



Australian Government

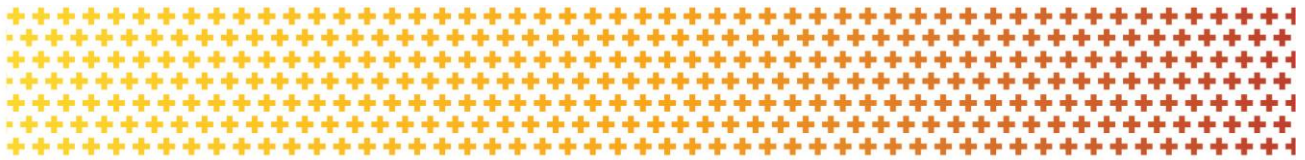
Community
Grants Hub
Improving your grant experience



National Landcare Program: Smart Farms Small Grants: Soil Extension Activities

Questions and Answers

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1. What is the closing time and date for applications?

The Application Form must be submitted by **9:00 pm AEDT on 12 October 2021**. It is recommended that you submit your application **well before the closing time and date**.

2. If I am not able to submit my application by the due time and date, can I be granted an extension?

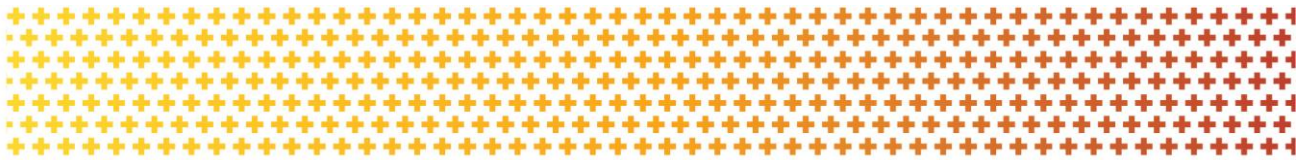
No, extensions will not be given. Late applications will not be accepted under any circumstances.

3. How much funding is available for this Program?

For this grant opportunity (Soil Extension Activities), \$13 million is available over the 2021-22 to 2022-23 financial years.

The minimum grant you can apply for is \$100,000 (\$50,000 per year) over 2 years per set of activities. The maximum grant you can apply for is \$250,000 (\$125,000 per year) over 2 years per set of activities.

All grants are over 2 financial years and can be for any amount between \$100,000 and \$250,000 up to a maximum of \$2 million.



4. Is the funding on-going?

The funding is available for 2 years – over the 2021-22 to 2022-23 financial years.

5. When will I know the outcome of my application?

You will be notified of the outcome of your application at the end of the selection process. For probity reasons, to treat all applicants fairly and equally, it is not possible to give you information about the status of individual applications during the assessment process.

The decision maker's decision is final in all matters and there is no appeal mechanism.

6. How can I submit the Application Form?

The form is an online Application Form that you must submit electronically. The Community Grants Hub will not provide application forms or accept application forms for this grant opportunity by fax, email or through Australia Post.

7. Do word limits apply to my application?

Yes, response limits are as follows for each criterion.

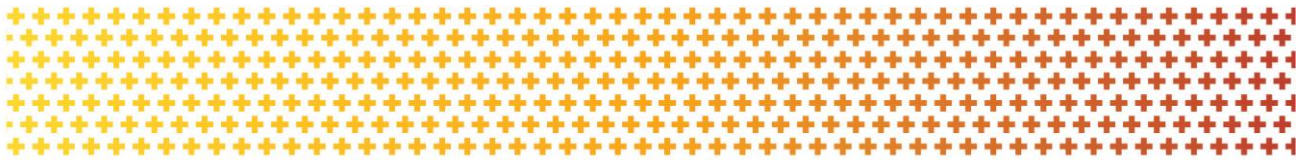
- Criterion 1: 4,000 characters
- Criterion 2: 3,000 characters
- Criterion 3: 2,000 characters
- Criterion 4: 2,000 characters
- Criterion 5: 3,000 characters

8. Previous rounds of Smart Farms Small Grants were not solely focused on Soil Extension Activities. Why has this changed?

As part of the Australian Government's commitment to the National Soil Strategy, two-year Soil Extension Activities will be funded through the Smart Farms Small Grants program to improve our understanding of Australia's soil condition and how to better manage it, assess the impact of land management practices on soil, assist farmers and land managers to improve their productivity and profitability, and better support them to participate in the Emissions Reduction Fund.

Soil extension activities will support land managers and farmers understand the benefits of soil testing and management. This will include working with farmers and land managers to participate in the National Soil Monitoring and Incentives Pilot Program, assist them to interpret results and to take action to improve soil health as a result.

This grant round will continue to support the Smart Farms Small Grants outcomes, as well as the outcomes of the National Soil Strategy.



Improved soil health is key to sustainable, productive and profitable farm businesses. Organisations and individuals are strongly encouraged to apply and contribute to this national effort.

9. Can anyone apply?

To be eligible to apply for a grant you must be an organisation capable of entering into a legally binding and enforceable agreement with the Commonwealth. To be eligible you must be, or you must intend to employ, a suitably qualified person* and be an eligible entity type. For more information, refer to section 4 and section 5 of the Grant Opportunity Guidelines.

*Suitable qualifications may include, but are not limited to, a bachelor's degree and/or diploma in a science, agriculture and/or environment field with soil science specific units. A minimum level of a diploma is required.

10. What are soil extension activities?

Eligible extension activities will promote soil testing and interpretation of results, and lead to improved sustainable soil management practices through the development and promotion of communication products, education awareness and training sessions, and on-ground trials and demonstrations. These activities must be supported by a suitably qualified person.

Eligible activities may include engaging a soil extension officer, conducting soil management workshops, seminars, roadshows or field days; creating communications products, webinars or online materials; and/or establishing trials, demonstrations and monitoring sites.

11. What is a suitably qualified person?

A suitably qualified person will have qualifications* in soil science or similar field or demonstrated experience in performing soil management extension activities or be in the process of attaining the aforementioned qualifications or experience.

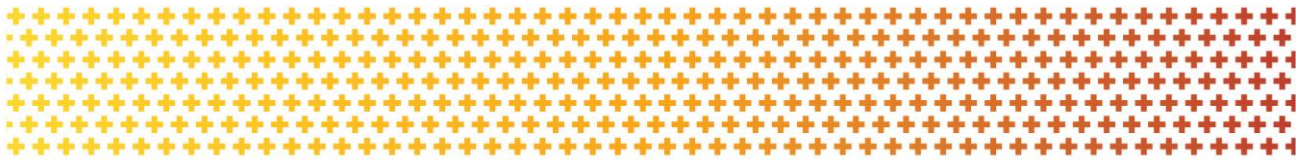
* Suitable qualifications may include, but are not limited to, a bachelor's degree and/or diploma in a science, agriculture and/or environment field with soil science specific units. A minimum level of a diploma is required.

12. What are the outcomes for this program?

Smart Farms Small Grants has 2 program outcomes that are to be achieved through the activities funded:

- Outcome 1 – Increased adoption of best practice sustainable agriculture.
- Outcome 2 – Increase the capacity of land managers to adopt best practice sustainable agriculture.

For more information, refer to section 2 of the Grant Opportunity Guidelines.



13. How long will the program run for?

The program will run from February 2022 to 30 June 2023.

14. Who approves grants?

The Minister for Agriculture and Northern Australia (the decision maker) decides which grants to approve based on the recommendations of the Selection Advisory Panel, taking into consideration any further information that may become known, including the availability of grant funds for the purposes of the grant program.

The Selection Advisory Panel will be established by the Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment and may include a mix of employees of the Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment, experts from the sector, other Commonwealth officers with relevant specialist expertise.

For more information, refer to section 8.2 of the guidelines.

15. Can I submit more than one application?

You may apply for more than one extension activity in the same application. Applications can be for one or more soil extension officers and/or one or more approved activities. Please note that you will be required to detail how much funding you are applying for per activity/extension officer within the application. If more than one application is submitted for the same soil extension officer and eligible activity, the latest accepted application form will progress. Each application cannot exceed the financial limits of the grant.

16. Can I send attachments outside of the application form?

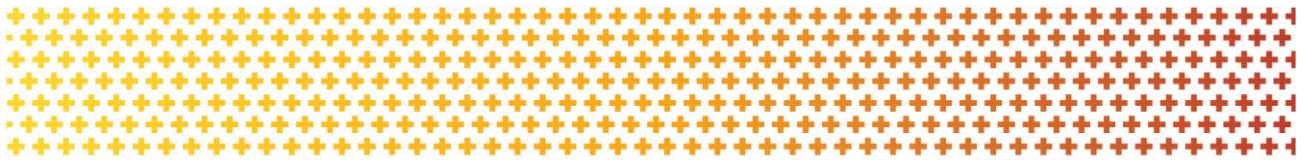
The only attachment that is mandatory is 'proof of business' documentation. No further attachments will be accepted. Applicants must use the online grant form which has an in-built budget template.

17. What if I disagree with my assessment?

The decision maker's decision is final in all matters and there is no appeal mechanism. We encourage you to contact us for feedback via support@communitygrants.gov.au.

The selection process is managed by the Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment. The department publishes a [service charter](#) that sets out our standards of service. We welcome your feedback because it will help us improve our services.

Any feedback can be lodged at this [website](#).



18. Why is the assessment process taking so long?

The selection process is managed by the Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment. We expect a significant number of applications and the selection advisory panel, made up of technical experts and departmental staff, need to review each of them and make a recommendation for the Minister of Agriculture and Northern Australia. Each application will be assessed against the grant criteria in a structured and systematic way. In some cases, the panel may need to seek further information before making a recommendation.

The panel's recommendations will then be sent to the Minister of Agriculture and Northern Australia. The Minister may seek more information from the panel before making a final decision. When a final decision is made, applicants will be notified of the outcome.

The department is committed to a timely assessment process that follows due process.

19. Where should I go for further information?

Please email your enquiries to support@communitygrants.gov.au.

Question and Answer added on 20 September 2021

20. Why is it that you cannot apply as a Partnership?

A Partnership is 'unincorporated' or a 'non-legal entity' and a non-legal entity does not have the capacity to enter into a legally binding agreement with the Commonwealth. In general terms in a standard agreement an individual entity can apply in their own right and be responsible for the terms of the agreement, but only if that entity is one of the entity types listed in section '4.1 – Who is eligible to apply for a grant?' of the Grant Opportunity Guidelines and meets the additional eligibility requirements set out in section '4.2 – Additional eligibility requirements'

Questions and Answers added on 22 September 2021

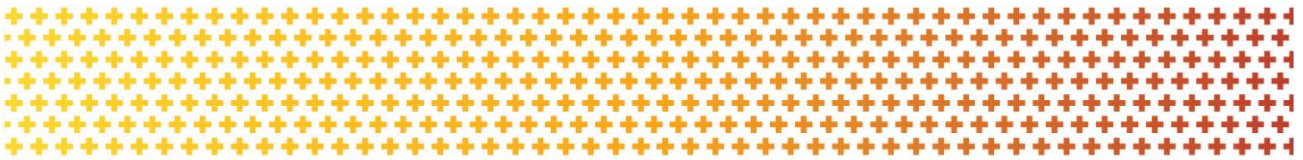
21. Is the focus of this grant about soil health improvements on a crop by crop basis, based on pathogen control and optimum nutrient levels or is the focus about greenhouse gases?

We are unable to provide specific advice on competitive grant round applications.

We suggest referring to Section 5.2 of the Grant Opportunity Guidelines, which outline the Eligible Expenditure for this grant round. We also recommend reviewing the National Soil Strategy for more detail on what the priorities are under the strategy and how your proposed activities align.

We recommend ensuring that when completing the criterion in the application form, that your activities align with what is outlined in both the Grant Opportunity Guidelines and the National Soil Strategy.

Links to the Grant Opportunity Guidelines and the National Soil Strategy below are as follows:



Grant Opportunity Guidelines:

https://www.communitygrants.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/09_2021/smart-farms-soil-extension-program-grant-opportunity-guidelines.pdf

National Soil Strategy

<https://www.agriculture.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/national-soil-strategy.pdf>

- 22. Could you please clarify whether administration/project management costs to the grant organisation can be included in the budget for this grant? (for example, project management and scheduling, reporting, invoicing etc.). And if so, is there a cap on how much we claim for administration/project management costs?**

A portion of the grant funding could be allocated to administration/project management costs. The Grant Opportunity Guidelines do not provide a funding cap for these expenses however, the applicant must justify all proposed expenditure in their application.

We recommend the applicant refers to Section 5.3 of the Grant Opportunity Guidelines which outlines what the grant money cannot be used for.

Link to the Grant Opportunity Guidelines as follows: [Grant Opportunity Guidelines](#)

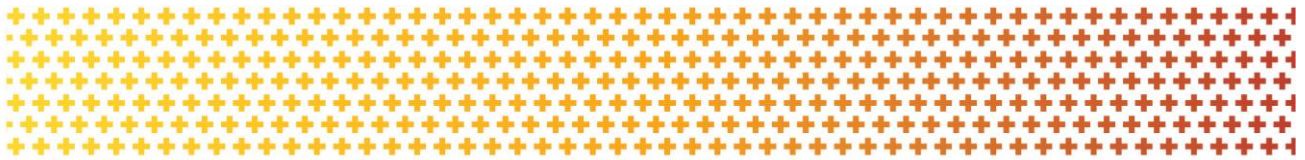
Questions and Answers added on 27 September 2021

- 23. Can you confirm that the National Soil Monitoring and Incentives Pilot Program as part of the National Soil Package will be the mechanism through which land managers can access funds for soil testing on their land?**

Yes, the National Soil Monitoring and Incentives Pilot Program will provide subsidies for the sampling and testing of soil with the aim to encourage farmers and land managers to undertake regular soil testing.

- 24. Can you confirm that grant applicants for the Soil Extension Smart Farm Small Grants program therefore do not need to include a budget for soil testing in their applications?**

As per section 5.2 of the Grant Opportunity Guidelines, undertaking soil testing is not an eligible activity and therefore does not need to be included in the budget tables within the application form as funding is not being requested for this activity. If however soil testing is being delivered in-kind to complement eligible activities being applied for, it will need to be provided in the 'In Kind Support' section of the application form.



25. What type of soil testing will be offered to land managers through the National Soil Monitoring and Incentives Pilot Program? Is it restricted to testing the nutritional status of soils and its chemical properties or does it also include soil tests for physical properties, biological activity and carbon content?

The National Soil Monitoring and Incentives Program is still being designed. Consultation with a broad range of stakeholders is informing the design including sampling standards and soil properties that will be tested.

26. Has the Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment determined any specific soil management practice advice it intends to promote to land managers as a result of interpreting their soil test results?

The Grant Opportunity Guidelines state that grantees will be expected to work collaboratively with regional and national networks. As per criterion five of the Grant Opportunity Guidelines, successful extension activities will demonstrate the grantees commitment to utilise latest technologies, research and industry methodologies and explain how this will be achieved. Note that all activities must be supported by or involve engaging a suitably qualified person/s with qualifications* in soil science or similar field or demonstrated experience in performing soil management extension activities or be in the process of attaining the aforementioned qualifications or experience.

*Suitable qualifications may include, but are not limited to, a bachelor's degree and/or diploma in a science, agriculture and/or environment field with soil science specific units. A minimum level of a diploma is required.
