

National Landcare Program: Smart Farms Small Grants Round 2 Grant Opportunity Guidelines

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Enquiries:	If you have any questions, please contact Community Grants Hub Phone: 1800 020 283 Email: support@communitygrants.gov.au Questions must be sent no later than 11:30pm 4 January 2019
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1. National Landcare Program: Smart Farms Small Grants Round 2 process

Smart Farming Small Grants is designed to achieve Australian Government objectives

Smart Farming Small Grants is part of the Australian Government's National Landcare Program, Outcome 1. The Department of Agriculture and Water Resources works with stakeholders to design agriculture-related components of the program according to the *Commonwealth Grants Rules and Guidelines*.



The grant opportunity opens

We publish the Smart Farming Small Grants guidelines (this document) and advertise on the GrantConnect and Community Grants Hub websites.



You complete and submit a grant application

You must read these guidelines before you submit your application for a Smart Farming Small Grants grant. Further information can be found on GrantConnect. Note: Any addenda to these guidelines will be published on GrantConnect. By registering on GrantConnect you will be automatically notified of any changes.



We assess all grant applications

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



We make grant recommendations

We provide advice to the Minister for Agriculture and Water Resources on the merits of each application.



Grant Decisions are made

The Minister 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 grant agreements have been executed with successful applicants.



We enter into an agreement with you

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



Delivery of grant

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



Evaluation of Smart Farming Small Grants

We evaluate Smart Farming Small Grants and the National Landcare Program as a whole. We base this evaluation on information you provide to us and that we collect from various sources.

1.1 Role of the Community Grants Hub

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

1.2 About the National Landcare Program

Australia's soils, water, vegetation and biodiversity underpin the productivity and sustainability of agriculture, fisheries and forestry industries. But these natural resources are under threat. Pressures on Australia's natural resources can limit the viability and productivity of food and fibre businesses. The Australian Government's National Landcare Program aims 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 industry, communities and other governments.

As the managers of around 61 per cent of the Australian landmass, farmers have an essential role in protecting and rehabilitating natural resources. Natural resources management practices that improve and protect the condition of soil, water, vegetation and biodiversity also assist farming, forestry and fishing industries to adapt to significant changes in climate, weather and markets.

The principal component of the National Landcare Program administered by the Department of Agriculture and Water Resources is Smart Farms. Smart Farms will run to 2022–23. It is made up of three elements:

- Smart Farming Partnerships—will invest \$55 million through two rounds of competitive grants into medium to large scale projects to encourage the development, trial and roll-out of innovative tools and farm practices
- Smart Farms Small Grants—is a \$55 million competitive small grants program over several rounds to support the adoption of best practices that improves the management and quality of our natural resources and increases on-farm productivity.
- Building Landcare Community and Capacity—will invest \$24 million to support the sharing of knowledge and achievements, and promote community leadership.

1.3 About Smart Farms Small Grants

Food and fibre industries want and need to reduce the pressure on Australia’s natural resources while increasing productivity and profitability. Smart Farms Small Grants (‘Small Grants’) is an open, competitive, grant opportunity to support one- to two-year projects to increase farming, forestry and fishing communities’ awareness, knowledge, skills and capacity to adopt sustainable natural resource management best practice.

A total of \$55 million is available for Smart Farms Small Grants in six rounds over six years (2017–18 to 2022–23). The first round opened for applications in October 2017. The Minister for Agriculture and Water Resources announced that he had approved 77 successful Round 1 applications in July 2018.

Small Grants fund organisations and individuals to do projects that build the ability and willingness of Australia’s farmers, fishers and foresters to adopt best practice natural resource management methods. This will deliver more sustainable, productive and profitable agriculture, fishing, aquaculture and forestry industries. Industry implementation of best practice also assists Australia to meet its obligations under international treaties including those about climate change, desertification, biological diversity and fish stocks.

Small Grants help individuals and organisations across a wide range of food and fibre businesses and across Australia to do better at managing our natural resources, to the benefit of the landscape, community and economy. We want organisations and individuals to apply for funding for projects that promote and deliver land manager adoption of best practice sustainable land management. We also want applications for projects that improve the ability of Landcare groups and others to improve land manager adoption of best practice. Projects may be delivered locally, regionally and multi-regionally. Projects will fall into one of four categories, based on their value and the outcomes they are focussed on achieving.

Smart Farms Small Grants are administered according to the *Commonwealth Grants Rules and Guidelines 2017* (CGRGs).

These guidelines describe the Smart Farms Small Grants Round 2 grant opportunity. In this second round the Australian Government (‘we’ or ‘us’) is seeking applications from eligible organisations. (‘you’).

This document sets out:

- the purpose of Smart Farms Small Grants Round 2
- eligibility and assessment criteria
- how to apply
- how grant applications are assessed
- responsibilities and expectations of the Department of Agriculture and Water Resources on grantees.

You must read this document before filling out an application.

1.4 Smart Farms Small Grants purpose and outcomes

The Australian Government's policy purpose for Smart Farms Small Grants is to support land manager practice change and to deliver more productive and profitable agriculture, fishing, aquaculture and forestry industries; protect Australia's biodiversity; protect and improve the condition of natural resources (in particular on-farm soils, water and vegetation); and assist Australia meet its international obligations.

The purpose will be achieved through local, on-ground, projects funded by grants that contribute to achieving at least one of the two outcomes described below. Projects may contribute to achieving one or both of the outcomes, however, funding of more than \$50 000 will not be available for projects that contribute to achieving only Outcome 2.

1.4.1 Outcome 1 – Doing and fostering sustainable natural resource management best practice

By 2023 Smart Farms Small Grants will have increased the number and area of Australia's farming, fisheries, aquaculture and forestry entities and other land managers that have developed, trialled or implemented best practice methods for maintaining or improving Australia's soil, water and vegetation resources and sustainable use of biodiversity.

Achieving this outcome will:

- deliver benefits to Australia's natural resource base and the broader community through better protected vegetation and biodiversity and cleaner air and water, and improved economic and social outcomes through better food and fibre industry sustainability, productivity, and profitability
- assist entities to improve their own sustainability, productivity, profitability and ability to adapt to significant changes in climate, weather and markets, while improving the capacity of food and fibre businesses to demonstrate the sustainability of their operations and the traceability of their products.

Small Grants projects may relate to any form of food and fibre production, including cropping, pasture grazing livestock, dairy, horticulture, mixed farming, forestry, farm forestry, fishing and aquaculture.

1.4.2 Outcome 2 – Capacity building for sustainable natural resource management

By 2023 Smart Farms Small Grants will have increased the number and proportion of Australia's farming, fisheries, aquaculture and forestry entities and other land managers with the awareness, knowledge and skills to sustainably manage our soil, water and vegetation resources and biodiversity. By 2023 Small Grants will have increased the capacity and capability of community Landcare groups and others who will in-turn increase land managers' awareness, knowledge and skill.

Achieving this outcome will:

- increase food and fibre business' and other land manager's awareness and understanding of the importance of best practice management of Australia's soil, water, vegetation and biodiversity to sustainability, adaptation to changing climate, weather and markets, and the quality of the environment enjoyed by the broader community
- increase food and fibre business' and other land manager's awareness, understanding and ability to adopt best practice methods of sustainably managing Australia's soil, water, vegetation and biodiversity
- increase engagement and participation by regional communities and groups, including Landcare, professional farming system groups, industry, other community groups or individuals in sustainable natural resource management activities
- increase the capacity and confidence of regional community leaders, including women, young people and Indigenous Australians, involved in food or fibre production and the management of natural resources to protect and improve Australia's natural resource base
- improve the organisational capability of community Landcare groups and others, so that they can better encourage land managers and improve land manager's awareness, understanding and ability to adopt sustainable natural resource management best practice

2. Grant amount

Grant applications for a minimum of \$5 000 or maximum of \$200 000 (GST exclusive) will be considered for projects focussed on achieving one or both of the outcomes at 1.4 above. A total of \$9.2 million is available for Smart Farms Small Grants Round 2.

All projects should be completed within two years of executing a grant agreement.

Applications may be made for projects in one of four tiers:

- Tier 1 projects are for grants of between \$5 000 and \$50 000 for Outcome 1 only, or for both Outcomes 1 and 2
- Tier 2 projects are for grants of between \$5 000 and \$50 000 for Outcome 2 only
- Tier 3 projects are for grants worth between \$50 001 and \$100 000

- Tier 4 projects are for grants worth between \$100 001 and \$200 000.

We will allocate a portion of the total funding available for Round 2 to each tier after applications close.

<i>Program outcome:</i>	<i>Grant amount:</i>		
	\$5 000–\$50 000	\$50 001–\$100 000	\$100 001–\$200 000
Outcome 1 (only)	Tier 1	Not available	Not available
Outcome 2 (only)	Tier 2	Not available	Not available
Outcomes 1 & 2 (both)	Tier 1	Tier 3	Tier 4

3. Eligibility criteria

Eligibility criteria apply to both the applicant and to the Smart Farms Small Grants project you apply for us to fund. You must provide the information we need to assess your eligibility and the eligibility of your project in your application.

We cannot consider your application if you or your project do not meet all the eligibility criteria. The decision maker can choose to waive the eligibility criteria, however they must be aware of and accept the risks.

3.1 Who is eligible to apply for a grant?

3.1.1 Only legal entities are eligible

To be eligible to apply for a grant you **must** be an individual or an organisation capable of entering into a legally binding and enforceable agreement with the Commonwealth. Eligible legal entities include the following entity types:

- Commonwealth company
- Company
- Cooperative
- Corporate Commonwealth entity
- Corporate state or territory entity
- Incorporated association
- Indigenous corporation
- Individual or natural person
- International entity
- Local government
- Non-corporate state or territory entity or statutory authority

- Partnership¹
- Sole trader
- Statutory entity
- Trustee on behalf of a trust.²

Applications from consortia are acceptable, as long as you have a lead applicant who is eligible and who will be solely accountable to the Commonwealth for the delivery of grant activities. For more information, please refer to item 6.5 below.

3.1.2 Ineligible applicants

Ineligible entities include the following entity types:

- Non-corporate Commonwealth entity or statutory authority
- Unincorporated association

3.1.3 Additional eligibility requirements for applicants

You must have the following additional eligibility requirements in place before you apply, or be willing to register prior to the execution of a grant agreement:

- have an Australian Business Number (ABN), or be willing to obtain one prior to the execution of the Grant Agreement
- be registered for the purposes of GST, or be willing to register prior to the execution of the Grant Agreement
- have an account with an Australian financial institution
- for individuals, be a permanent resident of Australia, and
- for international entities, be registered with ASIC to carry on business in Australia.

If you do not meet these additional requirements you will not be eligible.

3.2 What is an eligible Smart Farms Small Grants project?

To be eligible, your project must meet all of the following:

- the project must contribute to achieving at least one of the two outcomes described at item 1.4 above.
- projects contributing to achieving Outcome 1 must contribute to improving Australian food and fibre business productivity and profitability and must protect or improve eligible natural resources (see item 3.2.1 below)
- total grant funding sought must be between \$5 000 and \$200 000 (GST exclusive)

¹ Partnership—the individual partners will enter into an agreement with the Department. A partnership agreement or a list of all partners in the partnership may be requested.

² Trusts are not legal entities in their own right—to be eligible, only the Trustee for the Trust can apply. The applicant must provide the signed trust deed and any subsequent variations to it with the application form.

- all project activities must be planned to be completed by 30 September 2021
- all project activities must be eligible activities (see item 3.3.1 below)
- no project activities may be ineligible activities (see item 3.3.2 below)
- the project must achieve a public benefit that would not occur without the grant and that is at-least proportional to the amount of the grant, and
- the project must not provide a private benefit that is disproportionately greater than the amount of any private contribution to the project.

3.2.1 Eligible outcomes

Projects must contribute to achieving at least one of the two Smart Farms Small Grants outcomes. In your application you must identify the outcome your project will contribute to achieving. You must pick from one or both of:

- Outcome 1: Doing and fostering sustainable natural resource management best practice
 - Doing on-farm activities that directly improve eligible natural resources and improving on-farm adoption of sustainable best practice
- Outcome 2: Capacity building for sustainable natural resource management
 - Doing activities to increase land managers' awareness, knowledge and skill to sustainably manage eligible natural resources; or improve the ability of Landcare groups and others who will in-turn increase land managers' awareness, knowledge and skill

The Smart Farms Small Grants outcomes are described in more detail at item 1.4.1 and 1.4.2 above.

3.2.2 Eligible natural resources

Where your project contributes to achieving Outcome 1 (see item 1.4.1 above), your project must contribute to improving Australian food and fibre business productivity and profitability and must contribute to protecting or improving one of the following natural resources in Australia:³

- on-farm
 - soil, including marine sediments
 - water, freshwater and marine
 - vegetation
- off-farm:
 - soil, including marine sediments

³ This will ensure, in part, that you will be contributing to Australia meeting its national and international obligations, including under (but not limited to) the: *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (Cth) and Australia's Biodiversity Conservation Strategy 2010-2030, Convention on Biological Diversity, United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (including the Paris Agreement), United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification; Ramsar Convention on Wetlands, the Convention Concerning the Protection of World Cultural and Natural Heritage, the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea and the United Nations Fish Stocks Agreement.

- water, freshwater or marine
- threatened species
- threatened ecological communities listed for the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (Cth)
- Ramsar sites
- World Heritage properties
- native biodiversity (including both terrestrial and marine)
- sequestration and reduction of agricultural systems' greenhouse gas emissions
- capacity of agricultural, aquacultural, fishing or agroforestry systems to adapt to significant changes in climate

Project activities on-ground should be carried out on-farm and consider protection and improvements in on- and off-farm natural resources or reduce the off-farm impacts of food and fibre production.

In your application you must identify and describe the eligible natural resources your project will protect or improve. You must also outline the productivity and profitability improvements that will be delivered as a result of addressing these threats, and identify the affected agrifood industries.

3.3 Eligible project activities

3.3.1 What can the grant money be used for?

You must spend grant funding on project activities that mainly contribute to achieving at least one of the outcomes described at item 1.4 and on eligible grant activities as defined in the grant details in your grant agreement.

In your application you must describe each of your project activities.

For applications for projects contributing to Outcome 1, eligible project activities will undertake, demonstrate or extend sustainable agriculture practices that are already, or are emerging as, best practice for industries or regions relevant to the project but that may not yet be widely adopted. These could be practices that:

- have been recently developed through research
- have become viable through changing conditions
- have been successful in other regions or under different conditions,
- will assist with managing changing conditions
- embrace emerging technologies.

For example, suitable project activities include:

- Establishing a demonstration and monitoring site for best practice management of on-farm vegetation that includes livestock controls and that will result in sustainable agriculture outcomes.
- Demonstrating methods to monitor and manage groundcover to assist land managers to maintain levels above minimum thresholds to reduce soil and nutrient loss through wind and water erosion and improve air and/or water quality.
- Undertaking an extension program to train land managers in how to best manage surface and subsurface soil acidification to improve productivity and avoid future loss of productive land.
- Demonstrating methods to improve nutrient use efficiency where this will reduce losses into waterways while improving productivity and reducing nitrous oxide emissions.
- Conducting workshops to increase the capacity of land managers to improve soil health through better management of soil structure where it can be demonstrated that this will lead to increased productivity.
- Improving the capacity of Australian farmers to demonstrate the sustainability of their operations in response to market demands, where this is likely to result in increased adoption of sustainable practices.
- Extension of industry guidelines and codes of practice for sustainable management practice activities in the fishing and aquaculture industries
- Improved use of seasonal climate forecasting where this will assist land holders to adapt to changing local conditions and improve land management.

Successful Round 1 projects may also exemplify appropriate project activities.

For applications for projects in tier 2, that is, projects contributing to Outcome 2 only, eligible project activities include:

- Improving the capacity of a community Landcare group to operate effectively (for example, by training group members in book keeping, project management, project prioritisation or development, or in grant management or grant application writing).
- Training or mentoring staff by more experienced members of other Landcare groups or through accredited training providers
- Activities to improve collaboration and communication between Landcare groups and land managers and among Landcare groups.

3.3.2 What can't the grant money be used for?

You cannot use the grant for the following:

- business-as-usual activities for the participants or beneficiaries of the project
- activities that are reasonably considered to be the same as ones which are already underway, or activities that are so closely related that they could not be reasonably considered to be additional to those already underway or completed
- activities (including purchases of equipment or materials) that could reasonably be considered to be part of a land manager's ordinary responsibility unless you demonstrate:
 - a substantial public benefit that would not occur without the grant, and

- the private beneficiary’s contribution to the cost of the project is at least proportional to the private benefit obtained.
- research activities and trials of methods that are already well-established best practice for industries or regions relevant to the project
- grants from you to another entity
- activities that are the legal responsibility of the applicant or others, such as managing or controlling certain weeds and pests
- subsidies for commercial operations, business start-ups or where the primary activity is for commercial gain, or activities designed to raise revenue for an organisation or individual
- activities with the potential to adversely impact on a matter of national environmental significance under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (Cth)
- the introduction of plants, animals or other biological agents known to be, or that could become, environmental or agricultural weeds and pests
- subsidy of the general ongoing administration costs of an organisation such as electricity, phone and rent
- capital expenditure or construction works valued at more than 10 per cent of the grant amount sought
- overseas travel
- activities outside of Australia (including outside Australia’s maritime zone)
- activities that have commenced before execution of the grant agreement
- costs incurred in the preparation of a grant application or related documentation, and
- activities for which other Commonwealth, State, Territory or local government bodies have primary responsibility.

You cannot use the grant for project activities or costs that have been funded through Smart Farms Small Grants Round 1, another element of the National Landcare Program, or any other previous or current Australian Government programs. This includes funding obtained through the Regional Land Partnerships component of the National Landcare Program. You cannot use the grant for project activities that are eligible for funding under another Australian Government program, including any of the drought assistance measures.

4. The grant selection process

First, the Community Grants Hub will assess your application against the eligibility criteria. Only eligible applications will move to the next stage. Eligible applications will then be considered through an open competitive grant process where the Community Grants Hub will assess and score your application against the criteria set out below and against other applications. Your application will be considered on its merits, based on how well it meets the assessment criteria.

After assessment by the Community Grants Hub, Tier 4 applicants will be subject to a financial viability assessment. This can include assessment of the financial health of an entity

and establishing whether relevant persons have an adverse business history (for example current or past bankruptcy). Tier 4 applicants must pass the financial viability assessment in order to be considered by the Selection Advisory Panel.

The Selection Advisory Panel will make recommendations to the Minister of Agriculture and Water Resources about applications that are suitable to be approved. In addition to the assessment criteria the Selection Advisory Panel will consider:

- how your application compares to other applications in the same tier, and
- the primary industries represented (such as broadacre cropping, livestock production, horticulture, fishing, aquaculture and forestry) relative to the size of the industries and the extent of their natural resource use.

In making recommendations to the Minister the Selection Advisory Panel may also consider:

- distribution of projects across Australia and across the range of agro-ecological zones
- range of eligible applicant types.

The Minister will make the final decision to approve a grant.

5. The assessment criteria

You must address all of the following assessment criteria in your application. All assessment criteria are given equal weighting.

The amount of information you provide in your application should be relative to your project's size, complexity and the grant amount requested. (The application form has word limits.)

Criterion 1: Appropriateness of project objective and project activities

We will assess your application to determine how appropriate the project objective is, given the purpose and outcomes of Smart Farms Small Grants. We will also assess your application to determine how appropriate each of the project activities is to achieving your project objective. We will also consider the contribution of the activities to achieving the project objective and consider if the activities are eligible project activities (see item 3.3 above).

In providing a response to this criterion you should:

1. Describe what you want to achieve with your project. What is your project objective?
2. Explain why you want to achieve the objective.
 - Why is it important? Why is it worthwhile?
 - What will happen if you do not do your project?
3. Describe your project activities.
 - For the three most significant project activities you will do to achieve your objective, what will you do?
 - When will you do these activities?

- Who will participate in the activities? Who will deliver the activities?

Criterion 2: Effectiveness of project to achieve Small Grants program outcomes

We will assess your application to determine the effectiveness of your project to achieve the Smart Farms Small Grants outcome(s) you have identified. We will consider how, how much, and when each project activity will contribute to achieving the Smart Farms Small Grants outcomes.

In providing a response to this criterion you should describe the contribution of each project activity to achieving the Smart Farms Small Grants outcome/s.

1. Where your project will contribute to achieving Outcome 1 you must describe how, how much, and when the activity will protect or improve the condition of eligible natural resources and improve food and fibre business productivity and profitability.
2. Where your project will contribute to achieving Outcome 2 you must describe how, how much, and when, the activity will increase land managers' awareness, knowledge and skill to sustainably manage eligible natural resources or improve the capacity of groups to in-turn help land managers.

Criterion 3: Project suitability for public funding and value for money

We will assess your application to determine the extent to which the project is suitable for public funding and the value for money of your project. We will consider who will benefit from this project and the extent of the benefit likely to flow to each beneficiary. We will also consider who will contribute to the cost of the project and the extent of their contribution.

We will consider whether the public benefits to be achieved by the project are additional to those that would otherwise be achieved and exceed the amount of the grant sought. We will also consider whether any private benefits to be achieved by your project exceed any private contributions.

In providing a response to this criterion you should:

1. Explain how the grant amount requested is appropriate to the outcomes your project will achieve.
2. Describe the public benefits that will occur because of the project.
 - What will be the benefit to the community from achieving your objective?
 - What value will your project add that would not occur without the project?
3. If the project will have private benefits, describe the benefits and the beneficiaries.
 - Who will benefit from your project? What benefits will flow to each beneficiary?
 - How is the private benefit proportional to the private contribution to the cost of the project?

Criterion 4: Applicant suitability

We will assess your application to determine your suitability to deliver against the project objective, do the project activities and administer the grant. We will consider your capability and capacity to develop, implement, manage, monitor and report on the project activities you will do, on time and within budget. We will also consider your ability to manage the grant funds and to assess and manage risk.

In providing a response to this criterion you should:

1. Describe your experience with projects of comparable outcomes, scope and budget. Explain how are you capable of implementing, monitoring and reporting on your project.
2. Describe how you will engage with relevant stakeholders including, where relevant, Indigenous and culturally and linguistically diverse groups and communities in project activities.
3. Describe how will you promote project outcomes to land managers and the broader community. How will you maintain project outcomes into the future?

This criterion does not apply to applications for projects in tiers 1 and 2.

6. The grant application process

6.1 Overview of application process

You must read these grant guidelines, the 'questions and answers', the application form, and the draft grant agreement before you submit an application.

You may submit more than one application. You must submit a separate application for each project. If more than one application is submitted for the same project the latest accepted application will progress.⁴

Please complete each section of the application form and make sure you provide the information we have requested. Giving false or misleading information will exclude your application from further consideration. You are responsible for ensuring that your application is complete and accurate. You must address all of the eligibility and assessment criteria to be considered for a grant otherwise your application will not progress to assessment.

We may ask you for more information, as long as it does not change the substance of your application.

Please keep a copy of your application.

6.2 Application process timing

You must submit an application between the published opening and closing dates and times.

⁴ A project (the 'first project') is not the same as another project if it is in a different Tier than the first project.

The Community Grants Hub will not accept late applications unless an applicant has experienced exceptional circumstances that prevent the submission of the application. Broadly, exceptional circumstances are events characterised by one or more of the following:

- reasonably unforeseeable,
- beyond the applicant’s control,
- unable to be managed or resolved within the application period.

Exceptional circumstances will be considered on their merits and in accordance with probity principles.

How to lodge a late application

Applicants seeking to submit a late application will be required to submit a late application request to the Community Grants Hub Hotline via support@communitygrants.gov.au.

The request should include a detailed explanation of the circumstances that prevented the application being submitted prior to the closing time. Where appropriate, supporting evidence can be provided to verify the claim of exceptional circumstances.

Written requests to lodge a late application will only be accepted within three days after the grant opportunity has closed.

The Delegate or their appointed representative^[1] will determine whether a late application will be accepted. The decision of the delegate will be final and not be subject to a review or appeals process.

Once the outcome is determined, the Community Grants Hub will advise the applicant if their request is accepted or declined.

A grant agreement must be executed by all parties prior to the payment of the grant and commencement of project activities. The expected commencement date for the project activities is 1 July 2019 and the expected completion date is two years after execution of a grant agreement and no later than 30 September 2021. You must spend the grant by the completion date.

Table 1: Expected timing for this grant opportunity

Activity	Timeframe
Application period	Open: 13 November 2018 Close: 11:30pm, 11 January 2019
Assessment of applications	Timing will be dependent on the volume and complexity of applications received and the capacity of the Community Grants Hub and the Selection Advisory Panel

^[1] This may be the Hub delegate or nominated staff member of the client agency at the EL2 level or above.

Activity	Timeframe
Approval of outcomes of selection process	Timing will be dependent on the volume and complexity of applications received and the capacity of the Community Grants Hub and the Selection Advisory Panel
Negotiations and award of grant agreements	Anticipated by the end of June 2019
Notification to unsuccessful applicants	Anticipated by the end of June 2019
Activity commences	On execution of the grant agreement.
Activity ends	Two years after execution of the grant agreement and no later than 30 September 2021.
Smart Farms Small Grants Round 2 end date	31 December 2021

6.3 Completing the grant application

You must submit a separate application for each Small Grants project.

You must submit your grant application using the application form that is available on the GrantConnect and Community Grants Hub websites. The application form has word limits and 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. We 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, accurate and submitted by the closing date and time 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. We do not have to accept any additional information or address requests from applicants to correct applications after the closing time.

You should use active language, for example: 'We will trial best practice methods of...on..., and if the method is successful in addressing [the NRM problem], train farmers/fishers/etc in [region/industry/circumstance] to adopt the method by...'.

You should read the general feedback provided to applicants for the first round Smart Farm Small Grants before submitting your application. This feedback discusses the main strengths and areas of improvement for Round 2 applications. The feedback is available as part of the Grant Opportunity Documents or as part of the [2017 Smart Farms Small Grants](#) round documentation.

6.4 Attachments to the application

You must include a project budget in your application. The budget must be completed in the template provided. In the template, for each project activity, you must:

- Include information about the cost of the activity.
- Identify the amount and identity of each contributor to the cost of the activity. You must separately identify cash- and in-kind contributions. You must say what contributions you, your partners and other private beneficiaries are making.

The budget should be attached to the application form.

If you are applying as a Trustee on behalf of a Trust, a signed Trust Deed and any subsequent variations must also be provided.

There are instructions in the application form to help you. Only attach the documents you have been asked to include.

6.5 Applications from consortia

Some organisations may apply as a consortium to deliver grant activities. 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.

6.6 Questions during the application process

If you have any questions during the application period, please contact the Community Grants Hub on 1800 020 283 or email to support@communitygrants.gov.au. The Community Grants Hub will respond to emailed questions within five working days.

The question period will close at 11:30pm on 4 January 2019 (one week before the closing date for applications). Following this time, only questions relating to using and/or submitting the application form will be answered.

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

6.7 Further grant opportunities

In the event that there are insufficient suitable applications to meet program objectives, the Department of Agriculture and Water Resources may approach organisations directly and invite them to apply through a restricted non-competitive selection process.

7. Assessment of grant applications

7.1 Who will assess applications?

A Community Grants Hub assessment team will assess and score all eligible applications against the assessment criteria and against other applications. The assessment team will undertake training to ensure consistent assessment of all applications. You may be contacted to correct or explain any unintentional errors in your application.

A Selection Advisory Panel will then review all ranked applications to inform the final recommendations for funding. The panel will have regard to:

- the purpose and objectives of Smart Farms Small Grants
- conformance with eligibility criteria
- performance against assessment criteria
- the relative merit of an application compared to other applications
- the location of project activities and eligible natural resources targeted, range of food and fibre industries represented, and range of eligible applicant types represented.

We may seek information about you or your application. We may also consider information about you or your application that is available through the normal course of business.

The Department of Agriculture and Water Resources will make recommendations to the Minister of Agriculture and Water Resources about grants suitable to be approved.

7.2 Who will approve grants?

The Department of Agriculture and Water Resources will make recommendations to the Minister of Agriculture and Water Resources. The Minister will make the final decision to approve a grant.

The Minister's decision is final in all matters, including the:

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

The Minister must not approve funding if he reasonably considers the program funding available across financial years will not accommodate the funding offer, and/or the application does not represent value for money.

8. Notification of application outcomes

You will be advised of the outcomes of your application in writing by email, following a decision by the Minister for Agriculture and Water Resources. If you are successful, you will also be advised about any specific terms and conditions of the grant.

8.1 Feedback on your application

A feedback summary will be published on the Community Grants Hub website to provide all applicants with easy to access information about the assessment process and the main strengths and areas for improving their applications.

Individual feedback will be available on request. The process for requesting individual feedback will be included in the letter advising of the outcome of your application.

9. Successful grant applications

9.1 The grant agreement

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

The Community Grants Hub will negotiate agreements with successful applicants by 30 June 2019. If there are unreasonable delays in finalising a grant agreement, the grant offer may be withdrawn and the grant may be awarded to a different applicant.

You should not make financial commitments related to this grant until a grant agreement has been executed by the Commonwealth.

We may terminate the agreement if you fail to meet the obligations of the grant agreement.

9.2 How the grant will be paid

The grant agreement will state the maximum grant amount to be paid. Grantees will be paid in full upon the execution of a grant agreement.

We will not exceed the maximum grant amount under any circumstances. If you incur extra eligible expenditure, you must pay it yourself.

9.3 Grant agreement variations

We recognise that unexpected events may affect the progress of a project. In these circumstances, you can request a project variation, including:

- changing project milestones
- extending the timeframe for completing the project but within the period from the project start date until 30 June 2023.

Smart Farms Small Grants do not allow for an increase to the agreed amount of grant funds

If you want to propose changes to the grant agreement, you must put them in writing before the grant agreement end date. We will not consider changes after the grant agreement end date.

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

- how it affects the project outcome
- consistency with the program policy objective and any relevant policies of the department
- changes to the timing of grant payments
- availability of program funds.

10. Announcement of grants

If successful, your grant will be listed on GrantConnect no later than 21 calendar days after the date of effect as required by Section 5.3 of the CGRGs.

11. Delivery of grant activities

11.1 Your responsibilities

You must provide us with the following documents within a month of executing the grant agreement:

- A *Communications Strategy* to extend the outcomes from the project, leading to stakeholder capacity building, increasing knowledge about, and understanding of the sustainable natural resource management methods used in the project and their application by land managers. It should extend beyond the life of the project to create a project legacy (template provided)
- A *Risk Assessment and Management plan* (template provided).

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

- project activities described in your application

- progress against agreed project milestones
- cash and in-kind contributions of participants directly related to the project
- eligible expenditure of grant funds.

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, and
- participating in a grant program evaluation as specified in the grant agreement
- providing data collected during the project for incorporation into relevant national databases.

You must use the template provided for each document or report if we provide a template.

11.2 Our 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.

We 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 we may need to re-examine claims, seek further information or request an independent audit of claims and payments.

11.3 Grant payments and GST

Payments will be made as set out in the grant agreement. Payments will be GST inclusive unless GST does not apply.

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.

11.4 Evaluation

The Department of Agriculture and Water Resources will evaluate Smart Farms Small Grants projects and the program overall to measure how well the outcomes and objectives have been achieved.

The department will evaluate a range of issues, including but not limited to the performance of the program, the efficiency of implementation and effectiveness of the program meeting the outcomes.

Your performance against the grant agreement will be monitored on an on-going basis by the Funding Arrangement Manager assigned by the Department of Agriculture and Water Resources. The Funding Arrangement Manager will ensure all milestones recorded in your grant agreement are met.

Your grant agreement requires you to provide information to help with this evaluation.

11.5 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'.

11.6 Multicultural access and equity

Australia's Multicultural Access and Equity Policy obliges Australian government agencies to ensure their policies, programs and services (including those conducted by contractors and service delivery partners) are accessible to, and deliver equitable outcomes for, people from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds. For further information on the Multicultural Access and Equity Policy please refer to the Department of Home Affairs website. Grant applicants should consider how they will ensure their services will be accessible to people from CALD backgrounds. For example, service delivery partners may require cultural competency skills in order to engage with CALD clients. Services, projects, activities or events may require the use of professional translating or interpreting services in order to communicate with clients who have limited English proficiency.

12. 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 CGRGs.

Note: These guidelines may be changed from time-to-time by the Department of Agriculture and Water Resources. When this happens the revised guidelines will be published on GrantConnect and the Community Grants Hub websites.

12.1 Complaints process

Complaints about the 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 using the Department's website or by phone or mail.

Phone: 1800 634 035
Mail: Complaints
GPO Box 9820
Canberra ACT 2601

Complaints to the Ombudsman

If you do not agree with the way the Community Grants Hub 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 Community Grants Hub.

The Commonwealth Ombudsman can be contacted on:

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

12.2 Conflict of interest

Any conflicts of interest could affect the assessment of applications or the performance of the grant. There may be a conflict of interest, or perceived conflict of interest, if Department of Agriculture and Water Resources and the Community Grants Hub staff, any member of a panel, 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
- 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
- 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 Department of Agriculture and Water Resources and 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 Selection Advisory Panel 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*.

12.3 Privacy: confidentiality and protection of personal information

We treat your personal information according to the Australian Privacy Principles set out in 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:

- 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.

12.4 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
 Department of Social Services
 Government and Executive Services Branch
 GPO Box 9820
 Canberra ACT 2601

By email: foi@dss.gov.au

13. 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.
activity	The discrete tasks or sub-project endeavours or actions done to achieve the project objective. The tasks and services that the Grantee is required to undertake with the grant money. It is described in the Grant Agreement.
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.
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.
decision maker	The person who makes a decision to award a grant.
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.
grant	A grant is an arrangement for the provision of financial assistance by the Commonwealth or on behalf of the Commonwealth: <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 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 agreement	Sets out the relationship between the parties to the agreement, and specifies the details of the grant.
grant opportunity	A notice published on GrantConnect advertising the availability of Commonwealth grants.

Term	Definition
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 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
project	The set of activities being funded (at least in part) by the grant.
project objective	The end result the grantee aims to achieve from completion of the 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.

Appendix A: Community Grants Hub late applications policy

A Government agency may refuse to accept an application that is lodged after the stated closing date of a grant application process. The agency may accept a late application if the agency determines that there were exceptional circumstances beyond the applicant's control that meant that the deadline could not be met. Examples of exceptional circumstances could include, but may not be limited to:

- agency infrastructure failures
- natural disasters
- power outages that meant the applicant could not submit the application by the deadline
- death or disability of key personnel.

Any other exceptional circumstances will be considered on their merits.

How to lodge a late application

All requests for the lodgement of late applications must be made in writing to the agency that administers the grant. If the agency does not receive a written request to consider a late application, the application may be deemed ineligible.

The applicant must provide appropriate documentary evidence (as required by the Assessment Controller) to support the exceptional circumstances.

Examples of appropriate documentary evidence include Commonwealth/state/territory gazettal notices, letters/notices from a statutory authority, or a statutory declaration.

The applicant must submit the application within 5 calendar days of receiving an approval for late lodgement.

A delegate in the agency will determine whether a late application will be considered and accepted. The decision of the delegate will be final and not be subject to a review or appeals process.