Regional Development *Australia*

NORTHERN TERRITORY

RDA NT Strategy (2026-29) Interim Implementation Plan
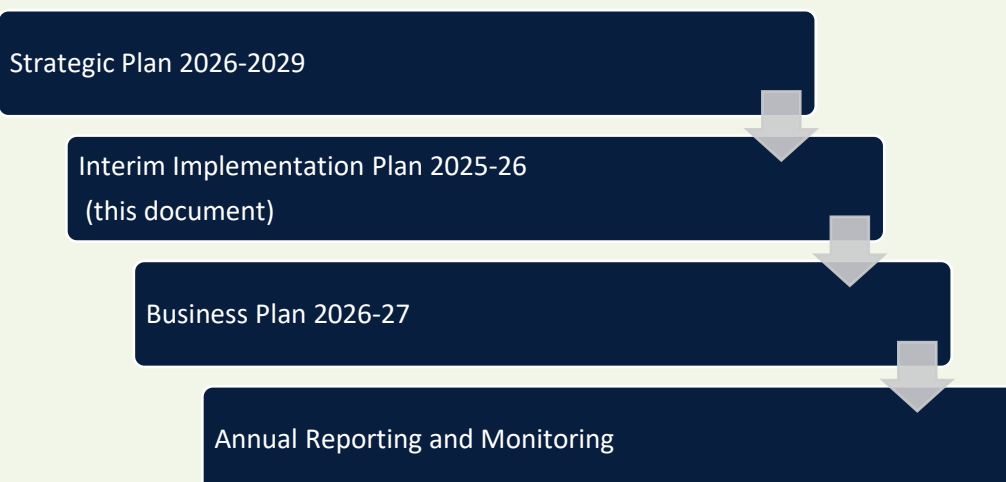
February 2026

This Interim Implementation Plan sets out Regional Development Australia Northern Territory's (RDA NT) key priorities and actions for February to July 2026. It operationalises the Strategic Plan 2026–2029 and aligns with the four Commonwealth Outcomes in RDA NT's funding agreement. This is a concise, public-facing document that focuses on what RDA NT will deliver this year to strengthen regional development across the Northern Territory.

Relationship to the Strategic Plan

This Implementation Plan sits within RDA NT's planning framework and should be read alongside the Strategic Plan 2026–2029, which establishes the organisation's vision, mission, values and five Strategic Goals.

Planning Framework

Strategic Plan 2026-2029

Interim Implementation Plan 2025-26 (this document)

Business Plan 2026-27

Annual Reporting and Monitoring

The Five Strategic Goals:

1. Drive coordinated advocacy and regional intelligence
2. Lead the design of a Northern Territory Liveability Framework
3. Increase regional investment and capability
4. Strengthen coordination for workforce and skills development
5. Strengthen governance, capability and visibility

For full detail about the Strategic Goals and their intended three-year outcomes, see the RDA NT Strategic Plan 2026–2029.

2025-26 Priorities by Strategic Goal

Goal 1: Drive Coordinated Advocacy and Regional Intelligence

Commence Territory-wide data mapping and develop RDA NT's Advocacy and Regional Priority Framework.

In 2025–26, RDA NT will establish the core advocacy and intelligence infrastructure to support coordinated regional priorities and evidence-led policy influence.

What we will do:

• Map who holds key regional data and intelligence across the Territory, and identify gaps
• Draft and test an Advocacy and Regional Priority Framework with the Committee and key government partners
• Use these tools to agree a concise set of NT-wide regional priorities for 2026–27
• Produce at least one Regional Insights Report combining data and local intelligence on a priority theme (e.g. liveability, workforce, investment readiness)
• Deliver targeted regional roadshows and stakeholder engagement aligned to advocacy priorities

Ref	Key Action	Lead / Partners	Timing	Success Signal
1.1	Complete data mapping: identify who holds regional data, tools available (.id, NTG, Commonwealth), and gaps	Policy/data team; NTG Treasury, Commonwealth agencies	Q4 2025–26	Data mapping summary completed and endorsed internally
1.2	Draft Advocacy and Regional Priority Framework and test with Committee and stakeholders	CEO; Committee, NTG, Commonwealth, local government	Q3 2025–26	Framework endorsed by Committee; stakeholder feedback incorporated
1.3	Coordinate development of 2026 Territory-wide Regional Priorities list through consultation	Policy/engagement; Committee, local government, First Nations organisations, industry	Q3–Q4 2025–26	Regional Priorities list published and communicated

| 1.4 | Produce Regional Insights Report (focus: liveability indicators or workforce landscape) | Data/policy; .id, NTG, training providers | Q4 2025–26 | Report published; used in submissions or stakeholder briefings |

Goal 2: Lead the Design of a Northern Territory Liveability Framework

Establish a Liveability Framework working group and design the initial shape of a Northern Territory Liveability Framework.

In 2025–26, RDA NT will focus on scoping, partnerships and securing resources for a Northern Territory Liveability Framework, rather than full development and rollout.

What we will do:

- Form a small working group with key NTG, Commonwealth, local government, sector and First Nations partners

- Agree the purpose, scope and principles for the Framework and outline the staged work program

- Identify potential pilot locations that reflect the diversity of NT communities (remote, regional centres, Darwin)

- Develop a clear funding and partnership proposal to secure investment for Framework design and pilot testing

- Build understanding of what liveability means in different NT contexts through preliminary consultation

Ref	Key Action	Lead / Partners	Timing	Success Signal
2.1	Establish Liveability Framework working group with cross-sector representation	CEO; government agencies, industry, local government, First Nations organisations	Q3–Q4 2025–26	Regional Priorities list published and communicated
2.2	Complete scoping work: define purpose, scope, principles and staged work program	Policy/working group; research institutions, comparable jurisdictions	Q4 2025–26	Report published; used in submissions or stakeholder briefings
2.3	Identify potential pilot locations reflecting diversity of NT contexts	Policy/CEO; working group, local partners	Q4 2025–26	Shortlist of pilot locations endorsed by Committee and discussed with local partners

Goal 3: Increase Regional Investment and Capability

Develop a Funding Enablement Framework and launch a new Regional Investment Readiness and Impact Fund.

In 2025–26, RDA NT will clarify its funding support role, build capability across regional proponents, and strengthen the Territory-wide project pipeline.

What we will do:

- Finalise and endorse the Funding Enablement Framework that sets out RDA NT's support offer, eligibility and boundaries (advice, data, letters of support, workshops)
- Begin using a simple project pipeline register to track supported regional projects from concept to delivery
- Finalise Design and open the Regional Investment Readiness and Impact Fund ($200,000) to help proponents get projects investment ready
- Deliver targeted grant readiness workshops in the regions
- Provide direct project development support to priority regional projects (target: 10–15 projects)
- Track and report outcomes: funds leveraged, projects supported, capability improvements

Ref	Key Action	Lead / Partners	Timing	Success Signal
3.1	Develop Funding Enablement Framework defining RDA NT support model, eligibility and service standards	Policy/engagement; Committee, local government, First Nations organisations	Q4 2025–26	Framework endorsed by Committee
3.2	Design and launch Regional Investment Readiness and Impact Fund ($200K): guidelines, application process, assessment criteria	CEO/projects; Committee, funders	Q4 2025–26	Fund guidelines published; applications open; first round assessed by Q4
3.4	Deliver grant readiness workshops in the regions	Engagement/projects; local government, First Nations & NFP organisations, grant teams	Q4 2025–26	Four workshops delivered; post-workshop capability feedback captured
3.5	Provide direct project development support to priority regional projects (target: 10–15 projects)	Projects; project proponents, government agencies	Q3–Q4 2025–26	Projects supported; funding applications submitted; letters of support provided

| 3.6 | Track and report outcomes: funds leveraged, success rates, capability improvements | Projects/data; Committee | Q4 2025–26 | Annual outcomes report completed; case studies documented |

Goal 4: Strengthen Coordination for Workforce and Skills Development

Clarify RDA NT's coordination role in regional workforce and skills, using a light-touch, mapping-first approach.

In 2025–26, RDA NT will focus on understanding the workforce landscape and identifying where it can add distinct value through coordination and convening, rather than direct program delivery.

What we will do:

- Map existing workforce and skills initiatives across government, industry, training providers and First Nations organisations
- Talk with key workforce stakeholders to identify where coordination is missing or duplicated
- Recommend 1–2 practical coordination roles or pilots for RDA NT to lead or support from 2026–27 (e.g. a regional workforce forum or sector-specific initiative)
- Contribute workforce intelligence to government planning and submissions

Ref	Key Action	Lead / Partners	Timing	Success Signal
4.1	Commence NT workforce and skills landscape mapping: stakeholders, programs, gaps, opportunities	Policy; NTG Education/Skills, Commonwealth Jobs and Skills Australia, training providers	Q4 2025–26	Mapping report completed; coordination opportunities identified
4.2	Engage with workforce stakeholders to identify coordination gaps and duplication	CEO/policy; government agencies, industry, training providers, First Nations organisations	Q3 2025–26	Stakeholder engagement completed; recommendations prepared
4.3	Define RDA NT workforce coordination niche and recommend 1–2 pilots or coordination roles	CEO/policy; Committee	Q4 2025–26	Niche role documented and endorsed by Committee; pilots/roles identified for 2026–27
4.4	Contribute workforce intelligence to government policy submissions or regional planning	Policy; NTG, Commonwealth, Committee	Q3–Q4 2025–26	Submissions made; intelligence incorporated in planning documents

Goal 5: Strengthen Governance, Capability and Visibility

Complete key internal reforms and lift RDA NT's visibility.

In 2025–26, RDA NT will consolidate governance and internal systems, recruit additional staff, and implement a consistent communications approach.

What we will do:

- Launch the new Strategic Plan and this Interim Implementation Plan on 18 February 2026 and communicate clearly what RDA NT does
- Finalise priority internal work: new or updated policies by 31 March 2026, implement new staffing structure with recruitment of new staff underway, review of constitution and risk framework
- Put in place a concise communications plan so stakeholders hear from RDA NT regularly and consistently
- Implement performance monitoring framework with quarterly reporting to Committee

Ref	Key Action	Lead / Partners	Timing	Success Signal
5.1	Launch Strategic Plan 2026–2029 and Interim Implementation Plan on 18 February 2026	CEO; Committee, stakeholders	Q3 2025–26	Launch event delivered; Strategic Plan and Implementation Plan published
5.2	Finalise governance policies: delegations, conflicts of interest, procurement, risk management	CEO; Committee,	Q3 2025–26	Priority policies updated and endorsed by Committee
5.3	Implement new structure and recruit new staff positions	CEO; Committee	Q3-Q4 2025–26	New Structure implemented; key positions filled.
5.4	Develop scope of works for constitution and risk framework review/workshop & engage consultant	CEO; Committee, auditor	Q3-Q4 2025–26	Constitution review, risk framework review underway.
5.5	Develop and implement Communications and Engagement Plan	Engagement; Committee, communications consultant	Q3 2025–26	Plan commenced; regular communications established
5.6	Implement performance monitoring framework with quarterly reporting to Committee	CEO/data; Committee	Q3 2025–26	Framework operational; first quarterly report to Committee
5.7	Complete 2026–27 Business Plan for Committee approval	CEO; Committee, Commonwealth	Q4 2025–26	Business Plan & Budget Endorsed Finalised and submitted to AG

Performance and Monitoring

Alignment with Commonwealth Outcomes

Commonwealth Outcome	Strategic Goal Alignment	2025-26 Key Measures
Outcome 1: Facilitate regional economic development outcomes	Goals 1, 2, 3, 4	• Regional priorities identified and advocated • Projects in pipeline by stage • Regional stakeholders engaged through roadshows/forums • Progress on Liveability Framework (milestones achieved)
Outcome 2: Support regional stakeholders to access grants	Goal 3	• Proponents supported with grant applications • Grant readiness workshops delivered • Regional Investment Readiness Fund applications and approvals • Total funding sought by supported projects
Outcome 3: Contribute to local economic development planning	Goals 1, 2, 4	• Regional Insights Reports published • Policy submissions and planning contributions • Engagement in local/regional planning processes
Outcome 4: Provide regional data and intelligence	Goals 1, 3, 4	• Data mapping completed • Regional Insights Reports produced • Project pipeline reports • Workforce landscape mapping completed

Quarterly Reporting

Progress will be reported to the RDA NT Committee quarterly (September 2025, December 2025, March 2026, June 2026), with focus on:

- Status of key actions under each Strategic Goal
- Notable achievements, case studies or advocacy outcomes
- Emerging risks, issues and dependencies
- Adjustments required to respond to changing circumstances

Governance, Partnerships and Resourcing

Governance

The RDA NT Committee provides strategic leadership and governance oversight. The Committee reviews implementation progress quarterly, approves adjustments to priorities, oversees risk management, and endorses key frameworks and reports before release.

The CEO is accountable for day-to-day implementation, supported by RDA NT staff.

Key Partnerships

Successful delivery depends on strong partnerships with:

- **Australian Government:** Commonwealth departments, NAIF, relevant agencies
- **Northern Territory Government:** Relevant agencies
- **Local Government:** All NT councils, with tailored support for smaller councils
- **First Nations Organisations:** Aboriginal organisations, land councils, community-controlled organisations
- **Industry and Community:** Peak & membership bodies, training providers, research institutions, businesses

Resourcing

Delivery is resourced through RDA NT's 2025–2030 Commonwealth funding agreement (core operational funding), and project-specific funding if secured. During 2025–26, RDA NT will strengthen capability through strategic recruitment, professional development, and investment in digital systems and tools.

Risk Management

Risk	Likely Impact	Mitigation Strategy
Funding and capacity constraints	Limits delivery; reputational risk	Prioritise high-impact activities; seek supplementary funding; communicate scope clearly
Policy and program changes (Commonwealth or NTG)	Requires plan adjustment	Maintain close government relationships; build flexibility into frameworks
Stakeholder fatigue or overlap	Duplication; confusion; disengagement	Clarify niche through frameworks; coordinate proactively; focus on convening
Slow progress on major initiatives (e.g. Liveability Framework funding)	Delays flagship projects	Develop contingency plans; stage milestones; communicate progress transparently
Workforce and recruitment challenges	Difficulty attracting/retaining staff	Competitive conditions; professional development; flexible work arrangements

Risk will be managed through a formal risk register maintained by the CEO and reviewed by the Committee quarterly.

Review and Next Steps

This Interim Implementation Plan covers February to July 2026. It will be reviewed in April–May 2026 as part of developing the 2026–27 Business Plan.

The 2026–27 Business Plan will:

- Incorporate lessons learned from the interim period
- Establish a full three-year Implementation Plan aligned to the Strategic Plan 2026–2029
- Integrate detailed performance indicators, budgets and work programs
- Reflect any changes to policy environment, funding arrangements or strategic priorities

Progress against this Interim Plan will be reported in the 2025–26 Annual Report.

Conclusion

This Interim Implementation Plan provides a clear, focused roadmap for RDA NT's work from February 2026 to July 2026. It sets realistic, achievable priorities that establish frameworks, build capability, strengthen partnerships and demonstrate impact.

The Committee and staff are committed to disciplined delivery, transparent reporting and genuine collaboration with regional stakeholders to turn this Plan into visible, practical outcomes for communities and economies across the Northern Territory.

For further information:

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