



**Community
Grants Hub**
Improving your grant experience



Natural Heritage Trust's Climate-Smart Agriculture Program Capacity Building Grants Round 2

Feedback for Applicants

The Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (the department) has provided the following general feedback for applicants of the Natural Heritage Trust's Climate-Smart Agriculture Program Capacity Building Grants Round 2 grant opportunity.

Assessment of applications was in accordance with the procedure detailed in the Grant Opportunity Guidelines (the guidelines) and outlined in the selection process below.

Overview

The application submission period opened on 18 February 2025 and closed on 31 March 2025.

This grant opportunity supports farmers to have better access to knowledge and skills relating to best practice climate-smart sustainable agriculture approaches. It will also increase the capacity and capability of community, regional Natural Resource Management (NRM) and comparable organisations, Landcare groups, First Nations groups and organisations, and industry partnerships to assist farmers to adopt climate-smart and sustainable agriculture practices.

The grant opportunity will contribute to the following Capacity Building grant opportunity outcomes:

- **Outcome 1:** farmers and land holders have increased awareness, knowledge and skills of best practice climate-smart sustainable agriculture approaches.
- **Outcome 2:** community, Landcare groups, First Nations peoples and industry have increased capacity and capability to assist farmers and land holders to adopt climate-smart and sustainable agriculture practices.
- **Outcome 3:** the agriculture sector is utilising proven climate-smart and sustainable agriculture practices, initiatives and information sources to increase adoption at scale.

Selection Process

The Community Grants Hub (the Hub) undertook the initial screening for organisation eligibility and compliance against the requirements outlined in the guidelines. This information was provided to the department's grant opportunity delegate for final decisions on whether an application met the eligibility and compliance criteria.

The department assessed and considered eligible and compliant applications through an open competitive grant process.

The selection advisory panel (panel) established by the department, comprised of subject matter experts who assessed shortlisted applications and provided advice to inform the funding recommendations to the Financial Delegate (decision maker).

The panel's consideration of assessed applications was based on:

- meeting the compliance requirements outlined in the guidelines
- meeting the eligibility requirements outlined in the guidelines
- how well the responses met the assessment criteria, including in comparison to other applications
- the extent to which the project demonstrated value for money and is suitable for public funding, including in comparison to other applications
- how the grant activities will target groups or individuals
- the distribution of projects across Australia and across the range of agro-ecological zones
- where applicable, the extent to which the geographic location of the application matches identified priorities
- whether applications potentially proposed duplicative activities funded through other Australian Government programs or other funding sources
- identified risks and the proposed mitigation strategies, as well as any additional risks to the department and the Commonwealth.

Selection Results

There was a strong interest in the grant opportunity and applications were of a high standard. The preferred applicants demonstrated their ability to meet the grant requirements outlined in the guidelines based on the strength of their responses to the assessment criteria.

The Hub notified applicants of the outcome in writing, where their applications did not meet the requirements outlined in the guidelines.

This feedback is provided to assist grant applicants to understand what comprised a strong application and what was quality responses to the assessment criteria, noting this was outlined within the guidelines.

Criterion 1

Proposed Activities and their linkages to the Capacity Building Round 2 Outcomes (section 2.1) (weighted 25%)

Strong applications:

- described which Capacity Building Round 2 outcomes would be addressed by the project
- outlined the project activities and how they would address the outcomes identified
- described how the organisation planned to measure their project's contribution to the grant outcomes, for example through baseline data, undertaking surveys, or MERIT system data
- if the organisation's proposed activities were soil-related, described how they aligned with Australian Government soil initiatives.

Criterion 2

Project Delivery (weighted 30%)

Strong applications:

- described the skills and experience of the personnel that would be allocated to the organisation's proposed activities, including personnel of any project partners
- outlined the organisation's experience in measurable project results reporting and monitoring and evaluation (this also applied to any project partners that may have been managing reporting and monitoring and evaluation for the project)
- outlined the organisation's experience in delivering similar activities, or general capacity building activities
- outlined the organisation's structure, governance, project management and business management systems, and how this would support their proposed activities and the effective management of project delivery
- described the key risks related to the successful delivery of their proposed project and achievement of outcomes, and the proposed mitigation strategies, including key WH&S risks and their organisation's responsibilities.

Criterion 3

Meaningful partnerships (weighted 20%)

Strong applications:

- described whether the proposed project had First Nations people, groups or entities/organisations, or an NRM organisation/s (or comparable on-ground organisations) as consortium members or project partners and provided letter/s of support to confirm this
- described which activities (if any) would be led by or involve a First Nations person, group or entity/organisation, or NRM organisation/s (or comparable on-ground organisations)
- described the amount of the grant funding allocated to support these activities and/or partnerships. For example, stipends for First Nations expertise, advisory services and knowledge
- described whether the proposed activities/project involved any co-design with First Nations people, groups or entities/organisations, or NRM organisations (or comparable on-ground organisations).

Criterion 4

Value for Money (weighted 25%)

Strong applications:

- described the public benefits that would be achieved by the proposed activities, including:
 - what the benefit would be to the target stakeholders
 - what the benefit would be to the broader community
 - what benefits are additional to those that would be achieved if the project did not go ahead
 - what the long-term benefits and legacy of the project would be
- described what the private benefits would be for the applicant, for any project partners, and for any commercial businesses or individual farmers and landholders

- described any financial and/or in-kind contributions that the applicant or others they have partnered with, would make to enhance the value of their proposed activities and offset the amount of private benefit provided by project activities
- described whether the applicant has previously received funding from the Australian Government or other funding sources for the project or a similar project, and if so, outlined how the project would be coordinated with and amplify the outcomes of both projects.

Individual feedback

Individual feedback will not be provided for this grant opportunity.