# Expert Session Outline – October 1, 2025

## Building Investment-Ready Projects

***Hosted by: Economic Development & Finance Working Group (EDFWG)***

### 1. Welcome & Framing (10 min)

- Opening remarks (EDFWG Co-Chairs)
- Session objectives: strengthening project readiness, enhancing financial fluency, and supporting RISE-aligned initiatives

### 2. Context Setting: Why Investment-Readiness Matters (15 min)

- Brief overview of capital absorption challenges in rural/tribal/regional contexts
- Aligning with Redwood Region RISE goals of inclusive economic growth and equitable capital access
- How this session connects to the November 5 Convening in Lake County

### 3. Expert Presentation(s) (30 min)

- **Topic areas:**
    - Tools & templates for feasibility studies
    - Developing financial pro formas for early-stage projects
    - Assessing “deal readiness” and risk

- Suggested experts: project finance specialists, CDFIs, regional development consultants, or philanthropy/private capital advisors

### 4. Case Study Spotlight (20 min)

- One or two RISE-aligned projects at varying stages of readiness
- Lessons learned: barriers, successes, replicable models

### 5. EDFWG Discussion – Next Steps(25 min)

- Guided by:
    - What makes this project investment-ready?
    - What can we do as EDFWG to further assist Catalyst projects? Other projects that did not receive Catalyst funding?
    - What tools or partnerships are missing?

  - How could this project connect to November’s in-person convening?

### 6. Report Back & Synthesis (15 min)

- Key insights from the discussion
- Identification of technical assistance needs
- Alignment with Cohort 1 Project Funding Accelerator

### 7. Closing & Next Steps (10 min)

- Preview of **November 5 Regional Convening** (focus on investors + entrepreneurs)
- Reminder of **December 3 Expert Session** (“Blending Capital: Philanthropy, Government, and Private Sector”)
- Open call for projects to prepare draft pro formas and feasibility summaries for Accelerator entry

## Supporting Materials

- Feasibility study template
- Sample project pro forma
- Investment-readiness checklist
- Links to relevant funding and finance resources

# Supporting Material 1: Feasibility Study Template

*(for early-stage project assessment)*

**A. Project Overview**

- Project name:
- Lead organization(s):
- Sector focus: (e.g., Blue Economy, Renewable Energy, Arts, Health, Aviation, AgTech)
- Geographic scope:

**B. Market Need & Demand**

- What problem does this project address?
- Who are the intended beneficiaries/customers?
- Market demand evidence (data, studies, trends):

**C. Project Description**

- Core activities/products/services:
- Unique value proposition:
- Partners and stakeholders:

**D. Financial & Technical Feasibility**

- Estimated capital requirements (start-up + operating):
- Revenue model and sources:
- Cost structure:
- Technology readiness and infrastructure needs:

**E. Regulatory & Legal Considerations**

- Permits, licenses, land use/zoning requirements:
- Compliance risks:

**F. Social & Community Impact**

- Jobs created:
- Equity and inclusion outcomes:
- Environmental impact:

**G. Risk Assessment & Mitigation**

- Top 3 risks:
- Proposed mitigation strategies:

**H. Next Steps**

- Key milestones (6–12 months):
- Technical assistance required:

# Supporting Material 2: Sample Project Pro Forma

*(for projecting project financials; 3–5 year horizon)*

| Category | Year 1 | Year 2 | Year 3 | Year 4 | Year 5 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Revenue** | | | | | |
| Product/Service Sales | | | | | |
| Grants/Subsidies | | | | | |
| Partnerships/Contracts | | | | | |
| Other | | | | | |
| **Total Revenue** | | | | | |
| **Expenses** | | | | | |
| Personnel | | | | | |
| Facilities/Equipment | | | | | |
| Operations | | | | | |
| Marketing/Outreach | | | | | |
| Legal/Compliance | | | | | |
| Other | | | | | |
| **Total Expenses** | | | | | |
| **Net Income (Loss)** | | | | | |
| **Cumulative Cash Flow** | | | | | |

*Notes:*

- Include assumptions section (e.g., growth rates, pricing, inflation).
- Keep it simple but realistic — highlight break-even year.

# Supporting Material 3: Investment-Readiness Checklist

*(quick self-assessment for project teams)*

### ✅ Vision & Strategy

- Clear mission, goals, and value proposition.
- Defined market opportunity and target customers/beneficiaries.

### ✅ Financial Readiness

- Draft pro forma (revenues, expenses, cash flow).
- Defined capital requirement (equity, debt, grants, or blended).
- Basic understanding of risk/return profile.

### ✅ Operational Readiness

- Identified project leadership and governance.
- Key partners secured (letters of support/commitment).
- Feasibility study completed or underway.

### ✅ Legal & Regulatory

- Site control (land, facility, or agreements).
- Permits/zoning identified or in process.
- Organizational legal structure clarified.

### ✅ Impact & Outcomes

- Defined community/equity benefits.
- Environmental or social ROI metrics identified.
- Alignment with regional/RISE sector strategies.

### ✅ Engagement with Capital Providers

- Initial conversations with funders/investors.
- Understanding of appropriate capital sources (philanthropy, government, private, blended).

### ✅ Next Steps

- Timeline for reaching “investment-ready” status.
- Gaps identified where technical assistance is needed.

# California Jobs First Implementation Funding Evaluation Criteria – Two-Phase Process

https://business.ca.gov/wp-content/uploads/2025/04/Implementation-RFP.pdf

## Phase 1: Pre-Application (Project Cluster Selection)

Applicants must form a **regional or cross-regional coalition** to submit a Notice of Intent and Pre-Application Questionnaire. Projects must be organized as **clusters of 3–8 interconnected projects** aligned with one tradable sector.

**Scoring Areas (24 points possible):**

1. **Project Descriptions (Pass/Fail)** – Each project in the cluster must be clearly described with identified leads.
2. **Sector Relevance (3 pts)** – Alignment with a designated tradable sector.
3. **Coalition Capacity (3 pts)** – Evidence of collaboration and stakeholder strength.
4. **Project Necessity (3 pts)** – Each project meets a defined employer, worker, or community need.
5. **Job Creation Potential (3 pts)** – Anticipated number and profile of good-paying jobs.
6. **Financing Plan (3 pts)** – Clear plan to fund projects, including secured or planned additional sources.
7. **Risk Identification & Mitigation (3 pts)** – Recognition of implementation challenges and mitigation strategies.
8. **Timeline & Deliverables (3 pts)** – Feasible schedule with measurable milestones.

Top-scoring applications advance to Phase 2.

## Phase 2: Full Application (Individual Project Selection)

Each project within a finalist cluster is evaluated independently and collectively. Includes an **interview/pitch opportunity** for qualifying projects.

**Key Evaluation Considerations:**

- **Geographic equity** (balanced distribution across California regions).
- **Benefits to disinvested communities** (equity and inclusion focus).
- **Capacity of lead organization** to execute.

- **Readiness** (completed feasibility, environmental studies, permits, pre-development steps).
- **Project type mix** – must include at least two categories:
  - Ecosystem Support (e.g., technical assistance, R&D, supply chain development)
  - Infrastructure (real estate, facilities)
  - Workforce Development (training, services)
  - Additional Anchors (critical activities defined in the State Economic Blueprint).

## Metrics for Success (Reporting & Accountability)

Projects must propose **measurable indicators**. Examples:

- **Ecosystem Support:** new startups, patents, small business engagement.
- **Infrastructure:** number of businesses/people benefitting, good-paying jobs created.
- **Workforce Development:** training completions, job placements, wage improvements.
- **Anchors:** network growth, partnerships, number of high-quality jobs.

✅ **Bottom Line:** The CJF Implementation evaluation criteria focus on **sector alignment, coalition strength, project readiness, job creation, equity impacts, and clear financial plans.** Strong scoring requires evidence of both **regional collaboration** and **investment-readiness** for timely execution.