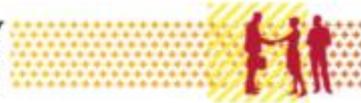




**Australian Government**  
**Department of Agriculture,  
Water and the Environment**

**Community  
Grants Hub**  
Improving your grant experience



## Future Drought Fund: Networks to Build Drought Resilience Project Grant Guidelines

<b>Opening date:</b>	<b>28 August 2020</b>
<b>Closing date and time:</b>	11.00pm AEST on 25 September 2020
<b>Commonwealth policy entity:</b>	Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment
<b>Administering entity</b>	Community Grants Hub
<b>Enquiries:</b>	If you have any questions, contact Community Grants Hub Phone: 1800 020 283 (option 1) Email: <a href="mailto:support@communitygrants.gov.au">support@communitygrants.gov.au</a> Questions should be sent no later than 18 September 2020
<b>Date guidelines released:</b>	28 August 2020
<b>Type of grant opportunity:</b>	Open competitive

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# 1. Future Drought Fund: Networks to Build Drought Resilience Project Grant processes

**The Networks to Build Drought Resilience (NBDR) Project is designed to achieve Australian Government objectives.**

This grant opportunity contributes to the Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment's (the department's) *Outcome 3: More sustainable, productive, internationally competitive and profitable Australian agricultural, food and fibre industries through policies and initiatives that promote better resource management practices, innovation, self-reliance and improved access to international markets.*

The department works with stakeholders to plan and design the grant opportunity according to Australian Government legislative and administrative frameworks:

[Future Drought Fund Act 2019](#)  
[Future Drought Fund \(Drought Resilience Funding Plan 2020 to 2024\) Determination 2020 \(the Funding Plan\)](#)  
[Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013](#)  
[Commonwealth Grants Rules and Guidelines \(CGRGs\).](#)



**The grant opportunity opens**

We publish the grant guidelines on the [GrantConnect](#) and [Community Grants Hub](#) websites.



**You complete and submit a grant application**

You complete the application form and address all of the eligibility and assessment criteria to be considered for the grant.



**We assess all grant applications**

We assess the applications against eligibility criteria and notify you if you are not eligible. We assess your eligible application against the assessment criteria including an overall consideration of value with money and comparison with other applications.



**We make grant recommendations**

We provide advice to the Drought Minister (or delegate) on the merits of each application. The Drought Minister (or delegate) must seek and consider advice from the Regional Investment Corporation (RIC) Board on the consistency of the proposed expenditure with the Funding Plan.



**Grant decisions are made**

The Drought Minister (or delegate) decides which applications are successful.



**We notify you of the outcome**

We advise you of the outcome of your application. We may not notify unsuccessful applicants until the grant agreements has been executed with successful applicant.



**We enter into a grant agreement with you**

We will enter into a grant agreement with you if you are successful. The type of grant agreement is based on the nature of the grant and will be proportional to the risks involved.



**You deliver the NBDR Project**

You undertake the project as set out in your grant agreement. We manage the grant by working with you, monitoring your progress and making payments.



**Evaluation of the Networks to Build Drought Resilience Project**

We evaluate your specific grant activity and the NBDR Project as a whole. We base this on both the information you provide to us and what we collect from various sources.

## 2. Introduction

These guidelines contain information for grant applicants who wish to be considered to deliver the Australian Government's Networks to Build Drought Resilience (NBDR) Project. We seek to engage one provider (a provider being defined as a single provider or the lead provider of a consortium, to deliver the NBDR Project nationally.

You must read these guidelines before filling out an application.

This document sets out:

- the purpose of the grant
- the eligibility and assessment criteria for the grantee(s) and activities funded by the grant
- how grant applications are considered and selected
- how grantee(s) are notified and receive grant payments
- how grantee(s) will be monitored and evaluated
- responsibilities and expectations in relation to the opportunity

The Community Grants Hub on behalf of the Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment (the department) will administer this grant opportunity.

## 3. About the grant program

### 3.1 About the Future Drought Fund

The Future Drought Fund (the Fund) is a long-term investment fund that provides a sustainable source of funding to help Australian farmers and communities become more prepared for, and resilient to, the impacts of drought. Established under the *Future Drought Fund Act 2019* in September 2019, the Fund began with a \$3.9 billion investment, with earnings to be reinvested by the Future Fund Board until the balance reaches \$5 billion. The Fund is part of the Government's Drought Response, Resilience and Preparedness Plan.

From July 2020, \$100 million is available each year from the Fund to invest in drought resilience programs. The programs support farm businesses to be better informed, more productive, profitable and adaptable, and to adopt more resilient land and natural resource management practices. The programs will also build capacity in rural and regional communities to be less vulnerable to the socio-economic impacts of drought. Through grants or other arrangements, the Fund will support a range of initiatives including farm business planning, greater access to information for decision-making, adoption of research and technologies, and building the drought resilience of natural resource in agricultural landscapes. Communities will benefit through improved regional planning, strengthening networks, leadership and community capabilities, and small-scale infrastructure projects.

The Drought Resilience Funding Plan 2020-2024 (the Funding Plan) sets out an approach for making arrangements or grants in relation to drought resilience, or entering into agreements in relation to such grants. The Funding Plan serves as a framework for all expenditure from the Fund.

The Funding Plan has three inter-connected strategic priorities:

- economic resilience for an innovative and profitable agricultural sector
- environmental resilience for sustainable and improved functioning of farming landscapes
- social resilience for resourceful and adaptable communities.

## 3.2 About Networks to Build Drought Resilience

The Networks to Build Drought Resilience (NBDR) Project will provide grant funding of \$3.75 million (GST exclusive) to build community capacity by strengthening social and community networking, support, engagement and wellbeing. These actions will build an enduring resilience to the impacts of climate change, including drought, and enhance the public good in agriculture dependent communities.

Drought resilience includes the ability to adapt, reorganise or transform in response to changing temperature, increasing variability and scarcity of rainfall and changed seasonality of rainfall, which may lead to improved economic, environmental and social wellbeing. Drought can create difficulties in maintaining the social fabric or social capital of rural and regional Australia, which may threaten the viability of some rural communities.

Social capital is built on social networks of trust, mutual support and understanding. When people are part of social networks, they are more involved in community life. Drought can reduce people's ability to work together for the benefit of the whole community. For example, when people experience stressors impacting on their individual or family circumstances, they may have reduced capacity to engage in social and business networks. This may also reduce their capacity to empathise with their peers and learn innovative ways to manage through drought. It also reduces capacity to engage in community projects, sporting activities or voluntary work, all of which can help keep rural communities vibrant, prosperous and contribute to ongoing resilience against various shocks.

We recognise that agriculture dependent communities have unique characteristics, and a community led approach is critical to achieving the best NBDR Project outcomes. As such, a provider's regional understanding and expertise will be critical in the design and development of the NBDR Project activities.

The NBDR Project activities are to be delivered nationally, ensuring that there is equity and opportunity for people throughout agriculture dependent communities to participate.

The successful provider will be selected based on their specialist expertise and capability to deliver the NBDR Project's activities in a tailored manner that addresses the needs of particular regions, such as dealing with remoteness and lack of connectivity, or specific regional agriculture sectors. To deliver the outcomes of the NBDR Project, activities to be delivered include:

1. Training of social network members to increase their community reach, dissemination of information that assists communities' capacity building and skills to deal with risks posed by drought and climate change, collaboration with other social network members from diverse backgrounds and experiences to share information and maintain knowledge over the long-term, coordination and collaboration with other community organisations.
2. Small-scale infrastructure projects to address social isolation and decline in community wellbeing and amenity value due to the impact of drought and climate change such as: improvements to community meeting places - upgrades to parks/gardens, tourist attractions, and places of ecological and/or cultural significance that have been affected or at risk of being affected by drought; water efficiency or recycling infrastructure and shade measures for sporting and other community facilities.
3. Hosting ongoing community-related events directed at mitigating the impacts of drought and climate change by strengthening the social capital of communities. Activities may include: networking events/conferences, fostering ongoing social networking, support, engagement and wellbeing building; festivals and field days focused on improving drought

resilience by building positive community culture over the long-term and improved place of embeddedness (eg regional branding and recognition) of local agri-food systems.

### 3.3 Outcomes of the NBDR Project

The NBDR Project will:

- improve the sharing of learnings amongst agriculture dependent communities
- increase social networking, support, engagement and wellbeing through building community network members' skills and social network diversity and strategic capacity
- improve wellbeing and reduce social isolation through increasing participation in community networking events/conferences, stimulating higher rates of innovation in the local economy and the agricultural sector over time
- improve community networks access to risk management information and training, increasing the capacity of community networks to participate in regional drought resilience planning
- increase community economic development and diversification opportunities to improve access to meeting places and facilities, reducing social isolation and improving community wellbeing over time
- deliver small scale projects, such as improving meeting places for the network members, purchasing small equipment (such as computers, printers) to assist the management of the network, and community facilities that support community drought resilience.

### 3.4 What you will deliver with the grant

The NBDR Project will fund a provider, or consortium of providers, to design and deliver the NBDR Project nationally, selecting grantees to undertake activities that contribute to the project outcomes (section 3.3 refers).

The NBDR Project must create opportunities for grantees to apply for different amounts of funding proportionate to the scale of the activities proposed, for example:

- From \$10,000 and up to \$20,000 for small or low risk activities
- Between \$20,001 and up to \$50,000 for broader medium term impact activities
- \$50,001 and \$150,000 for broader large scale short- or medium-term impact activities

Applicants can apply for a grant, which includes administrative funding, up to a maximum of \$3.75 million (exclusive of GST). Administrative funding is capped at a maximum of 10 per cent of the actual grant value sought. The grant is to:

1. Design and deliver a competitive NBDR Project nationally in accordance with the guidance provided at [Appendix A.2](#) and section 3.3 of these guidelines, and in line with the principles of the [Commonwealth Grants Rules and Guidelines \(CGRGs\)](#).
2. Develop and contribute to a Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) plan for the NBDR Project, identifying data and information to support an evaluation of the project, in accordance with the Future Drought Fund's MEL Framework (guidance is provided at [Appendix B](#)). The MEL Framework identifies the anticipated short, medium and long-term

outcomes of the NBDR Project. It includes indicators to identify progress towards achieving overall drought resilience.

The successful provider will be required to make a financial co-contribution or have secured a philanthropic financial contribution, of at least 30 per cent of the NBDR Project grant funding they receive.

The NBDR Project grant will fund a provider, or a consortium of providers, to design and deliver the NBDR Project nationally. Organisations that cannot, on their own, deliver the NBDR Project nationally may form a consortium with other interested organisations to submit a joint application to provide national coverage (refer section 5.2 Joint (consortium) applications). The application must include the identification of a lead provider for the consortium.

Organisations wishing to explore a consortium application, and wanting support in connecting with similarly interested parties, can register their interest on the department's website. Your contact information will be shared with others registering interest. No support or facilitation will be provided by the department beyond the sharing of contact details. The facility will be closed seven days after the opening of this grant opportunity. After this, there will be no opportunity to register your interest, or receive contact details of other organisations that have registered interest.

The successful applicant will be required to enter into a legally binding grant agreement with the Australian Government. The successful provider will be responsible for delivering the milestones and outputs in the grant agreement (early milestones are listed at section 3.5 below).

### **3.5 Early milestones**

The successful provider will deliver the following milestones (using administrative funding, section 4.1 refers) during the first three months of the NBDR Project:

- *Design of the NBDR Project, including assessment criteria for eligible grant activities* (guidance provided at [Appendix A.2](#)). These assessment criteria will be approved by the department prior to any agreements executed between the provider and grantees. All activities must be finished by 30 June 2022.
- *A Probity Plan*, providing assurance over the integrity and uprightness of funding decisions made under the NBDR Project.
- *A detailed Budget*.
- *A Communications Strategy* to promote the NBDR Project and its activities. You must notify us of events relating to your grant and provide an opportunity for the Drought Minister or their representative to attend.
- *A Risk Assessment and Management plan*.
- *A Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Plan* for the NBDR Project activities (Guidance provided at [Appendix B](#)).

## **4. Grant amount and period**

### **4.1 Administrative funding**

Applicants can apply for administrative funding to manage the project and deliver the NBDR Project activities (sections 3.4 and 4.3 refers). The administrative funding percentage applied for will form part of the value with money assessment of the application.

## 4.2 Philanthropic and/or co-contribution

In addition to the grant funding from the Australian Government, the provider will be required to make a financial co-contribution, or have secured a philanthropic contribution, of at least 30 per cent of the grant. This co-contribution must be used to fund activities in the NBDR Project. In-kind contributions are not eligible to meet this requirement.

Funding from other Commonwealth, state, territory or local government sources cannot be used to fund philanthropic co-contributions.

## 4.3 Funding for activities in the NBDR Project

Applicants can apply for a grant, which includes administrative funding, up to a maximum of \$3.75 million (exclusive of GST) (administrative funding is capped at a maximum of 10 per cent of the actual grant value sought) to fund activities in the NBDR Project, in line with the project outcomes (section 3 refers). Any interest earned by the provider on the grant funds must be used to extend the outcomes of the grant, as set out in the grant agreement. A separate interest-bearing bank account must be set up exclusively for the administration of this grant program in a registered Australian financial institution.

## 4.4 Project period

The successful provider must ensure all NBDR Project activities are delivered by 30 June 2022.

# 5. Eligibility criteria

To be eligible to deliver the project, your application must satisfy all of the eligibility criteria.

## 5.1 Who is eligible to apply?

To be eligible you must be a legal entity with an Australian Business Number (ABN), have an account with an Australian financial institution and be capable of entering into a legally binding and enforceable Agreement with the Commonwealth. For example:

- an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander organisation, council or incorporated association
- Company<sup>1</sup>
- Cooperative
- Incorporated Association
- Sole Trader
- Partnership<sup>2</sup>
- Trustee on behalf of a Trust<sup>3</sup>.

Consortia applications are eligible to apply, providing all partners are eligible entities individually.

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<sup>1</sup> Company is a company that is not a Commonwealth company and incorporated under the *Corporations Act 2001* (Cth).

<sup>2</sup> Partnership – In a legally binding partnership, the executing partner must have authorisation from all other partners to execute the grant agreement. A Partnership Agreement or a list of all individual partners of the Partnership may be requested. All members of the Partnership must be an eligible entity type.

<sup>3</sup> The Commonwealth will not execute grant agreements with trusts – only trustees are eligible to execute grant agreements. In a legally binding partnership, the executing partner must have authorisation from all other partners to execute the grant agreement.

In submitting your application, you may wish to consider engaging Indigenous organisations to access the expertise of the Indigenous organisations and people, to promote opportunities for Indigenous Australians to access funding, the employment of Indigenous Australians, or the use of Indigenous businesses in your supply chains.

## 5.2 Joint (consortium) applications

We recognise that some organisations may want to join together as a group to deliver the NBDR Project. In these circumstances, you must appoint a lead organisation. All members of the consortium must be eligible entities (refer section 5.1). Only the lead organisation can submit the application form and enter into the grant agreement with the Australian Government. The application should identify all other members of the proposed consortium and include a letter of support from each of the project partners. Each letter of support should include:

- details of the partner
- an overview about how the partner will work with the lead organisation and other partners in the group to successfully deliver the NBDR Project
- an outline of the relevant experience and/or expertise the partner will bring to the group
- the roles/responsibilities the partner will undertake, and the resources they will contribute (if any)
- details of a nominated management level contact officer for that partner.

You must have a formal arrangement in place with all parties prior to execution of any resultant grant agreement.

## 5.3 Who is not eligible to apply?

You are not eligible to apply if you are one of the following entity types:

- an unincorporated Association
- a Commonwealth, state, territory or local government agency or body (including government business enterprises)
- a Corporate Commonwealth Entity
- a Non-Corporate Commonwealth Statutory Authority
- a Commonwealth Company
- an international Entity.

# 6. What the grant funding can be used for

## 6.1 Eligible expenditure

You can only spend grant funds on eligible expenditure you have incurred on agreed activities as defined in your grant agreement. You must incur the project expenditure between the project start and end date for it to be eligible unless stated otherwise.

Eligible expenditure items from the \$3.75 million (GST exclusive) NBDR Project grant funding are:

### 1. NBDR Program administration:

The grant (not exceeding 10 per cent of the program funding) can be used by the provider to deliver the NBDR Project. This may include wages covering staff time spent directly engaged in delivering the NBDR Project.

## 2. NBDR Project funding:

The grant can be used to fund suitable activities in the NBDR Project, selected in accordance with the guidance provided at [Appendix A.2](#) and that contribute to one or more of the project's outcomes (refer to section 3.3).

Philanthropic and/or other financial (cash) co-contributions must only be used to fund activities in the NBDR Project.

## 6.2 Ineligible expenditure

The service provider cannot use the grant funding for the following activities:

- activities for which other Commonwealth, state, territory or local government bodies have primary responsibility
- activities that do not directly support agriculture dependent communities
- activities that benefit a single individual rather than build long-term drought resilience and enhance the public good in agriculture dependent communities
- activities that do not directly strengthen community networking, wellbeing and drought preparedness, or reduce the risk of social isolation associated with drought
- activities that duplicate existing projects or services in a particular community
- activities where the costs have already been incurred because the activity has already been undertaken or will have been undertaken at receipt of grant funds
- activities outside of Australia, or involving overseas travel
- activities that provide private and/or commercial benefit rather than not-for-profit social enterprises
- business activities where the primary purpose is for profit
- activities already funded through another Australian, state or territory, or local government program.

In delivering the NBDR Project, the service provider cannot provide grant funding to:

- an organisation with outstanding final reports from a prior Australian Government grant of financial assistance.

The grant cannot be used for costs incurred that are not directly related to carrying out the project, such as:

- preparation of grant application materials
- protecting or patenting intellectual property
- activities of a distinctly commercial or proprietary nature that are aimed at selling or attracting investment
- developing, building or producing commercial prototypes to commercialise a research project outcome
- creation of new institutions
- establishing new commercial ventures
- core business expenses not directly related to carrying out the project, including administrative, overhead and infrastructure costs, staff salaries (unless directly engaged in delivering the NBDR Project) and relocation costs, travel and living allowances
- financial support for feasibility studies

- hospitality or catering beyond reasonable costs for providing refreshments at project related events such as workshops or field days
- purchasing of infrastructure, major equipment or activities that could be considered part of normal business or ongoing operations, unless integral to the delivery of the project and with prior approval from the department
- purchase or acquisition of land or buildings
- capital expenditure
- activities involving political advocacy
- production of clothing, equipment or merchandise for distribution
- subsidy of general ongoing administration of an organisation such as electricity, phone and rent
- major construction/capital works
- overseas travel
- expenses that do not directly support the delivery of the NBDR Project's outcomes.

## 7. The assessment criteria

Applicants must address all of the following assessment criteria in the application form, with the exception of criterion 1 b) which applies to consortia applications only. We will assess your application based on the weighting given to each criterion.

The application form includes character limits – up to 4,000 characters (approximately 600 words) per criterion. The application form will not accept characters beyond this limit. Please note spaces are included in the character limit.

### Criterion 1

Organisational capacity and capability to lead and coordinate the delivery of the NBDR Project nationally in agriculture dependent communities [20 points]

You should demonstrate this through:

- a) evidence of your capacity to administer the NBDR Project activities, including assessment processes, probity and Networks Project management. This includes defined processes for delivering quality outcomes on time and within budget
- b) if a consortia, explanation of how the lead organisation will ensure collaboration amongst members for the national delivery of the project in agriculture dependent communities, and each party of the consortium will fulfil the contractual requirements
- c) identifying the key risks (ie what could delay or prevent the delivery of the NBDR Project activities in the agreed timeframe) and adequacy of proposed treatments to minimise or manage key risks
- d) providing details of the financial management systems and policies that are in place to financially acquit expenditure of grant monies and deliver required NBDR Project reporting
- e) evidence of the organisation's reputation for having reliable and efficient administrative processes
- f) evidence of funding available to make a financial co-contribution (philanthropic or other) of at least 30 per cent of the grant
- g) evidence of a successful and enduring organisational structure (including for each member of the consortium)

- h) evidence of project continuity plans for unforeseen events such as COVID-19 restrictions being extended, re-instated or increased.

## Criterion 2

Ability to report on and provide public accountability on activities funded by the grant and demonstrate the impact of the project over time [15 points].

You should demonstrate this through identifying:

- a) how you will establish a suitably experienced grant assessment and selection panel to assess applications for grants under the NBDR Project
- b) evidence of your strong understanding of project monitoring and evaluation methodology and application
- c) how you will maintain and report on the NBDR Project's activities to ensure transparency and accountability
- d) how you will ensure high levels of public accountability and transparency over grant expenditure, for example:
  - dashboard reporting to provide metrics and transparency on the progress and success of the project against agreed milestones
  - imposing certain contractual conditions on Network Program recipients, including financial and progress reporting and the repayment of any funds that are misspent or unspent
  - providing, on request, declarations signed by your Treasurer/Finance Manager and CEO, and end of project independently audited financial statement report
  - complying with compliance visits (if required)
  - providing upon request all records that must be kept under conditions made through a grant agreement
  - completing ongoing reporting against the Future Drought Funds Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Framework to measure the project's effectiveness.

## Criterion 3

A national reach, with an on-ground presence and ability to address regional needs, ensuring the successful delivery of the project in all agriculture dependent communities throughout Australia that are vulnerable to drought [20 points]

You should demonstrate this through:

- a) providing a statement of claims in relation to your specialist expertise/skills and previous experience with similar projects. To substantiate your claims and reputation with key stakeholders, you should provide contact details for at least two referee sponsors, organisations or agencies as part of your response
- b) outlining strategies for dealing with remote communities and/or and lack of connectivity and how you will engage with organisations, including Indigenous organisations, to work collaboratively to deliver the project
- c) outlining how you will determine regional needs to ensure activities in the NBDR Project are tailored to address the specific regional risks and issues impacting communities and agriculture industry sectors.

## Criterion 4

Experience managing grant rounds and reporting on the outcomes of grant activities. [30 points]

You should demonstrate this through:

- a) identifying evidence of previous grant round management experience, and processes used to assess, select and report on recipients' activities, particularly in accordance with the principles of the CGRGs and the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013* (Cth)
- b) detailing how the NBDR Project grant funding round will be structured and promoted to ensure only the highest quality proposals that maximise the project's outcomes are funded.

## Criterion 5

Ability to effectively undertake stakeholder engagement, communication and media activities for the NBDR Project. [15 points]

You should demonstrate this by identifying how you will:

- a) develop an effective communication strategy and products to promote participation in the NBDR Project by a wide range of community networks to maximise uptake by eligible recipients in the NBDR Project
- b) involve Indigenous Australians in the project, such as through embracing the expertise of Indigenous organisations and people, promoting opportunities for Indigenous Australians to access funding, employment of Indigenous Australians, or the use of Indigenous businesses in your supply chains
- c) attribute success from the grant, in line with the expectations set out in section 13.7 below, such as Australian Government and Future Drought Fund branding and recognition in all media and communication materials and events.

## 8. How to apply

Before applying, you must read and understand these guidelines, the sample application form and the sample grant agreement.

These documents may be found on the [GrantConnect](#) and [Community Grants Hub](#) websites. Any alterations and addenda<sup>4</sup> will be published on [GrantConnect](#) and by registering on this website; you will be automatically notified of any changes. [GrantConnect](#) is the authoritative source for grants information.

To apply you must:

- complete the online grant opportunity application form on [GrantConnect](#), or the [Community Grants Hub](#) websites
- provide all the information requested
- address all eligibility criteria and assessment criteria
- include all necessary attachments
- submit your application online by 11.00pm AEST on 25 September 2020

There will be no acceptance of hard copies of applications.

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<sup>4</sup> Addenda can include changes to existing grant opportunity documentation and/or publishing additional documents. Changes include but are not limited to corrections to currently published documents, changes to close times for applications and system outage notices.

Only one application is permitted per applicant. If multiple applications are received from an applicant, the last application received will be the application assessed.

You can submit an application as a service provider and/or as a lead provider of a consortia and you may also participate as a consortia member, with that application submitted by the lead provider of the consortia.

You are responsible for ensuring that your application is complete and accurate. Giving false or misleading information is a serious offence under the [Criminal Code 1995](#) and we will investigate any false or misleading information and may exclude your application from further consideration.

If you find an error in your application after submitting it, you should contact the Community Grants Hub immediately on 1800 020 283 (option 1) or email [support@communitygrants.gov.au](mailto:support@communitygrants.gov.au)

You cannot change your application after the closing date and time.

If we find an error or information that is missing, we may ask for clarification or additional information from you that will not change the nature of your application. However, we can refuse to accept any additional information from you that would change your submission after the application closing time.

You should keep a copy of your application and any supporting documents.

We will acknowledge that we have received your application within two working days.

If you need further guidance around the application process contact us at the Community Grants Hub Hotline on 1800 020 283 (option 1) or email [support@communitygrants.gov.au](mailto:support@communitygrants.gov.au).

## 8.1 Attachments to the application

We require the following mandatory documents with your application:

- An indicative budget, including administrative costs (template provided).
- A project management plan (template provided).
- A risk management plan (template provided).
- Evidence of funding strategy for the 30 per cent co-funding requirement (eg financial statements to date, loan agreements), and an audited financial statement or financial declaration (including balance sheet and profit and loss statements) from your organisation's Finance Manager/Treasurer/CEO for the two most recent consecutive financial years. If applying as a member of a consortium, each consortium member must provide a financial declaration for their organisation.
- Evidence of support from your organisation's board, CEO or equivalent, and if applying as a member of a consortium, evidence of support from each partner is required.

You must attach supporting documentation to the application form in line with the instructions provided within the form. You should only attach requested documents. We will not consider information in attachments that we do not request.

## 8.2 Timing of the NBDR Project grant process

### Expected timing for this grant opportunity

Activity	Timeframe
Grant round opens	28 August 2020
Closing date for applicants to submit an application	25 September 2020
Assessment of applications	3 weeks
Approval of outcomes of selection process	up to 5 weeks
Negotiations and awarding of grant agreement	1-3 weeks
Notification to unsuccessful applicants	2 weeks
Earliest start date of project	January 2021
Final grant payment	30 June 2021
End date of project or agreement	30 June 2022

You must submit an application between the published opening and closing dates. Applications close 11.00pm AEST on 25 September 2020. Applications received after this time will not be considered.

If you are successful, we expect you will be able to commence delivery of the project by January 2021.

### Questions during the application process

If you have any questions during the application period contact the Community Grants Hub on 1800 020 283 (option 1) or email [support@communitygrants.gov.au](mailto:support@communitygrants.gov.au).

The Community Grants Hub will respond to emailed questions within five working days. Answers to questions are posted on the [GrantConnect](#) and [Community Grants Hub](#) websites.

## 9. The grant selection process

Applications will first be assessed against the eligibility criteria. Only eligible applications will be assessed against the assessment criteria, including a comparative assessment against other eligible applications.

We will assess your application based on:

- how well it meets the criteria
- how it compares to other applications
- whether it provides value with relevant money<sup>5</sup>.

When assessing the extent to which the application represents value with relevant money, we will have regard to:

- the extent to which the evidence in the application demonstrates that it will contribute to meeting the outcomes of the NBDR Project

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<sup>5</sup> See glossary for an explanation of 'value with money'.

- the relative value of the grant
- how the grant activities will target groups or individuals to achieve project outcomes
- the percentage of administration fees requested.

### 9.1 Who will assess applications?

An assessment committee will assess each application against the eligibility criteria and if found eligible, the application will be assessed against the assessment criteria and other eligible applications. The assessment committee will be made up of departmental staff, who will undertake training to ensure consistent assessment of all applications.

This assessment will inform the deliberations of the Selection Advisory Panel (SAP).

### 9.2 Selection Advisory Panel (SAP)

The SAP will recommend which application should be awarded a grant. The SAP will be established by the department and include a mix of departmental executive and other representatives nominated by the department such as expert members from the Future Drought Fund Consultative Committee. The SAP will review the shortlist to provide expert advice and quality assurance, probity and transparency over decisions.

The SAP will consider shortlisted applications for:

- how well an application scored against the assessment criteria
- whether the project proposal provides value with relevant money<sup>6</sup>.

All members of the SAP, including non-government members, must perform their duties in accordance with the CGRGs.

The SAP may seek additional information about you or your application from within government. They may do this from within government, even if the sources are not nominated by you as referees. The SAP may also consider information about you or your application that is available through the normal course of business.

The SAP will make recommendations to the Drought Minister about which application to approve for a grant. The Regional Investment Corporation (RIC) Board will advise the Drought Minister in relation to making a grant, in accordance with the requirements of the *Future Drought Fund Act 2019*.

### 9.3 Who will approve the grant?

The Drought Minister (or their delegate) will make the final decision to approve the grant to the successful grantee. In making a final decision, the Drought Minister may take into consideration any further information that may become known, including the availability of grant funds.

The Drought Minister's (or delegate) decision is final in all matters, including the:

- approval of the grant
- grant funding amount to be awarded
- terms and conditions of the grant.

There is no provision in the *Future Drought Fund Act 2019* for review by the Administrative Appeals Tribunal of decisions to approve or not approve a grant.

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<sup>6</sup> See glossary for an explanation of 'value with money'.

## 10. Notification of application outcomes

We will advise you of the outcome of your application in writing. If you are successful, we will advise you of any specific conditions attached to the grant.

If you are unsuccessful, we will notify you and give you an opportunity for feedback on the outcome. If you are unsuccessful, you may email [support@communitygrants.gov.au](mailto:support@communitygrants.gov.au) to request feedback within one month of being notified of the outcome.

## 11. Successful applications

### 11.1 The grant agreement

You must enter into a legally binding grant agreement with the Australian Government. The grant agreement has general terms and conditions that cannot be changed. A sample grant agreement is available on GrantConnect. Your grant agreement may have specific conditions determined by the assessment process or other considerations made by the Drought Minister. We will identify these in the grant agreement.

We must execute a grant agreement with you before you start the project and before we can make any payments. We are not responsible for any of your expenditure until a grant agreement is executed.

You will have 20 business days from the date of a written offer to execute this grant agreement with the Australian Government ('execute' means both you and the Australian Government have signed the agreement). During this time, we will work with you to finalise details.

The offer may lapse if both parties do not sign the grant agreement within this time. Under certain circumstances, we may extend this period. We base the approval of your grant on the information you provide in your application.

If you enter an agreement under the Future Drought Fund, you cannot receive other grants for these activities from other Commonwealth, state or territory grant programs.

We may terminate the grant agreement and recover grant funds if there is a breach of the grant agreement.

### 11.2 Specific legislation, policies and industry standards

You must comply with all relevant laws and regulations. You may be requested to demonstrate compliance with the following legislation and policies:

- *Future Drought Fund Act 2019* (the Act); successful Grantee will be engaged to deliver the project in accordance with terms and conditions outlined in a grant agreement agreed to by the Drought Minister (or delegate) under section 21 of the Act
- The Commonwealth Grant Rules and Guidelines 2017
- *Privacy Act 1988*
- *Corporations Act 2001*
- *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013*.

### 11.3 How we pay the grant

The grant agreement will state:

- the maximum grant amount to be paid

- administration fees to be paid as a percentage of the funds expended
- the proportion of eligible expenditure covered by the grant
- the financial contributions you must make (at least 30 per cent of the grant)
- any in-kind contributions you will make
- any financial contribution provided by a third party.

We will make payments according to an agreed schedule set out in the grant agreement.

We will not exceed the maximum grant amount under any circumstances. If you incur extra costs, you must meet them yourself. You will be required to report how you spent the grant funds at each annual milestone and provide financial statements from the nominated bank account and on completion of the NBDR Project to show all funds have been expended.

## 11.4 Grant payments and GST

Payments will be paid GST inclusive. If you are registered for the [Goods and Services Tax \(GST\)](#), where applicable, we will add GST to your grant payment and issue you with a [Recipient Created Tax Invoice](#).

Grants are assessable income for taxation purposes, unless exempted by a taxation law. We recommend you seek independent professional advice on your taxation obligations or seek assistance from the [Australian Taxation Office](#). We do not provide advice on your particular taxation circumstances.

## 12. Announcement of grants

If successful, your grant will be listed on:

- the department's website as soon as practicable as required by section 27A of the Act
- the [GrantConnect](#) website 21 calendar days after the date of effect as required by paragraph 5.3 of the CGRGs.

## 13. How we monitor your grant

### 13.1 Keeping us informed

You must also inform us of any changes to your:

- name
- addresses
- nominated contact details
- bank account details.
- organisation structure or executive management team
- consortium members.

If you become aware of a breach of terms and conditions under the grant agreement, you must contact us immediately.

You will also be responsible for:

- meeting the terms and conditions of the grant agreement and managing the activity efficiently and effectively

- complying with record keeping, reporting and acquittal requirements as set out in the grant agreement
- participating in grant monitoring, evaluation and learning as specified in the grant agreement
- providing data collected during the NBDR Project for incorporation into relevant databases as specified in the grant agreement.

You must notify us of events relating to the project and provide an opportunity for the Minister or their representative to attend.

## 13.2 Reporting

You must submit reports in line with the grant agreement. We will provide sample templates for these reports as appendices in the grant agreement. We will expect you to report on:

- progress against agreed grant activity milestones and outcomes
- any cash and in-kind contributions you provide directly relating to delivery of the grant
- eligible expenditure of the grant funds.

We will monitor the outcome of your project by assessing reports you submit. You are required to submit the report by the due date and may submit ahead of time if you have completed all required activities. You must discuss any reporting delays with us as soon as you become aware of them.

This information will be used to:

- monitor and evaluate project activities for alignment with the FDF Funding Plan and program delivery
- validate initial outcomes and input into the legislated review of the Fund by the Productivity Commission (PC) during the third year of the four-year Funding Plan (due 2022-23). The PC will assess the economic, environmental and social outcomes of the grant
- collate summary reports, monthly, on the status of the grant and funded activities
- report periodically against the National Drought Agreement (NDA) reporting categories.

### Progress reports

You must provide progress reports in line with the grant agreement. We will provide sample templates for these reports as appendices to the grant agreement. We will expect you to report on:

- progress towards completion of agreed activities and outcomes (milestones) as set out in the grant agreement (including any evidence as required)
- the total eligible expenditure incurred to date (including evidence as required).

We will monitor the outcome of your project by assessing reports you submit. You are required to submit the report by the due date and may submit ahead of time if you have completed all required activities. You must discuss any reporting delays with us as soon as you become aware of them.

### Final report

When you complete the project, you must submit a final report in line with the grant agreement. We will provide sample templates for these reports as appendices to the grant agreement. The final report must:

- identify if and how outcomes have been achieved, including any evidence as specified in the grant agreement
- identify the total eligible expenditure incurred
- be submitted by the due date
- be in the format provided in the grant agreement.

## **Audited financial report**

We will ask you to provide an independently audited financial statement at the completion of the project. This financial report will verify that you spent the grant in accordance with the grant agreement and requires you to prepare a statement of grant income and expenditure.

## **Ad-hoc reporting**

We may ask you for ad-hoc reports on your project. This may be to provide an update on progress, or any significant delays or difficulties in completing the project.

### **13.3 Grant agreement variations**

We recognise that unexpected events may affect your progress. In these circumstances, you can request a variation to your grant agreement including changing project milestones.

If you want to propose changes to the grant agreement, you must request the changes in writing before the milestone and/or grant agreement end date. You can request a variation by contacting your Funding Arrangement Manager, Community Grants Hub.

You should not assume that a request for a variation will be successful. We will consider your request based on factors such as:

- how it affects the project and program outcome
- consistency with the program policy objective, grant opportunity guidelines and any relevant policies for the program and department
- changes to the timing of the grant and payments (as applicable).

### **13.4 Compliance visits**

We may visit you during or at the completion of the project to review your compliance with the grant agreement. We may also inspect the reports you are required to keep under the grant agreement. We will provide you with reasonable notice of any compliance visit.

### **13.5 Record keeping**

We may also inspect the records you are required to keep under the grant agreement.

### **13.6 Program evaluation**

We will evaluate the Networks to Build Drought Resilience Program to measure how well the outcomes have been achieved. The grant agreement will set out the information, data and reporting requirements to evaluate program specific outputs arising from investments and how effective the program was in achieving its outcomes. You will be required in line with the grant agreement to collect data and information for this purpose, and the legislated review of the Fund by the Productivity Commission (PC) during the third year of the four-year Funding Plan (due 2022-23). The PC will assess the economic, environmental and social outcomes of the grant.

We will evaluate each grant, guided by the Future Drought Fund's comprehensive Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) framework. The MEL framework identifies the anticipated short, medium and long-term outcomes from implementation of the Future Drought Fund. We will use high-level indicators, informed by relevant datasets and analysis to evaluate the success of the Fund against expected outcomes. At this level, the indicators will identify progress towards achieving overall drought resilience that is evaluated against a baseline established before programs are implemented. The MEL framework will also clearly articulate how the specific

program interventions will lead to improved drought resilience and direct attribution to FDF investment.

We may contact you up to one year after you finish your grant for more information to assist with this evaluation.

### 13.7 Acknowledgement

If you are successful, you may be required to conduct workshops and roadshow events on a regional basis, promoting and assisting potential NBDR project recipients to design activities that deliver against the project's outcomes in all rural, regional and remote communities exposed to the risk of drought and climate change.

When promoting the NBDR project at public events such as regional workshops and roadshow events, we require you to acknowledge the grant by making the following public statement about the project:

'The Networks Grant Program received funding from the Australian Government's Future Drought Fund.'

The program logo should be used on all materials related to grants under the program. Whenever the logo is used, the publication must also acknowledge the Australian Government by saying:

'Future Drought Fund's Networks to Build Drought Resilience – an Australian Government initiative'.

The logo's colour, shape, form, font or design must not be modified or obscured in any way.

## 14. Probity

The Australian Government will make sure that the grant opportunity process is fair, according to the published guidelines, incorporates appropriate safeguards against fraud, unlawful activities and other inappropriate conduct and is consistent with the CGRGs.

### 14.1 Conflicts of interest

Any conflicts of interest could affect the performance of the grant opportunity or the NBDR project. There may be a conflict of interest, or perceived conflict of interest, if department staff, any member of a committee or advisor and/or you or any of your personnel has a:

- professional, commercial or personal relationship with a party who is able to influence the application selection process, such as an Australian Government officer or member of an external panel
- relationship with, or interest in, an organisation, which is likely to interfere with or restrict the applicants from carrying out the proposed activities fairly and independently or
- relationship with, or interest in, an organisation from which they will receive personal gain because the organisation receives a grant under the grant opportunity.

You will be asked to declare, as part of your application, any perceived or existing conflicts of interests or that, to the best of your knowledge, there is no conflict of interest.

If you later think there is an actual, apparent, or perceived conflict of interest, you must inform the Department of Social Services' Community Grants Hub in writing immediately.

Conflicts of interest for Australian Government staff will be handled as set out in the Australian [Public Service Code of Conduct \(Section 13\(7\)\)](#) of the [Public Service Act 1999](#). Committee

members and other officials, including the decision maker, must also declare any conflicts of interest.

We publish our conflict of interest policy on the [Community Grants Hub](#) website.

## 14.2 Privacy

We treat your personal information according to the [Privacy Act 1988](#) and the [Australian Privacy Principles](#). This includes letting you know:

- what personal information we collect
- why we collect your personal information
- who we give your personal information to.

Your personal information can only be disclosed to someone else for the primary purpose for which it was collected, unless an exemption applies.

The Australian Government may also use and disclose information about grant applicants and grant recipients under this grant opportunity in any other Australian Government business or function. This includes disclosing grant information on GrantConnect as required for reporting purposes and giving information to the Australian Taxation Office for compliance purposes.

We may share the information you give us with other Australian Government entities for purposes including government administration, research or service delivery, according to Australian laws.

As part of your application, you declare your ability to comply with the *Privacy Act 1988* and the Australian Privacy Principles and impose the same privacy obligations on officers, employees, agents and subcontractors that you engage to assist with the activity, in respect of personal information you collect, use, store, or disclose in connection with the activity. Accordingly, you must not do anything, which if done by the department would breach an Australian Privacy Principle as defined in the Act.

## 14.3 Confidential information

Other than information available in the public domain, you agree not to disclose to any person, other than us, any confidential information relating to the grant application and/or agreement, without our prior written approval. The obligation will not be breached where you are required by law, Parliament or a stock exchange to disclose the relevant information or where the relevant information is publicly available (other than through breach of a confidentiality or non-disclosure obligation).

We may at any time, require you to arrange for you; or your employees, agents or subcontractors to give a written undertaking relating to nondisclosure of our confidential information in a form we consider acceptable.

We will keep any information in connection with the grant agreement confidential to the extent that it meets all of the three conditions below:

1. you clearly identify the information as confidential and explain why we should treat it as confidential
2. the information is commercially sensitive
3. revealing the information would cause unreasonable harm to you or someone else.

We will not be in breach of any confidentiality agreement if the information is disclosed to:

- the Selection Advisory Panel and other Australian Government employees and contractors to help us manage the FDF effectively
- employees and contractors of our department so we can research, assess, monitor and analyse our programs and activities
- employees and contractors of other Australian Government agencies for any purposes, including government administration, research or service delivery
- other Commonwealth, state, territory or local government agencies in program reports and consultations
- the Auditor-General, Ombudsman or Privacy Commissioner
- the responsible Minister or Parliamentary Secretary
- a House or a Committee of the Australian Parliament.

The grant agreement may also include any specific requirements about special categories of information collected, created or held under the grant agreement.

#### **14.4 Enquiries and feedback**

The Department of Social Services' feedback and complaints process apply to complaints about this grant opportunity. All complaints about a grant process must be provided in writing.

Any questions you have about grant decisions for this grant opportunity should be sent to [complaints@dss.gov.au](mailto:complaints@dss.gov.au)

#### **Complaints about the selection process**

Applicants can contact the complaints service with complaints about the Community Grants Hub's service(s) or the selection process.

Details of what makes an eligible complaint can be provided by asking the Community Grants Hub. Applicants can use the [online complaints form](#) on the [Department of Social Services](#) (DSS) website, or contact the DSS Complaints line.

Phone: 1800 634 035

Email: [complaints@dss.gov.au](mailto:complaints@dss.gov.au)

Mail: Complaints  
GPO Box 9820  
Canberra ACT 2601

#### **Complaints to the Ombudsman**

If you do not agree with the way the Department of Social Services has handled your complaint, you may complain to the [Commonwealth Ombudsman](#). The Ombudsman will not usually look into a complaint unless the matter has first been raised directly with the Department of Social Services.

The Commonwealth Ombudsman can be contacted on:

Phone (Toll free): 1300 362 072  
Email: [ombudsman@ombudsman.gov.au](mailto:ombudsman@ombudsman.gov.au)  
Website: [www.ombudsman.gov.au](http://www.ombudsman.gov.au)

## 14.5 Freedom of information

All documents in the possession of the Australian Government, including those about this grant opportunity, are subject to the *Freedom of Information Act 1982* (FOI Act).

The purpose of the FOI Act is to give members of the public rights of access to information held by the Australian Government and its entities. Under the FOI Act, members of the public can seek access to documents held by the Australian Government. This right of access is limited only by the exceptions and exemptions necessary to protect essential public interests and private and business affairs of persons in respect of whom the information relates.

All Freedom of Information requests must be referred to the Freedom of Information Coordinator in writing.

By mail:           Freedom of Information Team  
                      Government and Executive Services Branch  
                      Department of Social Services (DSS)  
                      GPO Box 9820  
                      Canberra ACT 2601

By email:         foi@dss.gov.au

## 15. Glossary

Term	Definition
agriculture dependent communities	refers to rural, regional and remote communities vulnerable to the impacts of drought
assessment criteria	are the specified principles or standards, against which applications will be judged. These criteria are also used to assess the merits of proposals and, in the case of a competitive grant opportunity, to determine application rankings.
commencement date	the expected start date for the grant activity
completion date	the expected date that the grant activity must be completed and the grant spent by
decision maker	the person who makes a decision to award a grant
eligibility criteria	refer to the mandatory criteria which must be met to qualify for a grant. Assessment criteria may apply in addition to eligibility criteria.
Commonwealth entity	a Department of State, or a Parliamentary Department, or a listed entity or a body corporate established by a law of the Commonwealth. See subsections 10(1) and (2) of the PGPA Act
<a href="#"><u>Commonwealth Grants Rules and Guidelines (CGRGs)</u></a>	establish the overarching Commonwealth grants policy framework and articulate the expectations for all non-corporate Commonwealth entities in relation to grants administration. Under this overarching framework, non-corporate Commonwealth entities undertake grants administration based on the mandatory requirements and key principles of grants administration.
FDF	refers to the Future Drought Fund legislation, the <i>Future Drought Fund Act 2019</i> , which enables the Commonwealth to make arrangements or grants with a person or body in relation to drought resilience

Term	Definition
grant	<p>for the purposes of the CGRGs, a 'grant' is an arrangement for the provision of financial assistance by the Commonwealth or on behalf of the Commonwealth:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. under which relevant money<sup>7</sup> or other <a href="#">Consolidated Revenue Fund</a> (CRF) money<sup>8</sup> is to be paid to a grantee other than the Commonwealth; and</li> <li>b. which is intended to help address one or more of the Commonwealth's policy outcomes while assisting the grantee achieve its objectives</li> </ul>
grant activity/activities	refers to the project/tasks/services that the grantee is required to undertake
grant agreement	sets out the relationship between the parties to the agreement, and specifies the details of the grant
<a href="#">GrantConnect</a>	is the Commonwealth's whole-of-government grants information system, which centralises the publication and reporting of Commonwealth grants in accordance with the CGRGs
grant opportunity	refers to the specific grant round or process where a Commonwealth grant is made available to potential grantees. Grant opportunities may be open or targeted, and will reflect the relevant grant selection process.
grant program	a 'program' carries its natural meaning and is intended to cover a potentially wide range of related activities aimed at achieving government policy outcomes. A grant program is a group of one or more grant opportunities under a single [entity] Portfolio Budget Statement Program.
grantee	the organisation which has been selected to receive a grant
NBDR Project	refers to the project delivered by the successful service provider to achieve the outcomes of the Networks Program
NBDR	refers to the Future Drought Fund's Networks to Build Drought Resilience Project, an Australian Government initiative and to which this grant opportunity refers

<sup>7</sup> Relevant money is defined in the PGPA Act. See section 8, Dictionary.

<sup>8</sup> Other CRF money is defined in the PGPA Act. See section 105, Rules in relation to other CRF money.

Term	Definition
PBS Program	described within the entity's <a href="#">Portfolio Budget Statement</a> , PBS programs each link to a single outcome and provide transparency for funding decisions. These high-level PBS programs often comprise a number of lower level, more publicly recognised programs, some of which will be grant programs. A PBS program may have more than one grant program associated with it, and each of these may have one or more grant opportunities.
service provider	The organisation/s chosen to deliver the NBDR project
selection criteria	comprise eligibility criteria and assessment criteria
selection process	the method used to select potential grantees. This process may involve comparative assessment of applications or the assessment of applications against the eligibility criteria and/or the assessment criteria.
value with money	<p>value with money in this document refers to 'value with relevant money' which is a judgement based on the grant proposal representing an efficient, effective, economical and ethical use of public resources and determined from a variety of considerations.</p> <p>When administering a grant opportunity, an official should consider the relevant financial and non-financial costs and benefits of each proposal including, but not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the quality of the project proposal and activities</li> <li>• fitness for purpose of the proposal in contributing to government objectives</li> <li>• that the absence of a grant is likely to prevent the grantee and government's outcomes being achieved</li> <li>• the potential grantee's relevant experience and performance history.</li> </ul>

## Appendix A. Guidance for the assessment of activities eligible for funding in the NBDR project to be established by the service provider and funded by the NBDR grant.

### A.1 - Assessment criteria for eligible activities in the NBDR project

A grantee proposal must demonstrate how the activity will achieve the project's outcomes. To do this, the service provider must ensure all activities funded address one or more of the project's outcomes (section 3.3 refers) and be supported by one of Australia's international obligations listed at section 26 (specifically sub sections (a), (d), (e) and (f) of the FDF Act). These activities are elaborated on at A.2 below.

Utilising your specialist expertise, you must establish eligibility and assessment criteria addressing the project's outcomes. You must provide the draft eligibility and assessment criteria to the department as an early milestone (as stated in section 3.5) for approval by the department before you open for applications. All eligible applications under the project must be assessed using this Australian Government approved eligibility and assessment criteria, to ensure that only the highest quality proposals for activities that maximise the project's outcomes are funded.

### A.2 - Guidance assessment criteria for funding opportunities in the NBDR project

The NBDR project will provide funding opportunities for community organisations, including Indigenous organisations, to deliver activities responding to one or more of the following opportunities. Project grantees can apply to receive funding under one or more of the opportunities below. Applicants for grant funding will need to adequately address all of the assessment criteria under the opportunity they are applying for to be successful.

Opportunity 1 - Activities that strengthen the capacity and capability of community network organisations in agriculture dependent communities.

NBDR project grantees must address how the proposed activities will:

- increase the community reach for social network members
- increase community engagement, a shared sense of purpose and belonging
- increase community and social network members access to professional and social networks
- improve the coordination and collaboration of social networks with other community organisations and networks to improve the diversity and strategic capability of social networks in communities.

Opportunity 2 - Activities that facilitate professional, social and community networking events in agriculture dependent communities throughout Australia.

Networks Program grantees must address how the proposed activities will:

- increase number of community social networking events/conferences
- contribute to building a positive community culture, perception of security, social embeddedness and opportunity to work collaboratively to solve problems
- foster higher rates of innovation in the local economy and agricultural sector
- improve regional branding and recognition of local agri-food systems.

Opportunity 3 - Training to improve the skills and capacity of community network members to participate in community risk management, planning and community driven projects that build drought resilience

NBDR project grantees must address how the proposed activities will:

- increase social network members access to information and training to build drought resilience in their communities
- increase the role of social networks in regional drought resilience planning.

Opportunity 4 - Small-scale community infrastructure projects to foster connectedness, improve wellbeing and make community facilities resilient to the impacts of drought.

NBDR project grantees must address how the proposed activity will:

- increase community access to social and wellbeing support structures; reduce social isolation and improve connectivity
- improve new and existing meeting places so they can be used year-round to support community wellbeing and reduce social isolation.

Guidance on standard monitoring, evaluation and reporting requirements for different tiers of financial assistance provided under the Networks Program are provided at [Appendix B](#). Requirements will vary depending upon the scale of grants offered.

### **A.3 - Assessment of grant applications in the NBDR project**

You will administer the selection process on behalf of the department. Applications will be considered through an open competitive process. The department will have the final say whether an application is removed from the process.

### **A.4 - Who will assess applications and approve grants for eligible activities in the NBDR project?**

You will assess each application on its merit against the assessment criteria (guidance provided at [Appendix A.2](#)). Assessors are to be staff employed by the service provider, who will undertake training to ensure consistent assessment of all applications. Assessors are required to perform their duties in accordance with the principles of the CGRGs.

The highest-ranked eligible applications will be shortlisted to inform the deliberations of the Grants Assessment Committee.

### **A.5 - Grants Assessment Committee**

The service provider must establish a Grants Assessment Committee (GAC) to review the suitability of proposals under the Networks Program against the assessment criteria.

The service provider must include representatives from the department and other representatives nominated by the department, as required by the grant agreement, on its GAC.

The GAC will consider shortlisted applications for:

- how well an application scored against the assessment criteria (guidance provided at [Appendix A.2](#))
- the relative merit of the application compared to other applications focussed on the same project outcome(s)/assessment criterion(s)
- the distribution and scale of proposed projects across Australia and rural, regional and remote communities

- the extent to which the application and its geographic location matches identified priorities
- the range of eligible applicant types
- whether the project proposal provides value with money<sup>9</sup>.

The service provider and any expert/advisor, will be required/expected to perform their duties in accordance with the principles of the CGRGs.

The GAC will make recommendations to the decision maker about applications that are suitable to be approved.

The GAC must provide recommendations to the department about which applications are to be approved to receive funding under the Networks Program.

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<sup>9</sup> See glossary for an explanation of 'value with money'.

## Appendix B. Guidance monitoring, evaluation and reporting requirements for the three tiers of funding in the Networks Program

<p>Tier 1 (up to \$20,000)</p>	<p>Completion Report including:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Grant Reference No / Contract Number:</li> <li>2. Amount of grant requested:</li> <li>3. Name of Beneficiary: (<i>organisation contracted</i>)</li> <li>4. Location of project: <i>this may be township/LGA</i></li> <li>5. Duration: (<i>Start date / End date</i>)</li> <li>6. Title of project: (<i>as per contract</i>)</li> <li>7. Summary of project (one paragraph – max 250 words):</li> <li>8. Primary project outcome: Economic; Ecological/Environmental; Social/Community</li> <li>9. Primary project modality or Category: (Training/learning, infrastructure, equipment, technology, etc.)</li> <li>10. Proposed outputs (list)</li> <li>11. Report / Summary of progress: (max 1000 words)</li> <li>12. Issues arising, recommendation/learnings</li> <li>13. Name/certification of author or team leader/manager:</li> <li>14. Date of report</li> <li>15. Annual financial declaration (for activities/subproject spanning more than one year duration) or end of project financial declaration (for activities/sub projects spanning less than one year duration) from Treasurer/CEO</li> </ol>
<p>Tier 2 (\$20,000 - \$50,000)</p>	<p>Monitoring Report including:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Grant Reference No / Contract Number:</li> <li>2. Duration: (<i>Start date / End date</i>)</li> <li>3. Report Period (<i>start date, end date</i>)</li> <li>4. Name of Beneficiary: (<i>organisation contracted</i>)</li> <li>5. Location of project: <i>this may be township/LGA</i></li> <li>6. Title of project: (<i>as per contract</i>)</li> <li>7. Summary of project (one paragraph – max 250 words):</li> <li>8. Primary project outcome: Economic; Ecological/Environmental; Social/Community</li> <li>9. Proposed outputs/schedule for this period</li> <li>10. Report / Summary of progress: (max 1000 words)</li> <li>11. Issues arising, recommendation/learnings</li> <li>12. Name/certification of author or team leader/manager:</li> <li>13. Date of report</li> <li>14. Annual financial declaration (for activities/subproject spanning more than one year duration) or end of project financial declaration (for activities/sub projects spanning less than one year duration) from Treasurer/CEO</li> </ol> <p>Evaluation Report or Completion Report including:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>15. Grant Reference No / Contract Number:</li> <li>16. Grant amount</li> <li>17. Duration: (<i>Start date / End date</i>)</li> <li>18. Actual (start date, end date)</li> </ol>

	<p>19. Name of Beneficiary: (organisation contracted)  20. Location of project: this may be township/LGA  21. Title of project: (as per contract)  22. Summary of project (one paragraph – max 250 words)  23. Primary project outcome: Economic;  Ecological/Environmental; Social/Community  24. Proposed milestones / Outputs – list and dates  25. Actual milestones (dates achieved)  26. Report / Summary of progress: (per milestones)  27. Issues arising, recommendation/learnings  28. Name/certification of author or team leader/manager:  29. Date of report  30. End of project financial declaration from Treasurer/CEO</p>
<p>Tier 3 (\$50,001 - \$150,000)</p>	<p>Monitoring Report (as above) as well as:  A financial declaration from the organisation’s accountant or financial officer at the following periods:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Annual (if funding provided is between \$50,001 - \$99,999) or</li> <li>2. 6 monthly (if funding provided is greater than \$100,000).</li> </ol> <p>Evaluation or Completion Report (as above)</p>