



Australian Government  
Department of Agriculture,  
Water and the Environment

Community  
Grants Hub  
Improving your grant experience



# Future Drought Fund: Drought Resilient Soils and Landscapes Grants Program Grant Opportunity Guidelines

<b>Opening date:</b>	1 December 2021
<b>Closing date and time:</b>	9.00 pm AEDT on 11 January 2022
<b>Commonwealth policy entity:</b>	The Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment
<b>Administering entity</b>	Community Grants Hub
<b>Enquiries:</b>	If you have any questions, contact Community Grants Hub Phone: 1800 020 283 (option 1) Email: <a href="mailto:support@communitygrants.gov.au">support@communitygrants.gov.au</a> Questions should be sent no later than 5.00 pm AEDT on 22 December 2021
<b>Date guidelines released:</b>	1 December 2021
<b>Type of grant opportunity:</b>	Open competitive

## Contents

<b>1</b>	<b>Future Drought Fund: Drought Resilient Soils and Landscapes Grants Program processes</b>	<b>4</b>
1.1	Introduction	5
<b>2</b>	<b>About the grant program</b>	<b>5</b>
2.1	Response to COVID-19 (Coronavirus)	5
2.2	The Future Drought Fund	6
2.3	About the Future Drought Fund: Drought Resilient Soils and Landscapes grant opportunity	6
<b>3</b>	<b>Grant amount and grant period</b>	<b>10</b>
3.1	Grants available	10
3.2	Project period	10
<b>4</b>	<b>Eligibility criteria</b>	<b>11</b>
4.1	Who is eligible to apply for a grant?	11
4.2	Additional eligibility requirements	12
4.3	Who is not eligible to apply for a grant?	12
4.3.1	Unincorporated Associations	12
<b>5</b>	<b>What the grant money can be used for</b>	<b>12</b>
5.1	Eligible activities	12
5.2	Eligible locations	14
5.3	Eligible expenditure	14
5.4	What the grant money cannot be used for	15
<b>6</b>	<b>The assessment criteria</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>7</b>	<b>How to apply</b>	<b>17</b>
7.1	Attachments to the application	18
7.2	Joint (Consortia) applications	18
7.3	Timing of grant opportunity processes	19
7.4	Questions during the application process	19
<b>8</b>	<b>The grant selection process</b>	<b>19</b>
8.1	Assessment of grant applications	19
8.2	Financial viability	19
8.3	Who will assess and select applications?	20
8.4	Who will approve grants?	21
<b>9</b>	<b>Notification of application outcomes</b>	<b>21</b>
9.1	Feedback on your application	21
<b>10</b>	<b>Successful grant applications</b>	<b>21</b>
10.1	The grant agreement	21
10.2	Specific legislation, policies and industry standards	22
10.3	Multicultural Access and Equity	22

10.4	How we pay the grant .....	22
10.5	Grant payments and GST .....	23
<b>11</b>	<b>Announcement of grants .....</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>12</b>	<b>How we monitor your grant activity .....</b>	<b>23</b>
12.1	Keeping us informed .....	23
12.2	Reporting .....	24
12.3	Audited financial acquittal report.....	25
12.4	Grant agreement variations .....	25
12.5	Compliance visits .....	25
12.6	Record keeping.....	25
12.7	Evaluation .....	25
12.8	Acknowledgement.....	26
<b>13</b>	<b>Probity.....</b>	<b>26</b>
13.1	Enquiries and feedback .....	26
13.2	Conflicts of interest .....	27
13.3	Privacy .....	27
13.4	Confidential information .....	28
13.5	Freedom of information.....	28
<b>14</b>	<b>Glossary.....</b>	<b>30</b>

# 1 Future Drought Fund: Drought Resilient Soils and Landscapes Grants Program processes

## **The Future Drought Fund: Drought Resilient Soils and Landscapes Grants Program is designed to achieve Australian government objectives**

This grant opportunity contributes to the Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment's Outcome 3<sup>1</sup> and the objects of the [Future Drought Fund Act 2019](#) (the FDF Act). The Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment works with stakeholders to plan and design the grant program according to the FDF Act, the [Commonwealth Grants Rules and Guidelines 2017](#), (CGRGs), [Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013](#) and [Future Drought Fund \(Drought Resilience Funding Plan 2020 to 2024\) Determination 2020](#) (the funding plan).



## **The grant opportunity opens**

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



## **You complete and submit a grant application**

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



## **We assess all grant applications**

We assess your application against eligibility criteria and notify you if you are not eligible at this stage of the process and your application will be withdrawn.

An assessment committee of the department's staff will undertake assessment of applications against the assessment criteria and provide an initial ranking of applications to inform deliberations of the Selection Advisory Panel.

The Selection Advisory Panel will undergo further assessment of shortlisted applications, including an overall consideration of value with money and comparison to other applications.



## **We make grant recommendations**

The Selection Advisory Panel provides advice to the Minister for Agriculture and Northern Australia (the decision maker) on the merits of each application. The decision maker must seek and consider advice from the Regional Investment Corporation Board about applications recommended for funding.



## **Grant decisions are made**

The decision maker 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.



---

<sup>1</sup> Outcome 3: More sustainable, productive, internationally competitive and profitable Australian agricultural, food and fibre industries through policies and initiatives that promote better resource management practices, innovation, self-reliance and improved access to international markets.

### **We enter into a grant agreement**

We enter into a grant agreement with you if successful. The type of grant agreement is based on the nature or complexity of the grant and is 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.



### **Evaluation of the grant opportunity**

We work with you to evaluate your specific grant activity and the Future Drought Fund: Drought Resilient Soils and Landscapes Grants Program as a whole. We base this on information you provide us and that we collect from various sources.

## **1.1 Introduction**

These guidelines contain information for the Future Drought Fund: Drought Resilient Soils and Landscapes grants.

You must read these guidelines before filling out an application.

This document sets out:

- the purpose of the grant opportunity
- the eligibility and assessment criteria
- how grant applications are considered and selected
- how grantees are notified and receive grant payments
- how grantees will be monitored and evaluated
- responsibilities and expectations in relation to the opportunity.

This grant opportunity and process will be administered by the Community Grants Hub on behalf of the Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment (the department).

We have defined key terms used in these guidelines in the glossary at Section 14.

## **2 About the grant program**

The Future Drought Fund: Drought Resilient Soils and Landscapes Program (the program) will run over 2021–22 to 2023–24. Activities must be completed by 30 June 2024.

### **2.1 Response to COVID-19 (Coronavirus)**

At the time of publication, there are a range of public health and other measures in place as part of Australia's response to COVID-19.

COVID-19 represents a significant challenge both in Australia and internationally. Some members of the community may be particularly vulnerable to COVID-19. For this reason, applicants should carefully consider their projects and activities, to ensure that they can be safely delivered, including adhering to COVID-19 social distancing or other public health measures.

Successful projects will need to comply with the relevant social distancing or other public health measures in place at the time they are delivered (this includes national, state and/or local government requirements). Australian Government information and advice for limiting the spread of COVID-19 is available on the [Department of Health website](#).

## 2.2 The Future Drought Fund

The Future Drought Fund (the Fund) is a long-term investment fund that provides a sustainable source of funding to help Australian farmers and agricultural-dependent communities and businesses become more prepared for and resilient to the impacts of drought. From July 2020, \$100 million is available each year from the Fund to invest in drought resilience programs.

More information on the Future Drought Fund is available at the department's [website](#).

## 2.3 About the Future Drought Fund: Drought Resilient Soils and Landscapes grant opportunity

### Summary

We are looking for projects that address all of the following:

- targeted at improving the drought resilience of agriculture
- involve trial and demonstration of practices to improve management of natural capital in ways that directly support drought resilience
- focused on achieving and measuring impacts at scale, particularly landscape scale
- provide “case studies” to support “scaling out” of successful practices through robust monitoring, measurement and communication of project impacts
- are valued between \$500,000 and \$1 million
- delivered over April 2022 to June 2024

The objective of the program is to trial and demonstrate how scaling of particular practices (or combinations of practices) to improve management of natural capital can build drought resilience.

Through this, the program aims to create and communicate an evidence-base and case studies that contribute to scaling out the successful practices.

Projects must explicitly target *improved drought resilience*

The practices to be trialled and demonstrated must target improved drought resilience as a primary focus. That is, they must seek to support:

- continued agricultural productivity and profitability during times of drought
- faster recovery of agricultural productivity and profitability following times of drought
- the provision of common and public good ecosystem services during and following times of drought. Those services underpin or are co-benefits to agricultural productivity and profitability.

Projects can have non-drought resilience co-benefits, but drought resilience must be an explicit focus of each project.

**Drought resilience** is the ability to adapt, reorganise or transform in response to changing temperatures and increasing variability and scarcity of rainfall, for improved economic, environmental and social wellbeing (Drought Resilience Funding Plan 2020–2024)

**Public good** benefits are the benefits of the project that are not captured by a particular business, individual or other entity. Public good benefits can include contribution to economic and productivity and profitability growth, improvements to the environment that are valued by the community and government, and increased social connection and resilience in regional communities. Projects can involve private benefits, but private benefits should be more than offset by public benefits and/or co-contributions from non-government sources

**Ecosystem services** refer to the services that an ecosystem (farm, forest, etc.) provide for human wellbeing. These include provisioning (crops, meat), regulating (climate regulation, water regulation), cultural (recreation, aesthetic, spiritual values) and supporting (nutrient cycling, soil formation) services. Ecosystem services provided by natural capital enhance drought resilience on farm and may extend to general resilience across the broader landscape. A resilient landscape increases the capacity of farmers and their businesses to prepare for and recover quickly from drought.

#### Projects must be focused on the *management of natural capital*

Natural capital is the stock of natural assets, in both agricultural and broader landscapes, that include soils, water, vegetation, animals and microorganisms. These assets are the source of beneficial ecosystem services.

Managing natural capital on farms underpins agricultural productivity and profitability and contributes to building economic resilience of farmers and their businesses.

For example, increasing vegetation on farms, such as through shelterbelts or improved groundcover, provides shade and shelter for stock, pest control for crops, improved soil health and water quality and improved human wellbeing, all of which eventually contribute to improved productivity and profitability.

#### Projects must focus on demonstrating impact *at scale*

The program is focused on achieving and measuring impact *at scale*. There are lots of small examples of natural resource management practices that support drought resilience. This program is wanting to test and demonstrate such practices at a broader scale, for example, across a landscape or collection of farms, and not just within individual farms.

**A landscape** is considered to be a bioregion (or part of a bioregion) that shares common characteristics, such as landform patterns and natural resources such as soils, water, animals and plants (for example mallee, mulga, grasslands, rangelands, savannah woodlands, etc.). A landscape is also a coherent area that people relate to (for example a catchment or sub-catchment). It may include a dominant type of farming systems (e.g. grazing, broadacre cropping, irrigated cropping, horticulture, etc.), or a diverse mix of these. A landscape is therefore not necessarily confined within state or NRM regional boundaries.

Discrete small-scale projects that are done on particular locations (such as one farm, or property) are unlikely to be supported as standalone single grants. Projects that are more likely to be successful might, for example, involve:

- a collection of coordinated activities and practices at multiple locations across the landscape or region, where the targeted impact (the whole) is greater than the “sum of the parts” (such as the focus is not just on the “parts”, such as individual farms)<sup>2</sup>.
- collaboration among different people across a landscape or region
- the connection and enhancement of existing activities across a landscape or region so as to investigate and demonstrate the impact of the “sum of the parts”.

The program is focused on scaling *relatively mature practices*

The program is seeking to trial and demonstrate the ability of more mature practices to have impacts at scale. This can include commonly established practices (such as “business as usual” or BAU), that have been successful on small/individual farms (for example, early-stage research) but not scaled up to more than one location and/or context, such as where their trial and demonstration at scale is novel and has not yet been adequately measured, demonstrated and communicated.

The program is not supporting basic research and early-stage innovation. The program is not supporting generic extension, adoption or commercialisation, except where extension activities are in the context of the focus on trial and demonstration at scale.

Projects must serve as case studies to help drive broader changes through “*scaling out*”

The intended output of the program is the generation of “case studies” of successful practices that can inspire and inform others who may become interested in implementing some or all of the practices in question. This aims to support “scaling out” of the practices, and through this, widespread transformational changes in land management across Australia that support drought resilience.

Consistent with this, each project will be required to measure, record and communicate outcomes to support others to learn from the “case study” projects. This will include:

- scientifically robust evaluation of impacts, where applicable, drawing on best practice methodologies for measuring natural capital
- integrated communication and practice-change methods (written, demonstration sites, peer-to-peer, and so on.) that are targeted at other land managers who may wish to consider trialling or adopting the practices in question.
- tools and processes that enable a strategic approach across a landscape and scaling-out to achieve greater impact

The related Intellectual Property (IP) must therefore be freely available for use by the Commonwealth. This is a key focus of the program, and an important way in which projects will deliver public good benefits.

---

<sup>2</sup> In line with whole-of-system thinking, feedbacks and interactions between components of complex systems (in this case the land, people, industry, governance and so on.) lead to non-linear changes that are not necessarily the sum of the characteristics or dynamics of components, or any pair of interactions between these components. The whole system is therefore often more than the sum of its parts.

Projects are not expected to directly support “scaling out” through dissemination of project data and information. The department will support this aspect as part of communicating and leveraging the outputs of FDF investments and learning from the long-term landscape-scale impacts of these projects.

It is recognised that ecological changes may take many years and go beyond the timeframe of the grant activity. However, each project must demonstrate a trend of improvements that would indicate potentially significant long-term changes. For example, increases in soil organic matter, and the resulting drought resilience and productivity benefits, may take many years. The project should demonstrate, via measuring and communicating changes against baselines, that soil organic matter is increasing as a result of the practices being trialled.

#### Example description of a possible project

There could be a wide range of projects suitable for funding under this program. To help explain what a project might look like, the following description outlines a hypothetical project which would meet all of the requirements outlined above.

- A consortium of stakeholders, including a Drought Resilience Adoption and Innovation Hub, a farming system group, a regional NRM body, Landcare group and a number of landholders come together in a joint project.
- The project aims to test a mix of ways to manage groundcover and other natural capital at the landscape scale. These approaches, while mature and the focus of previous successful small-scale trials on individual farms, have not been demonstrated, measured and their impact communicated at the landscape scale before.
- To do this, an integrated number of practices and activities are applied on several farms across the landscape. This may include:
  - managing pasture for productivity, biodiversity and resilience to drought (by ensuring year-round cover to protect soil)
  - diversification into alternative, drought resilient livestock or crop species
  - preventing access of stock to riparian areas to allow these to regenerate
  - applying landscape rehydration or similar techniques
  - using different ways of controlling grazing pressure from non-domestic herbivores.
- These farms effectively become interlinked “parts” of a broader system (the landscape), or healthy patches that contribute to improved functioning of the broader landscape
  - the aim is to demonstrate that the trialled approaches result in the “system being bigger than the sum of its parts”
  - this includes feedbacks and catalysed impacts resulting from connectedness between participating farms and farmers (now effectively a network)
  - for example, during the first rain after drought, water and rich organic and mineral materials can be washed away from bare areas in the landscape. They then get captured by healthy patches (including on participating farms with permanent groundcover). This further improves the condition of the groundcover and has been shown to also improve the function of the broader landscape (that is not only on farms).
- Impacts will be measured both on farms and the broader landscape.
  - impacts on farms may include:
    - successful permanent groundcover
    - increased productivity and profitability
    - reduced erosion and loss of topsoil
    - change in soil characteristics (physical, chemical and biological)

- impacts across the landscape may include:
  - creation of corridors between farms that allow spread of wildlife across the landscape and resulting improvements in biodiversity (public good)
  - improvement in health and flow of rivers and other riparian areas across the landscape (as a result of managing these on farms)
  - reduction in dust storms and other impacts of erosion.
- Outcomes and learning from the project are shared in many ways:
  - farmers use their networks to communicate lessons learnt from the project, including through field days, demonstration sites, and peer-to-peer learning
  - NRM bodies and Landcare groups further disseminate outcomes of these case studies
  - potential new tools and processes for achieving landscape-scale improvements
  - through an evidence-base used to inform future work and investors
  - research organisation can publish these outcomes, leading to further exposure including in scientific journals.
- All these activities can help catalyse adoption of the trialled approach.

### **Program outcomes**

The program will contribute to drought resilience by:

- increasing the number of land managers trialling and adopting drought resilient land management practices – both directly through project activities, and by providing case studies and evidence that can support the “scaling out” of effective practices.
- strengthening collaborative networks between farmers and other land managers in support of increased adoption of drought resilient land management practices.
- demonstrating the effectiveness of particular land management practices, and combinations of practices, in improving drought resilience.

The contribution of the projects to the program’s outcomes and objectives will be evaluated in line with the measures and indicators of success set out in the Future Drought Fund’s Annual Report. An individual Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) process for the program will be in place once the program is established to monitor progress towards outcomes and objectives outlined here and in the framework.

## **3 Grant amount and grant period**

### **3.1 Grants available**

The Australian Government has announced a total of \$23 million (GST exclusive) over 3 years for the Future Drought Fund: Drought Resilient Soils and Landscapes Grants Program.

The minimum grant amount is \$500,000 (GST exclusive).

The maximum grant amount is \$1 million (GST exclusive).

Co-investment is expected, but not mandated. It will be assessed as part of considering value for money (that is, the impacts that can be achieved from the allocation of a given amount of public funds).

Eligibility and assessment criteria are described in sections 4 and 6 respectively.

### **3.2 Project period**

The grant round will run up to the end of the 2023–24 financial year. You must complete your project by 30 June 2024. Following the project period, you will be expected to provide a final report.

## 4 Eligibility criteria

Eligibility criteria apply to both the applicant and to the proposed project. You must provide the information we need to assess your eligibility and the eligibility of your proposed project in your application.

If you, or your proposed project, do not meet all the eligibility criteria, your application will not undergo merit assessment.

### 4.1 Who is eligible to apply for a grant?

To be eligible you must be an Australian-based organisation, capable of entering into a legally binding and enforceable agreement with the Commonwealth. This includes the following entity types:

- Indigenous Corporation, registered under the Corporations (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander) Act 2006 (Cth)
- Company<sup>3</sup>
- Corporate Commonwealth Entity
- Commonwealth Company
- Corporate State or Territory Entity
- Non-corporate State or Territory Statutory Authority
- Local Government<sup>4</sup>
- Cooperative
- Incorporated Association
- Statutory Entity
- Partnership<sup>5</sup>
- Trustee on behalf of a Trust<sup>6</sup>

Consortia are encouraged to apply. Each consortium must nominate a lead applicant who is solely accountable to the Commonwealth for the delivery of grant activities and is an eligible entity as per the list above<sup>7</sup>. Eligible entities can form a consortium with ineligible entities. Projects that involve collaboration among people and organisations across a landscape will be viewed favourably, as collaboration is a driver of resilience. All consortia members must comply with the National Redress legislation. Given the program's objectives and focus, a person or sole trader will not be eligible to lead but can be part of a consortium.

---

<sup>3</sup> Company is a company incorporated under the *Corporations Act 2001* (Cth)

<sup>4</sup> Local Government Entity is an entity established under state or territory local government legislation, for the purposes of governing local areas within state or territory. In the states, they are generally referred to as local councils.

<sup>5</sup> One individual partner will enter into the agreement with the department. A Partnership Agreement or a list of all individual partners of the Partnership may be requested.

<sup>6</sup> Trusts are not legal entities in their own right – to be eligible, only the Trustee for the Trust can apply by providing the signed Trust Deed and any subsequent variations with the application form. Trustees must be an eligible entity type as stated in Section 4.1

<sup>7</sup> The Australian Government recognises that some organisations may seek to form consortia in order to apply for a grant under the Program. Consortia are eligible to apply and the relevant conditions applicable to consortia are at 7.2 'Joint (Consortia) Applications'

<sup>9</sup> Australia's Rural Research and Development Corporations allow Australian government and primary producers to co-invest in research and development (R&D). There are currently 15 RDCs: 5 Commonwealth statutory bodies and 10 industry-owned companies. All RDCs manage R&D services.

Organisations can make, and/or be part of, more than one application. However, each individual application will be assessed on its own merits – there will be no collective consideration of applications.

## **4.2 Additional eligibility requirements**

You must meet the following additional eligibility requirements before you apply:

- have an Australian Business Number (ABN)
- have an account with an Australian financial institution

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

## **4.3 Who is not eligible to apply for a grant?**

The following organisations are not eligible to apply as the lead organisation for the grant:

- Non-corporate Commonwealth Statutory Authority
- Rural Research and Development Corporations<sup>9</sup>
- Non-corporate Commonwealth Entity
- Non-corporate State or Territory Entity
- Unincorporated Association
- International Entity
- Person<sup>8</sup>
- Sole Trader<sup>9</sup>

You are not eligible to apply for this grant opportunity if your organisation is listed as one of the institutions on the National Redress Scheme website that have not joined the scheme or signified their intent to join the scheme.

If your entity details match any of those listed institutions that have not joined or signified their intent to join the scheme, your application will be ineligible and will not progress to assessment. The list of institutions can be found on the National Redress Scheme website.

As stated above, ineligible organisations can be a member of a consortium with an eligible lead organisation making an application.

### **4.3.1 Unincorporated associations**

Non-legal entities such as an unincorporated association may be able to receive funding where a legal parent organisation, or a legal entity connected to the unincorporated association can enter into a legally binding agreement on its behalf.

## **5 What the grant money can be used for**

### **5.1 Eligible activities**

To be eligible your project must:

- be consistent with the parameters for the program outlines in section 2.3 above, notably:
  - targeted at improving the drought resilience of soils and landscapes

---

<sup>8</sup> A person is a natural person, an individual, a human being. Given the program's objectives and focus, individuals, including Persons, will not be eligible to lead but can be part of a consortium

<sup>9</sup> Given the program's objectives and focus, individuals, including sole traders, will not be eligible to lead but can be part of a consortium

- involve trial and demonstration of practices to improve management of natural capital
- focused on achieving and measuring impacts at landscape scale
- provide “case studies” to support “scaling out” of successful practices through robust monitoring, measurement and communication of project impacts
- involve relatively mature practices, rather than basic research and early-stage innovation.
- take place in an agricultural landscape within Australia. An agricultural landscape is a region in which agriculture is the predominant form of land use. This can include aquaculture<sup>10</sup>, agroforestry<sup>11</sup> and management of areas not under productive use where the ecosystem services of such areas support agricultural productivity and profitability. It does not include farm forestry<sup>12</sup> or commercial fisheries.

Examples of eligible practices<sup>13</sup> include:

- management of groundcover through alternative grazing and/or cropping approaches
  - practices include (but not limited to) rotational grazing, no-till cropping, pasture cropping and sustainable intensification<sup>14</sup>
  - Other cropping and grazing practices that are known to increase biomass, improve soil health, and build soil carbon specifically in low rainfall environments
- experimenting with drought-resilient livestock, pastures and crops in new bioregions (or parts of bioregions)
- experimenting with switching from pasture to drought resilient shrub forage systems
- using soil moisture management approaches at seeding on a range of soil types
- diversification into alternative livestock, pasture or crop species
- holistic, integrated pest and weed management practices, to avoid competition with pasture/crops
- innovative approaches to monitor and manage pasture biomass
- enhancement of biodiversity on farm, by planting shelterbelts and biodiversity blocks, revegetating gullies and other erosion-prone areas, or protecting remnant trees. This contributes to the general resilience of both agricultural and broader landscapes. For example, improving the resilience of diverse bird species to drought and other climatic shocks feeds back into improved resilience of the land itself.
- management of farm dams and riparian areas, both for stock water and biodiversity purposes, for example through landscape rehydration, farm dam rehabilitation, water spreading and ponding, and similar approaches.
- trialling management tools to control total grazing pressure, including by non-domestic herbivores
- monitoring, modelling and scientific assessment of the impacts of the practices being trialled and demonstrated on natural capital and drought resilience.

---

<sup>10</sup> Aquaculture is defined by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations as the farming of aquatic organisms including fish, molluscs, crustaceans and aquatic plants with some sort of intervention in the rearing process to enhance production, such as regular stocking, feeding and protection from predators (DAWE)

<sup>11</sup> use of trees and shrubs on farm to improve productivity and profitability, protect soils, improve water management, enhance biodiversity, sequester carbon and contribute to a range of other ecosystem services on and beyond farms

<sup>12</sup> Plantations for commercial production of wood

<sup>13</sup> This list is not exhaustive. All practices aiming for sustainable identified by industries are eligible as long as projects demonstrate clear links to building drought resilience.

<sup>14</sup> These practices may in turn improve soil health and trigger a cascade of ecological processes and ecosystem services that improve drought resilience and landscape function, such as water infiltration and retention, increased soil organic carbon and erosion control.

- development of communications materials that capture project data and information to support understanding and “scaling out” by others.

## **5.2 Eligible locations**

Your grant activities must take place in an agricultural landscape within Australia (see above, 5.1, on “agricultural landscape”).

## **5.3 Eligible expenditure**

You can only spend the grant on eligible expenditure you have incurred on an agreed project as defined in your grant agreement. To be eligible, expenditure must:

- be a direct cost of the project
- be incurred by you for required project activities

You must incur the project expenditure between the project start and end or completion date for it to be eligible unless stated otherwise.

Eligible expenditure items are:

- purchase (or hire or lease) of equipment and materials to support eligible project activities, for example: building materials, ICT cabling, infrastructure (for example fences), fixed furniture, landscaping
- salaries and on-costs for personnel directly employed in delivering the project activities (this should be calculated on a pro-rata basis relative to their time commitment). This excludes project management or project co-ordination costs which are covered under administrative support below
- staff training that directly supports the achievement of project outcomes (maximum 5 % GST exclusive of the grant)
- contract expenditure, the cost of any agreed project activities that you contract to others directly relating to the program objectives
- external labour and external consulting expenditure to cover the cost of contracting others to undertake core elements of the project related to construction and may include architect services, design services, project management, quantity surveying and building services
- workshops and conferences, including venue hire, catering and networking costs
- community events, including exhibitions and cultural heritage events
- building modifications where you own the modified asset and the modification is required to undertake the project
- domestic travel to and from the on-ground location limited to the reasonable cost of accommodation and transportation required to conduct the agreed activities
- administrative support and overheads additional to the normal day to day running costs of the organisation, including project management or project co-ordination (maximum 10 % GST exclusive of the grant)
- costs you incur in order to obtain planning, environmental or other regulatory approvals during the project period. However, associated fees paid to the Commonwealth, state, territory and local governments are not eligible
- financial auditing of project expenditure
- reporting on project outcomes (maximum 5 % GST exclusive of the grant)

We may update the guidelines on eligible and ineligible expenditure from time to time. If your application is successful, the version in place when you submitted your application applies to your project.

If your application is successful, we may ask you to verify project costs that you provided in your application. You may need to provide evidence such as quotes for major costs. Not all expenditure on your project may be eligible for grant funding. The decision maker makes the final decision on what is eligible expenditure.

You may elect to commence your project from the date we notify you that your application is successful. We are not responsible for any expenditure you incur until such time as a grant agreement is executed. The Commonwealth will not be liable, and should not be held out as being liable, for any activities undertaken before the grant agreement is executed.

You will be required to develop a MEL plan for the project and submit this to the department within the timeframe specified in the grant agreement (normally within 3 months of acceptance of your Activity Work Plan). You will undertake MEL activities and contract an independent evaluation of the project before its completion.

#### **5.4 What the grant money cannot be used for**

You cannot use the grant for the following activities:

- practices and ideas that are not ready for broad-scale trial and demonstration.
- basic research and early-stage innovation through this process. We are focused on demonstrating the potential impact of implementing relatively mature practices (or combinations of practices) at a landscape scale.
- extension, adoption or commercialisation, except in the context of the focus on trial and demonstration across a landscape
- 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
- large scale infrastructure. Only small-scale infrastructure that is clearly justified by public benefits and is required specifically for project activities. Generally speaking, the presumption is against funding for infrastructure, unless it is a necessary input to support on-ground land management practices that are being trialled/demonstrated.
- purchase of land or existing infrastructure
- activities that have commenced before execution of the grant agreement
- repair or replacement of existing infrastructure where there is no demonstrated significant increase in benefit to the community
- ongoing operating costs, including utilities
- ICT equipment, including software or hardware that is not an integral part of the funded project
- payment of salaries for the applicant's employees where the activity is not directly related to the project
- business case development and feasibility studies
- costs related to registered training organisation training activities
- business as usual operational expenses, including communications, accommodation, office computing facilities, printing and stationery, postage, legal and accounting fees and bank charges
- writing the application and reporting for the grant
- making donations, gifts and sponsorships
- major construction, capital expenditure (including mobile capital equipment if needed for activities) and general infrastructure costs, or earthworks (for example, to prepare for new shelterbelts, rehabilitate dams which may include fencing) valued at more than 25% GST exclusive of the grant amount sought
- administration costs (including office equipment) valued at more than 10% GST exclusive of the grant amount sought

- fees paid to the Commonwealth, state, territory and local governments to obtain planning, environmental or other regulatory approvals.
- costs incurred in the preparation of a grant application or related documentation
- subsidy of general ongoing administration of an organisation such as electricity, phone and rent
- major construction/capital works
- overseas travel, and
- activities for which other Commonwealth, state, territory or local government bodies have primary responsibility.

Activities that are funded by other government programs cannot be funded from this program. However, projects can leverage and/or incorporate activities funded from other sources where:

- it can be demonstrated that public funds are not being used for the same activity, and the funding will add additional value to already funded activities
- an objective of the project is to build connections between activities across a landscape in order to target impact that reflects the “sum of the parts” (refer to section 6 and the example project in section 2.3 for further details).

## 6 The assessment criteria

You must address all of the following assessment criteria in the application. We will assess your application based on the weighting given to each criterion detailed below.

The application form includes character limits – up to 3500 characters (approximately 525 words) per criterion. The application form will not accept characters beyond this limit. Please note spaces are included in the character limit.

### Criterion 1

Describe the project’s potential contribution to the drought resilience of Australian agriculture (25 points)

When addressing the criterion, strong applicants will outline:

- the potential for the practices to be trialled and demonstrated to result in higher agricultural productivity and profitability during and following drought, compared to conventional practices
- the potential for the practices to be translated and adopted into other regions, systems and contexts, and the extent to which the project will produce outputs to support this (for example, monitoring and communications materials)

### Criterion 2

Describe the ability of the project to deliver and demonstrate impact at scale (25 points)

When addressing the criterion, strong applicants will outline how:

- the project differs from small-scale, discrete projects, for example, through a focus on providing confidence the practice/s can work in a broader context (for example a farming system or region), or a focus on demonstrating impact at a landscape level.

### Criterion 3

Describe how your proposed activities represent value for money in the use of public funding (25 points)

When addressing the criterion, strong applicants will outline:

- the targeted impacts and benefits of the project
- the quantity and quality of co-funding

- any leveraging of related government, private and philanthropic investments
- what the public good<sup>15</sup> benefits of the project are
- what the private benefits of the project are
- where relevant, an explanation of how public benefits outweigh any private benefits

#### Criterion 4

Describe your capability to deliver the project (25 points)

When addressing the criterion, strong applicants will outline:

- the skills and expertise of project participants, including project management, scientific rigour, monitoring and evaluation, and communications
- any intended collaborations, and the associated contribution to delivery capability
- project risks, and capability to manage those risks

## 7 How to apply

Before applying, you must read and understand these guidelines, questions and answers, sample Commonwealth Standard Grant Agreement and the Commonwealth terms and conditions, (Standard Grant Agreement Supplementary Provisions and the Commonwealth Standard Grant Conditions).

These documents are found at the [GrantConnect](#) and [Community Grants Hub](#) websites. Any changes to grant documentation are published on both sites and addenda<sup>16</sup> will be published on GrantConnect. By registering on this website, you will be automatically notified of any changes. GrantConnect is the authoritative source for grants information.

You may submit more than one application form. A separate application form must be submitted for each proposed project. If more than one application is submitted for the same project proposal the latest accepted application form will progress.

To apply you must:

- complete the online application form on [GrantConnect](#) or [Community Grants Hub](#)
- provide all the information requested
- address all eligibility criteria and assessment criteria
- include all necessary attachments
- submit your application/s to the Community Grants Hub by 9.00 pm AEDT on 11 January 2022.

We will not provide application forms or accept applications for this grant opportunity by fax, email or mail. You must use the on-line application form.

---

<sup>15</sup> **Public good** benefits are the benefits of the project that are not captured by a particular business, individual or other entity. Public good benefits can include contribution to economic and productivity and profitability growth, improvements to the environment that are valued by the community and government, and increased social connection and resilience in regional communities.

The explanatory memorandum of the Future Drought Fund Act gives examples of public good as follows:

The public good may be enhanced by reducing soil erosion and sediment run-off from the property. This would conserve soils, increase soil moisture and mitigate the effects of flooding, which in turn would increase drought resilience and enhance farm productivity and profitability. It would also contribute to the public good by arresting and reversing land degradation, improving animal welfare and improving biodiversity outcomes.

<sup>16</sup>Addenda can include changes to existing grant opportunity documentation and/or publishing additional documents.

Changes include but are not limited to corrections to currently published documents, changes to close times for applications and system outage notices

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

We reserve the right at any point in the process to request additional information from you, however we are not obligated to do so.

If you need more help about the application process, submitting an application online, have any technical difficulties or find an error in your application after submission, but before the closing date and time, you should contact the Community Grants Hub immediately on 1800 020 283 (option 1) or email [support@communitygrants.gov.au](mailto:support@communitygrants.gov.au). The Community Grants Hub does not have to accept any additional information, or requests from you to correct your application after the closing time.

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

If we find an error or something missing, we may ask you for clarification or additional information.

This will not change the nature of your application. However, we can refuse to accept any additional information from you that would change your application after the closing time.

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

You will receive an automated notification acknowledging the receipt of your application.

## 7.1 Attachments to the application

All of the following documents must be attached to your application for it to be considered compliant and proceed to assessment. Templates are provided for your use with the grant opportunity documents as specified:

- proposed project budget – **mandatory template provided**
  - Include information about the cost of each of the proposed project activities and the overall project
- trust deed and any subsequent variations, if applying as a Trustee on behalf of a Trust
- a letter of support signed by each of the consortia partners (required for Joint Consortia applicants only – refer to section 7.2 for details)

If the mandatory budget template is not used your application will be considered non-compliant and will not proceed to assessment.

You must attach supporting documentation according to the instructions provided within the application form. You should only attach requested documents. We will not consider information in attachments we have not asked for.

**Please note:** There is a 2 MB limit for each attachment.

## 7.2 Joint (Consortia) applications

We encourage organisations joining together as a group to deliver a project.

In these circumstances, you must appoint a 'lead applicant'. Only the lead applicant can submit the application form and enter into a grant agreement with the Commonwealth. The lead applicant of a consortium must also be an eligible entity type as outlined in Section 4.1. The application must identify all other members of the proposed group. All members of the consortium must comply with the National Redress legislation. You must have a formal arrangement in place with all parties prior to execution of the agreement.

The maximum grant amount remains \$1 million for applications from consortia.

### 7.3 Timing of grant opportunity processes

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

#### Late applications

We will not accept late applications under any circumstances.

#### Expected timing for this grant opportunity

If you are successful, you will be expected to start your project around April 2022.

Table 1: Expected timing for this grant opportunity

Activity	Timeframe
Assessment of applications	January 2022 to February 2022
Approval of outcomes of selection process	February 2022 to March 2022
Negotiations and award of grant agreements	
Notification to unsuccessful applicants	
Earliest start date of grant activities	On execution of grant agreement, which is expected to be by 31 March 2022
Project completion date	30 June 2024
End date of grant activity	30 June 2024
Final Reporting and milestone payment	30 June 2024

### 7.4 Questions during the application process

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

The Community Grants Hub will respond to emailed questions within 5 working days. Answers to questions are posted on the GrantConnect and Community Grants Hub websites.

The question period will close at 5:00 pm AEDT on 22 December 2021. Following this time, only questions about using and/or submitting the application form will be answered.

## 8 The grant selection process

### 8.1 Assessment of grant applications

Applications will be assessed based on the eligibility and assessment criteria as set out in these Grant Opportunity Guidelines.

The Community Grants Hub will assess all applications for applicant eligibility and compliance against the requirements of the application process. Eligible applicant and compliant applications will then be considered through an open competitive grant process.

### 8.2 Financial viability

Applicants may be subject to a financial viability assessment. The financial viability assessment forms part of the risk mitigation strategy and can include:

- establishing whether relevant persons have any adverse business history (for example current or past bankruptcy)

- assessment of the financial health of an entity.

### **8.3 Who will assess and select applications?**

The department will assess the eligibility of your proposed project against these Grant Opportunity Guidelines.

The department will also undertake a preliminary assessment of each eligible and compliant application on its merit, against the selection criteria (see Section 4 and 6) and compare it to other eligible applications. The preliminary assessment will provide an initial ranking of applications to inform the deliberations of the Selection Advisory Panel.

The Selection Advisory Panel will be established by the department and may include a mix of employees of the department, experts from the sector, and/or other Commonwealth officers with relevant specialist expertise. Any potential conflicts of interest must be declared, and members will either be excluded from the process, or managed in accordance with appropriate probity guidance.

Any expert/advisor, who is not a Commonwealth Official, will be required/expected to perform their duties in accordance with the CGRGs.

The department will provide secretariat support to the Selection Advisory Panel. The department's independent probity advisor attends all Selection Advisory Panel meetings.

The Selection Advisory Panel will assess whether the application represents value with money and will make final recommendations to the decision maker by taking into account the following factors:

- the initial preliminary score against the assessment criteria
- the overall objective/s to be achieved in providing the grant
- whether the proposed project is in scope
- alignment with both the Future Drought Fund's Funding Plan and the Drought Resilient Soils and Landscapes Grants Program's objectives and outcomes
- the relative value of the grant sought
- the extent to which the evidence in the application demonstrates that it will contribute to meeting the outcomes/objectives of the Drought Resilient Soils and Landscapes Grants Program
- how the grant activities will target groups or individuals
- the risks, financial, fraud and other, that the applicant or project poses for the department
- the risks that the applicant or project poses for the Commonwealth

The Selection Advisory Panel may seek additional information about you or your application to assist in making its final recommendations. They may do this from within the Commonwealth, even if sources are not nominated by you as referees. They may also consider information about you or your application that is available through the normal course of business.

The final selection of projects may take into consideration geographical location, commodity and farming system types.

The Regional Investment Corporation (RIC) Board must also provide advice to the Minister about whether an arrangement under the *Future Drought Fund Act 2019* should be made. The RIC Board will be consulted about the eligible applications that are recommended for approval and must comply with the Drought Resilience Funding Plan. The RIC Board will be required to perform its duties in accordance with the CGRGs and has in place mechanisms to manage conflicts of interest.

## 8.4 Who will approve grants?

The Minister for Agriculture and Northern Australia (or delegate) decides which grants to approve considering the recommendations of the Selection Advisory Panel, any further information that may become known, the advice of the RIC Board and the availability of grant funds for the purposes of the grant program.

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

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

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

## 9 Notification of application outcomes

We will write to you about the outcome of your application. If you are successful, you are advised of any specific conditions attached to the grant.

If you are unsuccessful, we will give you an opportunity to discuss the outcome with us. We cannot however, review decisions about your application.

### 9.1 Feedback on your application

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

Individual feedback will be available. The process for requesting individual feedback will be included in the email advising of the outcome of your application. You will have 20 business days to request feedback after you have been notified of the outcome. We will not provide individual feedback after this timeframe.

## 10 Successful grant applications

### 10.1 The grant agreement

You must enter into a legally binding grant agreement with the Commonwealth. We will offer successful applicants a Commonwealth Standard Grant Agreement for this grant opportunity.

Each agreement has general/standard grant conditions that cannot be changed. Sample grant agreements are available on GrantConnect and Community Grants Hub websites as part of the grant documentation. We will use an Activity Work Plan to outline the specific grant requirements.

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

Your grant agreement may have specific conditions determined by the assessment process or other considerations made by the decision maker. These are identified in the agreement.

We may manage the grant agreement through our Grant Recipient Portal. Accepting the agreement through the Grant Recipient Portal is the equivalent of signing a grant agreement. After you have accepted it, we will execute the agreement. Execute means both you and the Commonwealth have entered into the grant agreement. We will notify you when this happens and a copy of the executed agreement will be available through the portal. The agreement will not become binding until it is executed.

The Commonwealth may recover grant funds if there is a breach of the grant agreement.

### **Commonwealth Standard Grant Agreement**

We will use a Commonwealth Standard grant agreement.

You will have 20 business days from the date of a written offer to sign and return this grant agreement. The grant agreement is not considered to be executed until both you and the Commonwealth have signed the agreement. During this time, we will work with you to finalise details.

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

The department will negotiate the Activity Work Plan with you following execution of the grant agreement.

## **10.2 Specific legislation, policies and industry standards**

Whilst you are required to be compliant with all relevant laws and regulations, you may be requested to demonstrate compliance with the following legislation and policies:

- [Commonwealth Grant Rules and Guidelines](#), paragraph 2.9 refers to third parties who undertake grants administration on behalf of the Australian Government
- [Future Drought Fund Act 2019](#) (the Act), successful grantee/s will be engaged to deliver the project in accordance with terms and conditions outlined in a grant agreement agreed to by the Minister, or their delegate under Section 21 of the Act.
- [Future Drought Fund \(Drought Resilience Funding Plan 2020 to 2024\) Determination 2020](#)
- [Privacy Act 1988](#)
- [Corporations Act 2001](#)
- [Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013](#)

## **10.3 Multicultural Access and Equity**

The Australian Government's Multicultural Access and Equity Policy obliges Australian Government agencies to ensure their policies, programs and services - including those provided by contractors and service delivery partners - are accessible to, and deliver equitable outcomes for, people from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds.

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 addition, 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. Based on an assessment of the client target group, costs for translating and interpreting services should be factored into grant applications (to assist with identifying these costs see the Translating and Interpreting Services costing tool in the grant opportunity documents).

## **10.4 How we pay the grant**

The grant agreement will state the:

- maximum grant amount to be paid
- proportion of eligible expenditure covered by the grant (grant percentage)
- any financial contributions you must make
- any in-kind or co-contributions you will make
- any financial contribution provided by a third party.

Any additional expenditure incurred by you above the approved amount specified in the grant agreement, or as otherwise varied by us, is your responsibility. The Commonwealth will not reimburse for such costs under any circumstances.

You are responsible for all financial and taxation implications associated with receiving funds. We will make payments according to an agreed schedule set out in the grant agreement. Payments are subject to satisfactory progress on the grant activities and paid on acceptance by the department.

The first payment will be made within 30 days of the department accepting the first milestone.

## 10.5 Grant payments and GST

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

If a government related entity is deemed successful, GST may not apply.

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

## 11 Announcement of grants

If successful, your grant will be listed on:

- the department's website as soon as practicable as required by Section 27A of the *Future Drought Fund Act 2019*
- the GrantConnect website within or no later than 21 calendar days after the execution of the grant agreement as required by Section 5.3 of the CGRGs.

## 12 How we monitor your grant activity

### 12.1 Keeping us informed

You should let us know if anything is likely to affect your project/grant activities or organisation.

We need to know of any changes to your organisation or its business activities, particularly if they affect your ability to complete your grant, carry on business and pay debts due because of these changes.

You must also inform us of any changes to your:

- name
- addresses
- nominated contact details
- bank account details.

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

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

## 12.2 Reporting

You must have systems in place to meet your data collection and reporting obligations outlined in the grant agreement.

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

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

The amount of detail you provide in your reports should be relative to the size and complexity of the grant and the grant amount.

We will monitor progress by assessing reports you submit. Occasionally we may need to re-examine claims, ask for more information or request an independent audit of claims and payments.

### **Activity Work Plan**

An Activity Work Plan will be used to outline the specific grant requirements. Following execution of agreements, successful applicants will be required to complete and submit an Activity Work Plan on a template that will be provided. The Activity Work Plan documents planned deliverables, milestones and outputs for the funded project. The Activity Work Plan also documents budget, risk management and community engagement relevant to the funded project.

Successful applicants' progress and outcomes against the Activity Work Plan will be monitored throughout the grant through regular reports.

### **Progress reports**

Progress reports must be submitted every 6 months on a template that will be provided. Report due dates will be specified in the grant agreement. Progress reports must:

- include evidence of your progress toward completion of agreed activities and outcomes
- show the total eligible expenditure incurred to date
- include evidence of expenditure
- be submitted on the template supplied and by the report due date (on a 6 monthly basis) (you can submit reports ahead of time if you have completed relevant activities).

Grant payments will only be made when the department receives and accepts satisfactory progress reports.

You must inform the Community Grants Hub of any reporting delays with us as soon as you become aware of them.

### **Ad-hoc reports**

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

### **Final report**

When you complete the project, you must submit a final report by the due date in the grant agreement and on the template provided to successful grantees.

Final reports must:

- identify if and how outcomes have been achieved
- include the agreed evidence as specified in the grant agreement and the Activity Work Plan
- identify the total eligible expenditure incurred

- be submitted on the template provided and by the due date.

### **12.3 Audited financial acquittal report**

We may ask you to provide an independently audited financial acquittal report at the end of the grant. A financial acquittal report will verify that you spent the grant in accordance with the grant agreement.

In addition to the Audited financial acquittal report, we may ask you for a financial declaration at the end of every financial year.

### **12.4 Grant agreement variations**

We recognise that unexpected events may affect your progress. In these circumstances, you can request a variation to your grant agreement. In these circumstances, you can request a variation to your grant agreement by contacting your Funding Arrangement Manager in the Community Grants Hub. You should not assume that a variation request will be successful. We will consider your request based on provisions in the grant agreement and the likely impact on achieving outcomes.

### **12.5 Compliance visits**

We may visit you during or at the completion of your grant activity to review your compliance with the grant agreement. We will provide you with reasonable notice of any compliance visit.

### **12.6 Record keeping**

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

We may contact you up to 2 years after you finish your grant for more information.

### **12.7 Evaluation**

Monitoring and evaluation for the program will be undertaken to see how well the outcomes and objectives have been achieved. We may use information from your application and reports for evaluation purposes. We may also interview you and the project participants or ask you for more information to help us understand the impact of the grants and how effective the program was in achieving its outcomes.

Relevant evaluation activities take place at 3 levels, including:

- your project, which is primarily your responsibility
- the Drought resilient Soils and Landscapes Program – Grants, to be evaluated by the department
- the Future Drought Fund, to be evaluated by the department and the Productivity Commission.

The grant agreement will set out the information, data and reporting requirements to evaluate how effective your project was in achieving its outcomes. It will also address requirements to contribute towards evaluation of the grants program, and the Fund.

We will evaluate each grant, guided by the Future Drought Fund's comprehensive MEL framework. The MEL framework identifies the anticipated intermediate and long-term outcomes from implementation of the Future Drought Fund.

You will evaluate your project in accordance with requirements established in the grant agreement and Activity Work Plan which includes developing a MEL plan for the project (included in the Activity Work Plan template). You will undertake MEL activities, and conduct an independent evaluation of the project before its completion. The department will assess information provided through MEL reporting, and will oversee the independent evaluation.

## 12.8 Acknowledgement

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

‘Future Drought Fund – an Australian Government initiative’.

If you make a public statement about the project/grant activities funded under the program, we require you to acknowledge the grant by using one of the following:

- ‘This project received funding from the Australian Government’s Future Drought Fund.’
- ‘This project is supported by [project providers name], through funding from the Australian Government’s Future Drought Fund.’

If there has been more than one funding body, the following statement should be used:

- ‘This project is supported by [project providers name], through funding from the Australian Government’s Future Drought Fund and [other funding bodies name].’

If the project participant has also provided funding, the following wording should be used:

- ‘This project is jointly funded through the Australian Government’s Future Drought Fund and the [organisation name].’

The department will provide co-branding and acknowledgement guidelines to successful applicants.

## 13 Probity

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

These guidelines may be changed by the department. When this happens, the revised guidelines are published on GrantConnect and the Community Grants Hub websites.

### 13.1 Enquiries and feedback

#### Complaints about this grant opportunity

The [department’s complaints procedures](#) apply to complaints about this grant opportunity. All complaints about this grant opportunity, including grant decisions, must be made in writing.

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

#### Complaints about the selection process

Applicants can contact the complaints service with complaints about the Community Grants Hub’s service/s or the selection process.

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

Phone: 1800 634 035

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

Mail: Complaints  
GPO Box 9820  
Canberra ACT 2601

#### Complaints to the Ombudsman

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

The Commonwealth Ombudsman can be contacted on:

Phone (Toll free): 1300 362 072

Email: [ombudsman@ombudsman.gov.au](mailto:ombudsman@ombudsman.gov.au)

Website: [www.ombudsman.gov.au](http://www.ombudsman.gov.au)

## 13.2 Conflicts of interest

Any conflicts of interest could affect the performance of the grant opportunity or program. There may be a conflict of interest, or perceived conflict of interest, if the department's staff, the Community Grants Hub staff, any member of a committee, the Regional Investment Corporation (RIC) Board, or advisor and/or you or any of your personnel has a:

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

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

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

Conflicts of interest for Australian Government staff will be handled as set out in the [Australian Public Service Code of Conduct \(Section 13\(7\)\)](#) of the [Public Service Act 1999](#). Committee members and other officials including the decision maker must also declare any conflicts of interest.

We publish our conflict of interest policy on the Community Grants Hub website.

## 13.3 Privacy

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

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

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

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

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

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

### **13.4 Confidential information**

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

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

We will keep any information in connection with the grant agreement confidential to the extent that it meets all of the 3 conditions below:

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

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

- 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.

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

### **13.5 Freedom of information**

All documents that the Australian Government has, including those about this grant opportunity, are subject to the [Freedom of Information Act 1982](#) (FOI Act).

The purpose of the FOI Act gives people the ability to get information held by the Australian Government and its organisations. Under the FOI Act, people can ask for documents the Australian Government has. People may not be able to get these documents if these documents need to protect essential public interests and private and business affairs of persons who the information relates to.

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

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

By email: [foi@dss.gov.au](mailto:foi@dss.gov.au)

## 14 Glossary

Term	Definition
accountable authority	see subsection 12(2) of the <a href="#">Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013</a>
administering entity	when an entity that is not responsible for the policy, is responsible for the administration of part or all of the grant administration processes
assessment criteria	are the specified principles or standards, against which applications will be judged. These criteria are also used to assess the merits of proposals and, in the case of a competitive grant opportunity, to determine application rankings.
commencement date	the expected start date for the grant activity
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
<i>Commonwealth Grants Rules and Guidelines (CGRGs)</i>	establish the overarching Commonwealth grants policy framework and articulate the expectations for all non-corporate Commonwealth entities in relation to grants administration. Under this overarching framework, non-corporate Commonwealth entities undertake grants administration based on the mandatory requirements and key principles of grants administration.
completion date	the expected date that the grant activity must be completed and the grant spent by
co-sponsoring entity	when two or more entities are responsible for the policy and the appropriation for outcomes associated with it
date of effect	can be the date on 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
eligibility criteria	refer to the mandatory criteria which must be met to qualify for a grant. Assessment criteria may apply in addition to eligibility criteria.
funding arrangement manager	is the officer responsible for the ongoing management of the grantee and their compliance with the grant agreement.

Term	Definition
grant	<p>for the purposes of the CGRGs, a 'grant' is an arrangement for the provision of financial assistance by the Commonwealth or on behalf of the Commonwealth:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. under which relevant money<sup>17</sup> or other <a href="#">Consolidated Revenue Fund</a> (CRF) money<sup>18</sup> is to be paid to a grantee other than the Commonwealth</li> <li>b. which is intended to help address one or more of the Australian Government's policy outcomes while assisting the grantee achieve its objectives.</li> </ol>
grant activity/activities	refers to the project/tasks/services that the grantee is required to undertake
grant agreement	sets out the relationship between the parties to the agreement, and specifies the details of the grant
grant opportunity	refers to the specific grant round or process where a Commonwealth grant is made available to potential grantees. Grant opportunities may be open or targeted, and will reflect the relevant grant selection process.
grant program	a 'program' carries its natural meaning and is intended to cover a potentially wide range of related activities aimed at achieving government policy outcomes. A grant program is a group of one or more grant opportunities under a single [entity] Portfolio Budget Statement Program.
GrantConnect	is the Australian government's whole-of-government grants information system, which centralises the publication and reporting of Commonwealth grants in accordance with the CGRGs
grantee	the individual/organisation which has been selected to receive a grant
Portfolio Budget Statement (PBS) Program	described within the entity's <a href="#">Portfolio Budget Statement</a> , PBS programs each link to a single outcome and provide transparency for funding decisions. These high-level PBS programs often comprise a number of lower level, more publicly recognised programs, some of which will be grant Programs. A PBS Program may have more than one grant Program associated with it, and each of these may have one or more grant opportunities.

<sup>17</sup> Relevant money is defined in the PGPA Act. See section 8, Dictionary.

<sup>18</sup> Other CRF money is defined in the PGPA Act. See section 105, Rules in relation to other CRF money.

Term	Definition
selection advisory panel	provides strategic oversight, advice and recommendations to the decision maker on assessed applications from the program specific, service provider composition and service location perspectives.
selection criteria	comprise eligibility criteria and assessment criteria.
selection process	the method used to select potential grantees. This process may involve comparative assessment of applications or the assessment of applications against the eligibility criteria and/or the assessment criteria.
value with money	<p>refers to 'value with relevant money' which is a judgement based on the grant proposal representing an efficient, effective, economical and ethical use of public resources and determined from a variety of considerations.</p> <p>When administering a grant opportunity, an official should consider the relevant financial and non-financial costs and benefits of each proposal including, but not limited to the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ quality of the project proposal and activities;</li> <li>▪ fit for purpose of the proposal in contributing to government objectives;</li> <li>▪ absence of a grant is likely to prevent the grantee and government's outcomes being achieved</li> <li>▪ potential grantee's relevant experience and performance history.</li> </ul>