" style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%; vertical-align: top;"> <p>Jai Allison Insights & Impact Measurement Manager j.allison@frrr.org.au Ph: 0478 646 313</p> </td> <td style="width: 50%; vertical-align: top;"> <p>Jo Kemp IRCF Victoria Program Manager j.kemp@frrr.org.au Ph: 0448 990 800</p> </td> </tr> </table>	<p>Jai Allison Insights & Impact Measurement Manager j.allison@frrr.org.au Ph: 0478 646 313</p>	<p>Jo Kemp IRCF Victoria Program Manager j.kemp@frrr.org.au Ph: 0448 990 800</p>
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Contract Period	March 2025 to end September 2030		
Budget	The contract limit is \$220,000. Submissions should propose a total cost inclusive of GST and all expenditures (see Budget & Pricing section for details)		
Supporting Information	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. FRRR Impact Framework 2. Investing in Rural Community Futures program and background 3. About FRRR 4. Examples of FRRR 'insight' reports and evaluations 		



Glossary

Term	Meaning
Evidence base	The collated results of learnings and insights developed and shared through the multiple iterations of delivering the IRCF program and its evaluations
IRCF Vic program	Investing in Rural Community Futures Victoria program (as distinct from the 3 earlier iterations of the program ¹)
MERL plan	Monitoring Evaluation Reporting and Learning framework and plan to implement it
NFPs	Not-for-Profit organisations in a partner community
Program stakeholders	All people and organisations participating the program's development and delivery. Includes, but not limited to, participating community, NFPs, funding partners, and FRRR staff
Utilisation-focused evaluation	Approach based on the principle that an evaluation should be judged on usefulness to intended users – planned and conducted to enhance utilisation of findings and process to inform decisions and improve performance

¹ The 3 earlier iterations of the IRCF program include: 1. [IRCF NSW – VFFF Communities](#) (June, Leeton, Nambucca Valley), 2. [IRCF South Coast Communities](#) (Batemans Bay, Bay & Basin, Bega Valley, Nowra, Ulladulla) 3. [Investing in NFP Capacity in Regional NSW](#) (Bega Valley, Glen Innes, Taree/Wingham)

About FRRR & this Request for Proposal

The Foundation for Rural & Regional Renewal (FRRR) is focused on our vision for a vibrant, resilient and revitalised remote, rural and regional Australia. For more information on FRRR's values, principles and how we work see: [About FRRR | FRRR](#)

FRRR is seeking a creative, dynamic, and utilisation-focused evaluation partner that aligns with our values and approaches. We are requesting proposals from experienced social impact evaluators that outline how you would:

- Collaboratively develop a Monitoring, Evaluation, Reporting, and Learning (MERL) plan (with FRRR and potentially including participating NFPs and/or funders),
- Execute the plan to evaluate the Investing in Rural Community Futures (IRCF) Victoria program.

The three objectives of the MERL plan and its implementation should include:

- a) **Impact evaluation** – measure and report the short and medium term (1 to 5 year) impacts of the IRCF Vic program (including design for measuring ongoing longer-term and broader impacts, as per the FRRR Impact Framework²)
- b) **Impact learning** – facilitate program stakeholders (e.g. funders, FRRR staff, NFPs and community) to draw-out and reflect on putting learnings from the impact evaluation into action (collaboratively)
- c) **Contribute to evidence base** – that enables FRRR and stakeholders to demonstrate the value of IRCF's place-based capacity building approach to investment

According to the utilisation-focused and impact evaluation approaches³ the MERL plan will be adapted to the needs of participants and pragmatic (i.e. focus on the usefulness of what the MERL asks of participants and produces).⁴ Note contract variations are anticipated and FRRR welcomes according to negotiations.

About the IRCF Program & Victorian Iteration

Investing in Rural Community Futures (IRCF) is a grassroots capacity building program to support the local NFP sector in specific rural and regional communities. The program began in 2019.

FRRR expects prospective evaluation partners incorporate their understanding of the IRCF program into their proposal and MERL plan outline. For more details about the IRCF program,

² For copy of the FRRR impact framework, click [here](#)

³ For further details on utilisation-focused evaluative approaches see – [Utilisation-focused evaluation | Better Evaluation](#). For further details on impact evaluation see – [Impact evaluation | Better Evaluation](#)

⁴ This means create engaging, informative evaluation and learnings material that are appropriate for wider audiences (think communities and funders and what they want to do with the insights).

partner communities, and approach, visit the FRRR website [here](#). To view the program Theory of Change, see Appendix A.

Proposals should appreciate FRRR has delivered the IRCF program with eight partner communities in NSW, as well as lighter touch versions of the program in three additional communities. Therefore, proposals should outline how the MERL plan will use the trove of existing evaluation findings, data, and lived experience documented to date.

The IRCF Victoria program will be delivered in **three** regional Victorian communities. It is expected the three communities⁵ will be selected and announced in March 2025. Hence, the need to start the evaluation in March 2025.

Methods, Considerations & Deliverables

FRRR expects the evaluation will be undertaken using participatory methods that accentuate the community-led focus of the program and the opportunity for capacity building impacts to be achieved through participating in the different MERL activities. For example FRRR asks prospective evaluation partners consider drawing on principles and examples of participatory action research⁶ to formulate how local participants might be trained ('skilled up' formally or informally) and engaged to: conduct monitoring data collection; evaluation/reflection of results; and presentation of reporting/story telling using multi-media tools (for inspiration see participant led evaluation videos from [Utopia Homelands Project](#)).

FRRR also expects results from MERL processes will be sense-checked (using online workshops for example) and presented back to program stakeholders for consideration, then shared in an appropriate format to be used for their needs. See [Table 1](#) for indicative reporting outputs and formats, and Appendix B for indicative MERL plan rhythms.

⁵ The community selection process is currently underway with five communities shortlisted, these potential communities are: Colac, Hamilton, Maryborough, Portland, and Swan Hill.

⁶ [Community-based researchers in evaluation: getting the story right](#)

Table 1: Indicative MERL plan rhythms, outputs, audiences and their uses

Example Rhythms	Example Outputs + artefacts	Example Channels + audience + description + intended use
6 monthly	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Program insights/newsletters/news stories 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Short pithy 500-word articles, provocations published on, e.g. LinkedIn, blogs, social media channels, relevant publications Program stakeholders, potential future funders, and public via FRRR communication channels and public forums. Sharing results to date, promoting the value of IRCF approach and to inform future program design
Annual story telling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Progress report (synthesis of insights + sense checking workshop). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Videos Workshops Written document (assume PDF) Program Advisory Committee, program stakeholders. Who will forward to their internal audiences - Reporting against targets and obligations (e.g. corporate reporting, ACNC reporting etc.) Professional tone, describe insights, operational milestones, programmatic & strategic implications, incorporate graphics to present learnings/outcomes 2-4 pages max.
Annual	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Impact asset 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community facing, consumable, creative communication that evaluator creates to engage donors as well. Up to 12 slides and an online session to walk through results and answer questions.
3 years in	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Publication for philanthropic & professional audiences 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Co-developed and published thought leadership for sector and policy/decision makers, sharing key in-depth learnings.
Final impact package	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Broad audience 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consolidation of program learnings incorporating case studies, overall impact, recommendations Community partners, funder group Visually engaging (think putting a ribbon around the program outcomes)

The evaluation approach should facilitate reflexive practices that enable program stakeholders to learn from and share experiences, as well as communicate the results of their work with broader audiences as part of participating in the evaluation. As outlined in *Table 1*, this could be achieved through activities such as workshopping (co-creating), case studies and other communication materials as part of the evaluation process.

It is expected appropriate methods of engagement are proposed for the diverse types and needs of the community participants and organisations. To accurately capture the range of stakeholders it is likely a combination of virtual and in-person methods will be required and should be planned for accordingly.

FRRR welcomes proposals that include:

- Partnerships to ensure the balance of expertise and accessibility to the participating communities is achieved.
- Or 'sit alongside' social research work that is in some way related to the objectives of this evaluation project.

Ethical and Accessible

An ethical approach will be undertaken at all stages of the evaluation (at minimum in accordance with the Australian Evaluation Society's ethical guidelines) the Evaluation Partner will plan for and ensure methods are transparent, culturally appropriate and are responsive to the needs of participants and consensual.

This will require all MERL activities to factor in diverse options for how different stakeholders can engage, participate, and benefit.

Evaluation Data Sources & Gathering Activities

The MERL plan could use a variety of data sources such as:

- Existing written, visuals and recording materials from the existing IRCF NSW evaluations
- Program management records – administered by FRRR
- Project management records gathered through NFPs – including end of funded project reports
- Web based materials – websites, social media posts, visual and digital media recordings (workshops, and discussions around presentations are themselves data collection activities)
- Participant self-assessment tools
- Participatory methods in which local people as well as outsiders conduct community-led data collection and storytelling. Note these methods may include participatory creative pursuits such as community gatherings, artistic, theatrical, historic and other methods of engaging diverse cohorts in sharing their experiences through generative processes

- Interviews, focus groups and workshops with program stakeholders (e.g. FRRR staff, funders, NFPs, their partners, key stakeholders, and community members)
- Typical methods, such as: surveys, most significant change stories, case studies etc.

Co-developing the MERL plan will further detail and plan strategies, approaches and tools suitable to collect information for evaluation purposes. Responsibilities for who collects what data will be negotiated during the MERL plan collaborative development process and reflected in contract arrangements.

Budget & Pricing

The maximum overall budget for the evaluation is \$220,000 over the period of the evaluation, which includes up to five years (between March 2025 – September 2030). This includes GST, reimbursements, evaluation partner travel and any direct expenses.

Applicants are encouraged to submit a budget that includes GST, travel and direct expenses and provides a breakdown of activities to illustrate value for money, See Appendix C for Budget Pricing.

Prospective budgets are encouraged to demonstrate a means of honouring the time and value provided by grant recipients and community participation in evaluative activities.

What FRRR is looking for in an Evaluation Partner

FRRR will evaluate proposals based on:

1. Alignment with FRRR values and aspirations.
2. Demonstrated understanding of the requirements, objectives and motivation of the evaluation.
3. Experience evaluating community led, place-based, capacity building or development projects.
4. A deep understanding of working with rural and regional communities, volunteers and the NFP sectors including First Nations, Young People (18-35 years) and other diverse groups.
5. Ability to adapt, change and pivot if required when working with communities and dynamic programs.
6. Demonstrated examples of providing and presenting data and evaluation communications in creative and innovative ways that are useful for a variety of audiences (funders, community, etc).
7. Potential for all program stakeholders to build capacity, generate and share learning, as well as their impact outcomes by participating in the evaluation.
8. Proposed evaluation methodology that meets the requirement and suitability of the program and community context (including demonstrated capabilities and experience conducting relevant MERL activities online and in-person).

9. Evidence that relevant insurances, licences, policies and procedures are in place and compliant with State, Territory or Commonwealth laws. Demonstrated health and safety measures including Working with Vulnerable Persons, Working with Children, Occupational Health and Safety policies as well as relevant insurances such as Public Liability and Professional Indemnity.
10. Overall value for money.

Proposals should be no greater than twenty pages in **total** and include:

- Responses to “What FRRR is looking for in an evaluation partner” points (1-10) above
- An outline of suggested IRCF Vic MERL plan, along with description of approach to collaboratively developing and implementing it
- Examples of previous work experience (social impact evaluations) with relevant communities
 - Completed budget
 - Two referees

Please also provide the CVs of the individuals or team that would undertake the evaluation (these can be annexed to the proposal and will not be included in the 20-page limit).

FRRR is an equal opportunity employer and encourages proposals from applicants from diverse backgrounds.

This RFP merely scaffolds what FRRR thinks might be needed and how to achieve it, we value proposals that bring alternative suggestions and creative approaches. If your proposal differs from what is suggested here, briefly explain why.

At the nub of it, this is an opportunity to reimagine what evaluation can be and the value it generates for everyone involved in the IRCF Victoria program.

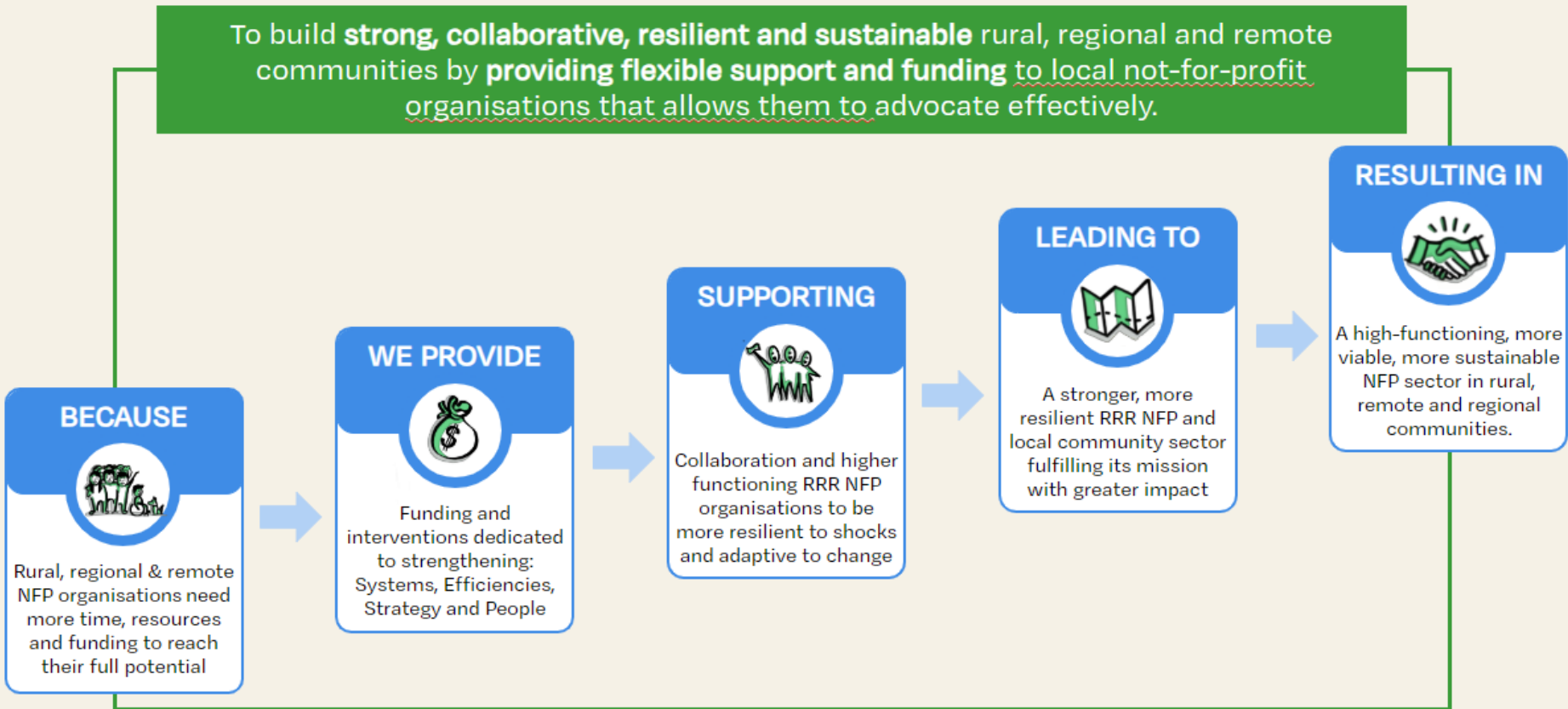
Prospective evaluation partners are encouraged to contact FRRR staff to discuss any aspect of this request for proposal before submitting a response.

For further information please reach out to:

Jo Kemp (in the first instance)	Jai Allison (if needed)
IRCF Victoria Program Manager	Insights and Impact Measurement Manager
j.kemp@frrr.org.au or 0448 990 800	j.allison@frrr.org.au or 0478 646 313

Appendix A – Theory of Change IRCF Victoria

Shifting mindsets and systems: a focus on capacity & collaboration in rural NFP's



Appendix B – Indicative Rhythm for MERL Plan



Appendix C – Budget Pricing

Add rows and any other details as required.

Include staff wages (by team member), travel + field work, organisational direct, and indirect costs.				
2025				
Staff member	Role / trip / activity /	Rate	Units (e.g. No of days)	Total costs (e.g. wages) excl. GST
		\$		
SUB TOTAL DIRECT COSTS: STAFF				\$