

National Landcare Program Smart Farms Small Grants Round 2017-18 Grant Opportunity Guidelines

Opening date:	24 October 2017
Closing date and time:	2:00pm AEDT on 7 December 2017
Commonwealth policy entity:	Department of Agriculture and Water Resources
Enquiries:	If you have any questions, please contact: Phone: 1800 020 283 Email: support@communitygrants.gov.au
Date guidelines released:	24 October 2017
Type of grant opportunity:	Open competitive

Contents

1. National Landcare Program: Smart Farms Small Grants Process	5
1.1 Role of the Community Grants Hub	7
2. About the grant program	7
2.1 Why Smart Farms Small Grants?	7
2.2 What is the National Landcare Program?	7
2.3 About the Smart Farms Small Grants Opportunity	8
2.4 The Smart Farms Small Grants purpose and outcome	9
2.5 Natural resource management requirements	9
3. Grant amount	10
4. Grant eligibility criteria	10
4.1 What is an eligible project?	10
4.2 Who is eligible to apply for a grant?	10
4.2.1 Who is eligible to apply in their own right for grants for Tier 1 projects?	11
4.2.2 Who is not eligible to apply in their own right for grants for Tier 1 projects?	11
4.2.3 Who is eligible to apply as a sponsor for grants for Tier 1 projects?	12
4.2.4 Who is not eligible to apply as a sponsor for grants for Tier 1 projects?	12
4.2.5 Who is eligible to apply for grants for Tier 2 projects?	13
4.2.6 Who is not eligible to apply for grants for Tier 2 projects?	13
5. Eligible grants activities	14
5.1 Examples of eligible grant activities	14
5.2 Activities to include in project applications	15
5.3 Budget	15
5.4 What the grants money cannot be used for?	16
5.5 Co-contributions	17
5.6 Eligible expenditure for grantee contributions	17
6. The assessment criteria	17
6.1 Assessment criteria for Tier 1 projects	17
6.2 Assessment criteria for Tier 2 project	18
6.3 Assessment considerations for all (Tier 1 and Tier 2) applications	19
6.3.1 Principles of public/private benefits and cost sharing	20

7. The grant application process	20
7.1 Overview of application process	20
7.2 Application process timing	21
7.3 Completing the grant application	21
7.4 Attachments	22
7.4.1 Attachments for Tier 1 applications	22
7.4.2 Attachments for Tier 2 applications	22
7.5 Applications from consortia	22
7.6 Submitting multiple applications	23
7.7 Questions during the application process	23
8. Assessment of grant applications	23
8.1 Who will assess applications?	23
8.2 Who will approve grants?	24
9. Notification of application outcomes	24
9.1 Feedback on your application	24
10. Successful grant applications	25
10.1 The grant agreement	25
10.2 How the grant will be paid	25
11. Announcement of grants	25
12. Delivery of grant activities	26
12.1 Your responsibilities	26
12.2 Community Grants Hub's responsibilities	26
12.3 Grant payments and GST	27
12.4 Reporting	27
12.5 Evaluation	27
12.6 Acknowledgement	28
13. Probity	28
13.1 Complaints process	28
13.2 Conflict of interest	29
13.3 Privacy: confidentiality and protection of personal information	29

13.4 Freedom of information 31

14. Glossary 32

1. National Landcare Program: Smart Farms Small Grants Process

The Program is designed to achieve Australian Government objectives

This grant opportunity is part of the National Landcare Program (NLP) announced through the 2017-18 budget. We plan and design the grant program according to the *Commonwealth Grants Rules and Guidelines*



The grant opportunity opens

We publish the grant guidelines and advertise on GrantConnect and Community Grants Hub websites



You complete and submit a grant application



We assess all grant applications

We assess the applications against eligibility criteria and notify you if you are not eligible. We then assess your application against the criteria including an overall consideration of value for money and compare it to other applications



We make grant recommendations

We provide advice to the decision maker on the merits of each application



Grant decisions are made

The decision maker decides which grant 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 grant agreements have been executed with successful applicants.



We enter into a grant agreement

We will enter into a grant agreement or letter of agreement with successful applicants. The type of grant agreement is based on the nature of the grant and proportional to the risks involved.



Delivery of grant

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



Evaluation of the grant

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

1.1 Role of the Community Grants Hub

The Smart Farms Small Grants grant opportunity will be administered by the Community Grants Hub on behalf of Department of Agriculture and Water Resources under a Whole of Australian Government initiative to streamline grant processes across agencies.

2. About the grant program

2.1 Why Smart Farms Small Grants?

There are pressures on Australia's natural resources (soil, vegetation and biodiversity) that can limit the viability and productivity of Australia's farming, fishery, aquaculture and forestry industries. Agricultural industries are looking to trial and implement new and innovative technologies and tools, which will reduce these pressures while increasing their productivity and profitability.

In response to these needs the Government has established Smart Farms Small Grants. This is a competitive grant program under the Smart Farms initiative, a component of the sustainable agriculture element of the National Landcare Program.

Grants will be available to support local on-ground projects across Australia that increase the knowledge and capacity of farmers and fishers and facilitate the adoption of tools, technologies and improved land management practices to effectively, sustainably and productively manage Australia's natural resources and adapt to significant changes in climate, weather and markets.

The Smart Farms Small Grants grant opportunity will be administered according to the *Commonwealth Grants Rules and Guidelines 2017* ([CGRGs](#)).

2.2 What is the National Landcare Program?

The National Landcare Program is the Australian Government's natural resources management (NRM) program, the next phase of which was announced in the 2017-18 budget (with \$1.08 billion of funding). The aim of the National Landcare Program is to protect, conserve and provide for the productive use of Australia's water, soil, plants and animals and the ecosystems in which they live and interact, in partnership with governments, industry and communities. Our natural resources are in threat of, or are being degraded, from land use change. Farmers manage around 61 per cent of our land and so play an important role. Protecting and restoring our soils, water, vegetation and biodiversity underpins the productivity and profitability of agriculture, fisheries and forestry industries and will assist these industries to become more resilient and able to effectively respond to changing climate, weather and market conditions.

The National Landcare Program has five proposed program outcomes:

1. Increase the protection, rehabilitation and restoration of environmental assets
2. Increase in the NRM community delivering biodiversity and natural resources practices

3. Increased awareness and the adoption of land management practices that improve and protect the condition of soil, biodiversity and vegetation
4. Support for the eradication of Red Imported Fire Ants and the establishment of a Centre for Invasive Species Solutions research institute
5. Agricultural systems have a capacity to adapt to significant changes in climate, weather and markets.

These National Landcare Program outcomes will be delivered by initiatives administered by the Department of Agriculture and Water Resources and the Department of Environment and Energy. The key initiative for the agriculture portfolio is Smart Farms.

Smart Farms—will run over six years from 2017-18 to 2022-23 and consists of three elements:

- Smart Farming Partnerships - will invest \$60 million into medium to large scale projects to encourage the development, trial and roll-out of new and innovative tools and farm practices.
- Smart Farms Small Grants - is a \$50 million small grants program to support the adoption of best practices that improve the management and quality of our natural resources and increases on-farm productivity.
- The Building Landcare Community and Capacity - will invest \$24 million to support the sharing of knowledge and achievements, and promote community leadership.

There is also a joint Department of the Environment and Energy and Department of Agriculture and Water Resources initiative called Regional Land Partnerships. This will focus on delivering environmental, economic and social benefits to Australian agriculture through protecting threatened plants and animals; eradication or better management of weeds and pests; improving agricultural land management practices and profitability; and building community resilience at the regional scale. This new regional delivery program will build on the strengths of the regional delivery stream of the previous National Landcare Program: including, retaining national coverage, engaging Indigenous people, delivering both environmental and sustainable agriculture outcomes, and planning and strategic approaches.

2.3 About the Smart Farms Small Grants Opportunity

Smart Farms Small Grants is an open competitive grants opportunity, offering up to \$50 million over six years (2017-18 to 2022-23) to fund short-term (up to two years) projects to support farming communities to increase awareness, knowledge, skills and capacity of adoption of best management practices. Six annual rounds of funding are expected: this initial 2017-18 round (\$5 million), followed by five subsequent annual calls for applicants to 2022-23.

Applications are invited for grants, the value of which range from a minimum of \$5 000 to a maximum of \$100 000 (GST exclusive). Projects will be considered under two tiers: Tier 1 for those between \$5 000 and \$50 000; and Tier 2 for those between \$50 001 and \$100 000. Under this grant round the Australian Government is seeking applications for projects that will be completed by 30 April 2020.

This document sets out:

- the purpose of the grant opportunity
- the eligibility and assessment criteria
- how grant applications are assessed and selected
- the responsibilities and expectations in relation to the opportunity.

You must read this document before filling out an application.

2.4 The Smart Farms Small Grants purpose and outcome

The purposes of the Smart Farms Small Grants are to increase land managers' awareness, knowledge, capability and adoption of tools and management practices that will deliver more productive and profitable agriculture, fishing, aquaculture and farm forestry industries; protect Australia's biodiversity; protect and improve the condition of natural resources (in particular soils and vegetation); and assist Australia meet its obligations under relevant international treaties (as discussed in section 5).

The purpose will be achieved through grants that support local on-ground projects across Australia that deliver against **the priority outcome of increasing the knowledge and capacity of farmers and fishers and facilitating the adoption of tools, technologies and improved land management practices to effectively, sustainably and productively manage Australia's natural resources and adapt to significant changes in climate, weather and markets.**

2.5 Natural resource management requirements

The Smart Farms Small Grants outcome relates primarily to protecting the condition of Australia's natural resource base and biodiversity.

The natural resources being protected or improved through these grants are **on-farm soil, vegetation** (where it also contributes to sustainable use outcomes) and **biodiversity** (including both terrestrial and marine).

Healthy soil is a key natural resource used by agriculture and agroforestry. The focus is on reducing the amount of soil (and nutrients) lost through wind and water erosion, slowing rates of soil carbon loss, and better managing soil acidification and nutrient balances. Improving these soil condition factors will also better support soil biology and its biodiversity. Improving on-farm vegetation management will contribute to biodiversity protection, including soil biodiversity, and enhance opportunities for integrated pest management.

Applicants must address at least one of these natural resource conditions (on-farm soil vegetation and biodiversity).

Projects should also consider how the adoption of technologies and improved management practices align with the government's current national priorities identified at a regional level. The government's priorities report and background reports on regional priorities are accessible at the Australian Government's [natural resource management website](#).

3. Grant amount

\$50 million over six years (2017-18 to 2022-23) is available for the Smart Farms Small Grants. The total available funding for the 2017-18 round is \$5 million. There will be two categories of projects—Tier 1 and Tier 2.

1. Tier 1 – grants for these projects will be between \$5 000 and \$50 000 (GST exclusive).
2. Tier 2 – grants for these projects will be between \$50 001 and \$100 000 (GST exclusive).

4. Grant eligibility criteria

4.1 What is an eligible project?

To be eligible for the 2017-18 round of Smart Farms Small Grants (either Tier 1 or Tier 2), a project must meet all of the following criteria:

- applicants must address the priority outcome (refer to section 2.4).
- total funding sought (refer to section 3) must be:
 - between \$5 000 and \$50,000 (GST exclusive) for Tier 1 projects
 - between \$50,001 and \$100 000 (GST exclusive) for Tier 2 projects.
- funded project activities must be planned to be completed on or before 30 April 2020.
- the project or activity must be undertaken in Australia and its territories and must have benefit for Australia
- the project must address a natural resource requirement (refer to section 2.5)
- project activities must be eligible (refer section 5)
- project activities must comply with all of the requirements set out in any applicable Commonwealth, state, territory and local government laws
- funding sought must not be for ineligible activities (refer section 5.4).

Your application will not be progressed if it does not satisfy all of these mandatory eligibility criteria.

4.2 Who is eligible to apply for a grant?

There are some differences between the tiers on who is eligible to apply. There are also differences between who is eligible to apply for Tier 1 in their own right versus those applying as sponsors (sponsor arrangements are not permitted for Tier 2 projects). Details are set out in sections 4.2.1 to 4.2.6.

4.2.1 Who is eligible to apply in their own right for grants for Tier 1 projects?

The following can apply for Tier 1 funding as applicants in their own right:

- Individuals and organisations that are legal entities capable of entering into a legally binding and enforceable agreement with the Commonwealth. This includes:
 - Aboriginal Corporation
 - Private Company
 - Public Company
 - Incorporated Cooperative
 - Trustee on behalf of Trust
 - Incorporated Association
 - Individual/Sole Trader
 - Partnership

To be eligible for funding, applicants must also provide a current Australian Business Number (ABN).

The Australian Government is keen to support suitable projects across a wide spectrum of individuals and groups, such as:

- Farming systems groups
- Landcare and community groups
- Indigenous organisations such as Aboriginal Land Councils and land trusts
- Individuals and corporate farming entities including farmers, pastoralists, farm foresters, aquaculture operators and fishers who can demonstrate the public benefits of the project.
- Non-government organisations and their state/territory branches; peak industry groups; and/or umbrella bodies.

4.2.2 Who is not eligible to apply in their own right for grants for Tier 1 projects?

The following entities are ineligible to apply for Tier 1 grants in their own right:

- Commonwealth Government agencies
- Research and development bodies, including CSIRO and Rural Research and Development Corporations
- Universities
- Regional/catchment natural resource management bodies
- Organisations directly operating or established by or appointed under state legislation, such as Livestock Health and Pest Authorities, and Committees of Management for Crown land reserves
- State/Territory Government
- Overseas Entity

- Overseas Entity operating in Australia

4.2.3 Who is eligible to apply as a sponsor for grants for Tier 1 projects?

To be eligible to apply in your own right for the Tier 1 projects, applicants must be an individual or an organisation that is a legal entity allowing you to be held legally responsible for meeting the contractual obligations of the grant. If a group is not a legal entity, they may still be able to participate if they are able to establish a sponsor arrangement

A sponsor arrangement can be sought under Tier 1 if a group that is not a legal entity wants support for a suitable project. Such groups are able to ask a sponsor (such as a regional/catchment natural resource management body) to apply on their behalf. The sponsor applicant will be legally responsible for meeting the contractual obligations of the grant.

Sponsors can only apply on behalf of a group where that group is **not** a legal entity (such as a small community group). Sponsors may sponsor more than one group, but must submit a separate application, and enter into a separate funding agreement, for each group they sponsor. A separate application form will need to be downloaded and completed for each application.

The following can apply for Tier 1 funding as sponsor applicants:

- Individuals and organisations that are legal entities capable of entering into a legally binding and enforceable agreement with the Commonwealth. This includes:
 - Aboriginal Corporation
 - Private Company
 - Public Company
 - Incorporated Cooperative
 - Trustee on behalf of Trust
 - Incorporated Association
 - Organisation established through a specific piece of Commonwealth or State/Territory legislation
 - Individual/Sole Trader
 - Local Government
 - Non-Entity Joint Venture
 - Partnership

To be eligible for funding, sponsor applicants must also provide a current Australian Business Number (ABN).

4.2.4 Who is not eligible to apply as a sponsor for grants for Tier 1 projects?

The following entities are ineligible to apply for Tier 1 grants as sponsor applicants:

- Commonwealth Government agencies but does not include Rural Research and Development Corporations
- Research and development bodies, including CSIRO but not Rural Research and Development Corporations
- Universities
- Organisations directly operating or established by or appointed under state legislation, such as Livestock Health and Pest Authorities, and Committees of Management for crown land reserves (this does not include regional/catchment natural resource management bodies).
- Overseas Entity
- Overseas Entity operating in Australia

4.2.5 Who is eligible to apply for grants for Tier 2 projects?

The following can apply for Tier 2 funding:

- Individuals and organisations that are legal entities capable of entering into a legally binding and enforceable agreement with the Commonwealth (if a group is not a legal entity they will not be able to participate – sponsor arrangements are not acceptable for Tier 2). This includes:
 - Aboriginal Corporation
 - Private Company
 - Public Company
 - Incorporated Cooperative
 - Trustee on behalf of Trust
 - Incorporated Association
 - Organisation established through a specific piece of Commonwealth or State/Territory legislation
 - Individual/Sole Trader
 - Local Government
 - Partnership

4.2.6 Who is not eligible to apply for grants for Tier 2 projects?

The following entities are ineligible to apply for Tier 2:

- Commonwealth Government agencies but does not include Rural Research and Development Corporations
- Research and development bodies, including CSIRO but does not include Rural Research and Development Corporations
- Organisations directly operating or appointed under state legislation, such as Livestock Health and Pest Authorities, and Committees of Management for crown land reserves (this does not include regional/catchment natural resource management bodies)
- State/Territory Government
- Overseas Entity

- Overseas Entity operating in Australia

The Australian Government is keen to support suitable projects across a wide spectrum of individuals and groups, and expect that the more substantial funds available under Tier 2, allowing for larger scale activities, will be suitable for groups such as:

- Farming systems groups
- Landcare and community groups
- Indigenous organisations such as Aboriginal Land Councils and land trusts
- Individuals and corporate farming entities including farmers, pastoralists, farm foresters, aquaculture operators and fishers who can demonstrate the public benefits of the project
- Regional/catchment natural resource management bodies
- Non-government organisations and their stat/territory branches; peak industry groups; and/or umbrella bodies
- Industry groups
- Rural Research and Development Corporations.

5. Eligible grants activities

To be eligible, activities will contribute to one or more of the following:

- soil health
- conserving or restoring Australia's native biodiversity
- climate change adaptation
- greenhouse gas emissions management and resource use efficiency
- sustainable agriculture and natural resource management that supports any of the above.

This ensures that the applicant will be contributing to Australia's national and international obligations. These include (but are not limited to): Australia's *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* and Australia's *Biodiversity Conservation Strategy 2010-2030*, the *Convention on Biological Diversity*, the Paris Agreement, the *United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification*; the *Ramsar Convention on Wetlands*; and the *UN Convention on the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage*.

Ineligible activities are detailed in section 5.4.

5.1 Examples of eligible grant activities

The grant money can be used for a range of activities that contribute to the outcome of this program. Some examples of eligible activities that may be able to demonstrate how they will deliver benefits to the broader community, under both Tier 1 and Tier 2, are listed below:

- maintaining groundcover levels above regional groundcover targets to reduce soil and nutrient loss, through wind and water erosion and improve air and water quality
- managing soil acidification to improve productivity and avoid future loss of productive land through subsoil acidification

- improving nutrient use efficiency where this will reduce losses into waterways while improving productivity and slowing rates of soil acidification or reduce nitrous oxide emissions
- improving soil health through better soil biology, better nutrient matching and management of soil structure where it can be demonstrated that this will lead to increased productivity and reduced nutrient loss
- adopting, extending and implementing industry guidelines and codes of practice for sustainable management practice activities in the fishing/aquaculture industry
- activities that will increase the capacity and knowledge of the NRM and agriculture community to better manage soil and vegetation on-farm
- dissemination of natural resource management information to better manage soil and vegetation on-farm through extension activities including training, workshops, demonstration sites and field days
- trialling and demonstrating soil and vegetation management associated with practices to adapt them to local farming conditions
- activities to facilitate the adoption of soil and vegetation management practices, and reporting frameworks for systems and practices that maintain productivity while improving the capacity of Australian farmers to demonstrate the sustainability of their operations and the traceability of their products (such as may be needed to demonstrate environmental credentials needed for access to certain markets/premium markets)
- developing innovative soil and vegetation management practices, where proof-of-concept has already been researched
- demonstrations, pilots and trials to adapt soil and vegetation management practices and systems to local/regional conditions.

5.2 Activities to include in project applications

All applicants are required to include (through attachments using the provided templates) in the project application details of how the project will deliver the following activity during the course of the project (this activity is eligible for funding):

- **Preparation of a communications strategy** – Communicating the outcomes from the project can assist with the adoption of the project outcomes in the future, by applying the projects approach in new regions or by different groups and fostering long-term benefits from the project.

5.3 Budget

Applications must include a project budget, using the template provided.

Applicants should consider all aspects of their project and ensure their applications include all relevant costs, as items not budgeted for in the original application will not be funded. Total administrative costs should not be more than 10 per cent of the total grant funding.

Project budget items may include, but are not limited to:

- materials, equipment hire and labour
- advertising, website development, printing and publication costs
- training and extension activities
- community information or education activities
- development of decision-making tools
- conducting surveys
- essential and project specific administration support including phone and internet bills and costs associated with legally required documents totalling not more than 10 per cent of the grant fund sought
- minor capital or capital items such as fencing, posts, plants etc., essential to deliver the project. It is expected this would not be the majority of the project budget.
- expert advice, such as consultancies
- infrastructure construction—for example, off-stream watering points where streambanks are being fenced and for earthwork activities to control gully erosion

The budget will also need to detail the value of any co-contributions (see section 5.5). The budget template will also set out how to do this for in-kind contributions.

Successful applicants are required to have the necessary levels of public liability insurance in place for their project.

5.4 What the grants money cannot be used for?

The following activities will not be funded under the Smart Farms Small Grants:

- projects that will devolve grants to other bodies
- activities with the potential to adversely impact on any matter of national environmental significance as identified under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*
- purchase of equipment or materials that are reasonably considered to be normally part of a landholder's responsibility for the management of their property
- the introduction of plants, animals or other biological agents known to be, or that could become environmental or agricultural weeds and pests
- subsidies for commercial operations, business start-ups or where the primary activity is for commercial gain
- activities that are the core responsibility or business of applicant
- activities that are regarded as basic research
- activities that are the legislative and regulatory responsibility of the applicant or others, such as managing or controlling certain weeds and pests
- activities designed to raise revenue for the group or individuals
- on ground activities outside of Australia
- retrospective activities that have been undertaken prior to the signing of a Smart Farming Partnerships grant agreement

- similar or related activities to ones which have already started where the proposed activity will not be reasonably considered to be different (additional) to what has or is already being undertaken
- activities for which the applicant has already received funding from the Australian Government.

5.5 Co-contributions

Activities on private land must include contributions (cash and /or in-kind, noting that direct cash contributions will be given a higher consideration as part of the assessment considerations, see section 6.3) to the cost of the activities that is proportionate to levels of private benefits to be obtained from the activities. For example, funding for on-ground works (such as fencing or the installation of watering points) on private land may only be provided if there is a substantial public and environment benefit, and a contribution from the landholder/s that will compensate for significant private benefit obtained.

The following activities, financial sources and/or costs **will not** be considered valid co-contributions for the purposes of a Project:

- funding from other projects under the National Landcare Program or any other previous or current Australian Government programs, such as funding obtained through NLP regional funding to regional natural resource management organisation
- funds from any other grant programs not secured at the time of applying.

5.6 Eligible expenditure for grantee contributions

This grant opportunity requires the applicant to contribute to the grant activity as stated in section 5.5. The applicant can only spend agreed funds (either the applicant's contribution or the government portion) on eligible expenditure the applicant has incurred on an agreed project, as defined in the grant agreement. The applicant must incur the project expenditure between the project start and end-date for it to be eligible.

6. The assessment criteria

6.1 Assessment criteria for Tier 1 projects

Subject to the assessment considerations in section 6.3, all Tier 1 applications will be evaluated against the following assessment criteria. All criteria will be weighted equally. The assessment process reserves the right to seek external advice and use the information provided in applications for this purpose.

Applicants for Tier 1 projects must address all the following criteria:

1. Explain how the development and implementation of the proposed grant activity is informed by evidence and will achieve the Smart Farms Small Grants outcome.

Applicants should:

- outline how the proposed activity aligns with the Smart Farms Small Grants outcome (section 2.4)
 - justify the need for the activity, especially how this will deliver benefits to the broader community
 - explain how the activity is informed by evidence and contemporary best practice.
2. Demonstrate capability to develop, implement, manage and monitor grant activities to achieve positive outcomes for all stakeholders on time and within budget.

Applicants should:

- outline previous experience delivering natural resource management projects that achieved positive outcomes for all stakeholders
- explain capability to develop, implement, manage and monitor the proposed grant activity to achieve positive outcomes for all stakeholders
- outline any risks associated with the grant activity, and explain how they will be managed and mitigated
- (if applicable) explain how the activity will include a co-contribution that would account for any private benefit to the landholder delivered by the activity.(see section 5.5).

6.2 Assessment criteria for Tier 2 project

Subject to the assessment considerations in section 6.3, all Tier 2 applications will be evaluated against the following assessment criteria. All criteria will be weighted equally. The assessment process reserves the right to seek external advice and use the information provided in applications for this purpose.

Applicants for Tier 2 projects must address all the following criteria:

1. Demonstrate the need for your grant activity in the chosen location.

Applicants should:

- provide evidence of the need for your activity (e.g. Australian government priorities, other statistics, demographic information, research, reports, empirical evidence)
- outline how your activity will address the identified need, especially how this will deliver benefits to the broader community
- outline how your activity aligns with the Smart Farms Small Grants outcome (section 2.4)
- explain how your activity will build on or complement (and not duplicate) existing services and/or support / natural resource management investment at this site(s).

2. Explain how the development and implementation of your organisation's grant activity is informed by evidence and will achieve the grant program's objectives.

Applicants should:

- explain how the development and implementation of your activity is informed by evidence and contemporary best practice (e.g. previous work and investments to address this, condition reports, expert assessments)
 - explain how the development and implementation of your activity will deliver positive, measurable outcomes that contribute to the program objectives; and
 - outline how the scale of your activity is appropriate.
3. Demonstrate your capability to deliver the grant activity.

Applicants should:

- outline your organisation's experience delivering natural resource management projects
- explain your capability to develop, implement, manage and monitor this grant activity
- outline any project risks, and explain how they will be managed and mitigated
- outline your expertise that will contribute to the delivery of your grant activity, including any technical expertise
- outline roles and responsibilities of all parties involved in your grant activity
- (if applicable) explain how your grant activity will be funded by a co-contribution that would be sufficient to account for any private benefit to the landholder delivered by your activity (see section 5.5).

6.3 Assessment considerations for all (Tier 1 and Tier 2) applications

The assessment panel will ensure that all proposed activities are eligible under section 5. Proposed activities that are not eligible activities will not be funded under the program.

The Smart Farms Small Grants also aim to support industry and community groups across the country to deliver the program outcome. To achieve a reasonable distribution and balance of different types of projects, and to determine the overall value-for-money the assessment process will consider the following:

- distribution across Australia and agro-ecological zones
- the public or broader community benefit derived from the application value for money for outcomes achieved, including:
 - that budget items are eligible, reasonable and relevant to the project activities, recognising the project and a sense of its scale

- the total project budget is comparable with the outcomes of the overall project, taking into account the co-contributions (cash and/or in-kind, with direct cash contributions given a higher consideration) and expected public benefit to be derived from the project (see section 6.3.1 for principles of public/private benefits and cost sharing)

6.3.1 Principles of public/private benefits and cost sharing

Government funding will be guided by a set of principles for public and private benefit. The interaction between the natural resource issue, the environmental and productive outcome(s), and the activities funded, the management practices and technologies being promoted, and the subsequent public and private benefits will vary between projects. Assessments will be made on a case-by-case basis taking into account:

- the public benefit, the current market reward and whether the outcomes would not occur without government intervention
- government funding being commensurate with the expected public or broader community benefit derived
- the level of private investment (cash and/or in kind) being appropriate for the level of private benefit received
- grant payments should only be considered where the public benefit is high
- extension activities including education, communication, demonstration should be used where there is a market failure and both public and private net benefits are expected
- alignment of information content, transfer and extension with similar activities by industry and other jurisdictions to make the most efficient use of resources.

7. The grant application process

7.1 Overview of application process

You must read the grant guidelines, the application form and the terms and conditions. before you submit an application.

You are responsible for ensuring that your application is complete and accurate. Giving false or misleading information will exclude your application from further consideration.

You must address all of the eligibility and assessment criteria to be considered for a grant. Please complete each section of the application form and make sure you provide the information we have requested.

Please keep a copy of your application and any supporting papers.

7.2 Application process timing

Submit your application to the Community Grants Hub by the closing date below. Late applications will not be accepted. However, the Community Grants Hub may consider the submission of late applications under extenuating circumstances provided that an alternative timeframe has been negotiated prior to the closing date. Any requests for an extension of time to lodge an application must be made in writing to the Community Grants Hub at support@communitygrants.gov.au prior to the closing date.

Information on the Community Grants Hub [late application policy](#) is available on the [Community Grants Hub](#) website.

The expected commencement date for the granting activities is June 2018 and the expected completion date is 30 April 2020.

The key dates for the program are set out in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Expected timing for this grant opportunity

Activity	Timeframe
Application period	Open: 24 October 2017 Close: 7 December 2017
Assessment of applications	Mid-December 2017 – mid February 2018
Approval of outcomes of selection process	March 2018
Negotiations and award of grant agreements	April – May 2018
Notification to unsuccessful applicants	May 2018
Activity commences	June 2018
End date	30 April 2020

7.3 Completing the grant application

You must submit your grant application using the application form, which is available on the [GrantConnect](#) and [Community Grants Hub](#) websites. The information form includes help information.

This is an online application form that you must submit electronically. If you have any technical difficulties, please contact 1800 020 283 or email support@communitygrants.gov.au.

The Community Grants Hub will not provide application forms or accept applications for this grant opportunity by fax or mail.

You must make sure that your application is complete and accurate and submitted in accordance with these Guidelines.

You cannot change your application after it has been submitted.

If you find a mistake in your application after it has been submitted, you should contact the Community Grants Hub by phone on 1800 020 283 or by email at support@communitygrants.gov.au straight away. The Community Grants Hub may ask you for more information, as long as it does not change the substance of your application. The Community Grants Hub does not have to accept any additional information, nor requests from applicants to correct applications after the closing time.

Applicants are encouraged to read the application carefully before submitting to ensure that all relevant sections have been completed and the information provided is true and correct. Projects will be selected through an open competitive grants process and assessors need all information in the application form to be completed to ensure applications can be compared equally.

7.4 Attachments

7.4.1 Attachments for Tier 1 applications

The following documents must be included in your application:

- A plan to deliver a communications strategy (refer to section 5.2)
- A project budget (refer to section 5.3)
- Sponsorship details (defined at section 4.2.3)

Complete the provided templates and attach to the application form. There will be instructions in the application form to help you. Only attach the documents you have been asked to include.

7.4.2 Attachments for Tier 2 applications

The following documents must be included in your application:

- A plan to deliver a communications strategy (refer to section 5.2)
- A project budget (refer to section 5.3)

Complete the provided templates and attach to the application form. There will be instructions in the application form to help you. Only attach the documents you have been asked to include.

7.5 Applications from consortia

A consortium is two or more organisations who are working together to combine their capabilities when developing and delivering a grant activity.

If you are submitting a grant application on behalf of a consortium, a member organisation or a newly created organisation must be appointed as the 'lead organisation'. Only the lead organisation will enter into a grant agreement with the Commonwealth and will be

responsible for the grant. The lead organisation must complete the application form and identify all other members of the proposed consortium in the application.

7.6 Submitting multiple applications

Some organisations may apply for grants for more than one project. In this case, applicants must complete a new application form for each project. Applicants should keep a copy of each submitted application.

Sponsors may choose to sponsor more than one applicant, but a separate application form must be submitted for each project.

7.7 Questions during the application process

If you have any questions during the application period, please call 1800 020 283 or Text Telephone / Teletype Terminal / TeleTyperwriter (TTY) 1800 555 677 or email support@communitygrants.gov.au. The Community Grants Hub will respond to emailed questions within five working days.

Answers to questions will be posted on the GrantConnect and Community Grants Hub websites.

The question period will close at 5:00pm AEDT on 30 November 2017. Following this time, only questions relating to using and/or submitting the application form will be answered.

8. Assessment of grant applications

8.1 Who will assess applications?

An assessment team comprised of Community Grants Hub staff will assess all eligible and compliant applications based on their merits and score them. The assessment team will undertake training to ensure consistent assessment of all applications.

If the selection process identifies unintentional errors in your application, you may be contacted to correct or explain the information.

An Expert Panel will provide strategic oversight, advice and recommendations on assessed applications to the grant decision maker. The Expert Panel will include a range of experts in agriculture and natural resource management.

The Expert Panel will make recommendations having regards to:

- overall objective for Smart Farms Small Grants
- conformance with eligibility criteria
- distribution of providers across all locations

- how the project will be delivered
- existing and/or potential market failure
- value for money
- (if known) minimise possible duplication with other Commonwealth/State/Territory government programs/service delivery.

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

8.2 Who will approve grants?

Projects recommended for funding by the Expert Panel will then be submitted to the Department of Agriculture and Water Resources for recommendation to the appropriate Minister in the agriculture and water resources portfolio. This Minister will consider applications and make the final decisions on which applications are successful to be offered funding.

While delivery of funding will be primarily on a competitive basis, if after running each application process, emerging issues have been identified and/or there are priorities that have not been met, the Minister may consider other projects to address these emerging issues or other forms of financial arrangements with partners and/or applicants, to otherwise further the objectives of the program. In these cases, the assessment criteria outlined in these guidelines will remain applicable.

All decisions made by the Minister about successful project applications are final. There is no appeal mechanism for decisions to approve or not approve a grant. The Minister must not approve funding if they reasonably consider the program funding available across financial years will not accommodate the funding offer, and/or the application does not represent value-for-money.

9. Notification of application outcomes

You will be advised of the outcomes of your application in writing, following a decision by the Community Grants Hub. If you are successful, you will also be advised about any specific conditions attached to the grant.

9.1 Feedback on your application

Feedback summaries for open funding rounds will be published on the Community Grants Hub website to provide all organisations with easy to access information about the assessment process and the main strengths and areas for improving their applications.

Individual feedback will be available upon written request.

10. Successful grant applications

10.1 The grant agreement

If you are successful, you must enter into a legally binding grant agreement with the Commonwealth represented by the Department of Agriculture and Water Resources. The Department of Agriculture and Water Resources will use the *Commonwealth Simple Grant Agreement*. Simple terms and conditions for the grant agreement will apply and cannot be changed. A schedule may be used to outline the specific grant requirements. Any additional conditions attached to the grant will be identified in the grant offer or during the grant agreement negotiations.

10.2 How the grant will be paid

The grant agreement will specify the total grant amount to be paid for each successful application. Any extra eligible expenditure will have to be borne by the project owner.

Payments for both Tier 1 and Tier 2 projects will be made to grantees upon the execution of a grant agreement. Details of payment will be provided in a Schedule that forms part of the grant agreement.

11. Announcement of grants

If successful, your grant will be listed on the [GrantConnect](#) website 21 business days after the date of effect¹ as required by Section 5.3 of the *Commonwealth Grants Rules and Guidelines*.

Information to be published includes:

- name of the person or entity receiving the grant
- project title and purpose
- amount of funding received
- term of the grant
- funding location.

By submitting an application for grant funding, the applicant consents to the above information being published by the department if they are successful under the Smart Farms Small Grants.

¹ See glossary

12. Delivery of grant activities

12.1 Your responsibilities

The government places a high priority on monitoring and reporting for all Smart Farms Grants projects and as a recipient of public monies, one of the most important obligations of successful applicants is to report on the progress and completion of the project undertaken with the funds received. You must submit reports in line with the timeframes in the grant agreement. The department will provide sample templates for these reports in the grant agreement.

Reporting requirements for the grants for both Tier 1 and Tier 2 Projects are:

- **final report suitable for publication on project activities, outcomes and achievements** — this includes qualitative and quantitative information, such as surveys, monitoring of attendee numbers at public information sessions or the use of photo-point data to show improvements in the condition of natural resources.
- **case study suitable for publication of project achievements** —to demonstrate project achievements.
- **financial statement to acquit the project** — this must be accompanied by a signed statutory declaration (if an individual) or a financial statement signed by the chair, treasurer or chief financial officer (if a group or organisation). The financial statement must include details of how the grant funding was spent against the budget and if the project involved cash or in-kind co-contributions, details on how this was spent/used must be included.
- Tier 2 projects will also be required to deliver, as an early milestone, a **risk management plan** showing appropriate management of identified project risks, including the risk of activities not being able to proceed as planned or the risk of project failure. This risk assessment may include risks of changes in climatic and seasonal conditions, consideration the level of planning undertaken, proposed resources, time, expertise and delivery mechanisms, the likelihood of receiving all necessary planning approvals and/or permits, including the permission from private landholders if required and Work Health and Safety risks to staff, contractors and volunteers.

If a grant recipient fails to comply with any requirements in the grant agreement, they may be required to repay some or all of the grant money received.

12.2 Community Grants Hub's responsibilities

The Community Grants Hub will:

- meet the terms and conditions set out in the grant agreement
- provide timely administration of the grant
- evaluate the grantee's performance.

The Community Grants Hub will monitor the progress of your project by assessing reports you submit and may conduct site visits to confirm details of your reports if necessary. Occasionally the Hub may need to re-examine claims, seek further information or request an independent audit of claims and payments.

12.3 Grant payments and GST

Payments will be made as set out in the grant agreement. Payments will be GST Inclusive'. Before any payments are made, you must provide:

- a tax invoice for the amount of the payment (the Australian Government's default invoice process is Recipient Created Tax Invoices)
- evidence that you have achieved the associated milestone or contractual obligations
- any other conditions of payment (e.g. evidence of purchase of equipment, satisfactory progress report, approvals, and any other documentation).

If you receive a grant, you should consider speaking to a tax advisor about the effect of receiving a grant before you enter into a grant agreement. You can also visit the [Australian Taxation Office website](#) for more information.

12.4 Reporting

All funded projects will be subject to financial and performance reporting requirements and meeting specified milestones. Grantees will need to keep records of project activities and monitor project progress, expenditure and the project's results. This information will help grantees to report on and evaluate the success of their project.

Officers from the Community Grants Hub may contact a grantee to check how the project is progressing, or to arrange a visit to the project site(s). Grantees will be required to submit a final report suitable for publication and a financial statement for the project on project

12.5 Evaluation

The Smart Farms Small Grants will be evaluated to measure how well the outcomes and objectives have been achieved. Your grant agreement requires you to provide information to help with this evaluation.

The government will evaluate the contribution that projects make to achieve the Smart Farms Small Grants outcome and the effectiveness and efficiency in delivering these program outcomes. The evaluation of grant projects will be an important contribution into the design of any future calls for similar programs.

12.6 Acknowledgement

The National Landcare Program logo is designed to be used on all materials related to grants under the Program. Whenever the logo is used the publication must also acknowledge the Commonwealth as follows:

National Landcare Program, Smart Farms Small Grants – an Australian Government initiative’.

All publications related to grants under the Program must acknowledge the Commonwealth as follows:

‘This activity received grant funding from the Australian Government Department of Agriculture and Water Resources.’

13. Probity

The Australian Government will make sure that the program process is fair, according to the published guidelines, incorporates appropriate safeguards against fraud, unlawful activities and other inappropriate conduct and is consistent with the Commonwealth Grants Rules and Guidelines.

Note: These guidelines may be changed from time-to-time by the Australian Government Department of Agriculture and Water Resources. When this happens the revised guidelines will be published on [GrantConnect](#) website.

13.1 Complaints process

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

Details of what constitutes an eligible complaint can be provided upon request by the Community Grants Hub. Applicants can lodge complaints by using the [online complaints form](#) or by phone or mail:

Phone: 1800 634 035
Mail: Complaints
GPO Box 9
Canberra ACT 2601

Complaints to the Ombudsman

If an applicant is at any time dissatisfied with the Department of Social Services or the Community Grant Hub's handling of a complaint, they can contact the Commonwealth Ombudsman on:

Phone: 1300 362 072 (Toll free)
Email: ombudsman@ombudsman.gov.au

Mail: Commonwealth Ombudsman
GPO Box 442
CANBERRA ACT 2601

Further information can found on the [Commonwealth Ombudsman's website](#).

13.2 Conflict of interest

Any conflicts of interest could affect the performance of the grant. There may be a [conflict of interest](#), or perceived conflict of interest, if the Department of Agriculture and Water Resources and the Community Grants Hub staff, any member of a committee or adviser 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
- has a relationship with an organisation, or in an organisation, which is likely to interfere with or restrict the applicants from carrying out the proposed activities fairly and independently or
- has a relationship with, or interest in an organisation from which they will receive personal gain because the organisation receives funding under the Program.

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 identify that there is an actual, apparent, or potential conflict of interest or that one might arise in relation to a grant application, you must inform the [Community Grants Hub](#) in writing immediately. Committee members and other officials including the decision maker must also declare any conflicts of interest.

The chair of the Assessment Committee will be made aware of any conflicts of interest and will handle them as set out in Australian Government policies and procedures. 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*. We publish our conflict of interest policy available on the [Community Grants Hub](#) website.

13.3 Privacy: confidentiality and protection of personal information

We treat your personal information according to the 13 Australian Privacy Principles and the *Privacy Act 1988*. This includes letting you know:

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

You are required, as part of your application, to declare your ability to comply with the *Privacy Act 1988*, including the Australian Privacy Principles and impose the same privacy obligations on any subcontractors you engage to assist with the activity. You must ask for the Australian Government's consent in writing before disclosing confidential information.

Your personal information can only be disclosed to someone else if you are given reasonable notice of the disclosure; where disclosure is authorised or required by law or is reasonably necessary for the enforcement of the criminal law; if it will prevent or lessen a serious and imminent threat to a person's life or health; or if you have consented to the disclosure.

The Australian Government may also use and disclose information about grant applicants and grant recipients under the Program in any other Australian Government business or function. This includes giving information to the Australian Taxation Office for compliance purposes.

We may reveal confidential information to:

- the committee and other Commonwealth employees and contractors to help us manage the program effectively
- employees and contractors of our department so we can research, assess, monitor and analyse our programs and activities
- employees and contractors of other Commonwealth 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.

We may share the information you give us with other Commonwealth agencies for any purposes including government administration, research or service delivery and according to Australian laws, including the:

- *Public Service Act 1999*
- *Public Service Regulations 1999*
- *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act*
- *Privacy Act 1988*
- *Crimes Act 1914*
- *Criminal Code Act 1995*

We'll treat the information you give us as sensitive and therefore confidential if it meets all of the four 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
4. you provide the information with an understanding that it will stay confidential.

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

13.4 Freedom of information

All documents in the possession of the Australian Government, including those about the Program, 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 Coordinator
 The Department of Social Services
 Public Law Branch
 GPO Box 9820
 Canberra ACT 2601

By email: foi@dss.gov.au

14. Glossary

Term	Definition
assessment criteria	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 granting activity, to determine applicant 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.
date of effect	This will depend on the particular grant. It can be the date in which a grant agreement is signed or a specified starting date. Where there is no grant agreement, entities must publish information on individual grants as soon as practicable.
decision maker	The person who makes a decision to award a grant.
double dipping	Double dipping occurs where a grant recipient is able to obtain a grant for the same project or activity from more than one source.
eligibility criteria	The principles, standards or rules that a grant applicant must meet to qualify for consideration of a grant. Eligibility criteria may apply in addition to assessment 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 <i>Public Governance and Performance Act 2013</i> .
Commonwealth Grant Rules and Guidelines (CGRGs)	The CGRGs establish the overarching Commonwealth grants policy framework and articulate the expectations for all non-corporate Commonwealth entities in relation to grants administration and are found at the Department of Finance website .
cost shifting	Involves 'substitution of effort' by the Commonwealth for activities of another organisation or level of government. For example, cost shifting occurs where the Commonwealth provides a grant for an activity that would usually be paid for by a state, territory, or local government, such as municipal

Term	Definition
	services.
grant	<p>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"> a) under which relevant money or other CRF money, is to be paid to a grantee other than the Commonwealth; and b) which is intended to help address one or more of the Australian Government's policy outcomes while assisting the grantee achieve its objectives.
grant activity	Is the project /tasks /services that the Grantee is required to undertake with the grant money. It is described in the Grant Agreement.
grant agreement	Grant agreement means the contract template used by Australian Government entities to set out the mutual obligations relating to the provision of the grant. The Australian Government is standardising and streamlining grant agreements between the Commonwealth and grant recipients to allow grant recipients to engage more easily and efficiently with the Commonwealth.
grant opportunity	A notice published on GrantConnect advertising the availability of Commonwealth grants.
grant program	May be advertised within the 'Forecast Opportunity' (FO) section of GrantConnect to provide a consolidated view of associated grant opportunities and provide strategic context for specific grant opportunities
grantee	An individual/organisation that has been awarded a grant.
PBS Program	Described within the entity's Portfolio Budget Statement (PBS), 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

Term	Definition
publicly funded research organisation	All higher education providers of the <i>Higher Education Support Act 2003</i> as well as Federal, State and Territory Government departments or agencies which undertake publicly funded research. This includes, but is not limited to, Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation, Defence Science and Technology Organisation, Australian Institute of Marine Science and Australian Nuclear Science and Technology Organisation.
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.
Sponsor	A project sponsor is a legal entity (as set out in section 4.2.3) who chooses to apply on behalf of an individual or an organisation that cannot do so themselves because they are not an eligible legal entity. The sponsor is responsible for the project meeting the grant agreement obligations but is not directly involved in the on-ground delivery of the project.