



Australian Government

Community
Grants Hub
Improving your grant experience



Our Marine Parks Grants – Round 3

General feedback for applicants

Overview

The Our Marine Parks – Round 3 grant opportunity will support and empower Australia’s ocean communities and industries, building their capacity to take an active role in the management of Australian Marine Parks and protect our unique marine environment, while supporting employment opportunities and economic recovery.

The grant opportunity application period opened on 25 October 2021 and closed on 16 December 2021.

The grant opportunity received 87 applications. Following the Decision Maker’s decision, 30 applications were selected for funding, to a value of just under \$8.6 million (GST exclusive).

There was a strong interest in the program and successful applications were of a very high standard. Applications were assessed according to the procedure detailed in the Grant Opportunity Guidelines and outlined in the Selection Process below.

This feedback is provided to assist grant applicants to understand what generally comprised a strong application and the content of quality responses to the assessment criteria for this grant opportunity.

Selection Process

The Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment (the department) used an open competitive selection process to select 24 organisations to deliver 30 projects under round 3 of the Our Marine Parks Grants program.

Applications were screened for eligibility and compliance against the requirements outlined in the Grant Opportunity Guidelines. Each applicant was required to address the following selection criteria:

- Criterion 1 – Demonstrate how your project meets the following Australian Marine Park objectives (45%)
 - Criterion 2 – Demonstrate stakeholder engagement and community benefits (25%)
 - Criterion 3 – Demonstrate your capability to deliver the project on time and within budget (15%)
 - Criterion 4 – Demonstrate how your activity will achieve value for money (15%)
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Applications were assessed on merit, based on:

- how well it met the criteria
- how it compared to other applications
- the budget, project plan outline and any other required attachments
- whether it provided value with relevant money.

A Selection Advisory Panel (SAP) considered the applications and made funding recommendations to the decision maker. The SAP comprised a Chair and 6 members from the department, with expertise and knowledge of the policy, program delivery and industry. The SAP was observed by a Probity Advisor on behalf of the Community Grants Hub.

The SAP assessed which applications represented stronger value for money and endeavoured to achieve a spread of projects across the type of applicants, across the Australian Marine Parks, under the management programs and the grant round aims (outcomes):

1. improve capacity of regional and Indigenous communities to deliver outcomes which support ongoing management and health of Australian Marine Parks.
2. develop tourism operator capability to deliver environmentally and culturally appropriate, high-quality recreation and tourism experiences in or associated with Australian Marine Parks, contributing to Australia's visitor economy.
3. improve ecosystem health and understanding of marine park values and the pressures impacting on them, including, but not limited to, projects with the recreational and commercial fishing sectors and the seafood industry.

The SAP's final recommendations to the decision maker were informed by consideration of the following factors, in accordance with section 8.3 of the Grant Opportunity Guidelines:

- the initial preliminary score or alignment against the assessment criteria
- proportionality of costs to expected impact (noting projects which demonstrate in-kind support, or leverage additional funding through project partners, will be prioritised)
- the extent to which the evidence in the application demonstrates it will contribute to meeting the outcomes/objectives of the Our Marine Parks – Round 3 Grants
- wider economic and social impacts
- contribution to Australia's international obligations
- the extent to which the applicant demonstrates a commitment to Our Marine Parks – Round 3 objectives and Australian Marine Park Values
- the risks – financial, fraud, delivery and other – the applicant or project poses for the department or for the Commonwealth
- distribution of grants across type of applicant, Australian Marine Parks, and management programs (Appendix B, Grant Opportunity Guidelines)
- how the grant activities will impact on, leverage or be led by various target groups (indigenous people and regional communities)

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- legacy outcomes – consideration of ‘value add’ impacts beyond the direct grant activities (for example, building organisational capacity, new partnerships or new competencies, or trailing innovation)
 - confidence in delivery – for example, where applicants have prior history of successfully undertaking activities within Australian Marine Parks
 - innovation
 - compliance with legislation, policy, and industry standards.

The Minister for the Environment provided final approval of the successful projects including the grant funding amounts awarded.

Selection Results

24 organisations were selected to deliver the Our Marine Parks Grants – Round 3 grant opportunity.

The selected organisations provided strong responses to the selection criteria and demonstrated their ability to meet the eligibility requirements outlined in the Grant Opportunity Guidelines. Further detail about what constituted a strong response to each criterion is provided below.

Criterion 1 (45%) – Demonstrate how your project meets the following Australian Marine Park objectives

- a) the protection and conservation of biodiversity and other natural, cultural and heritage values of marine parks in the Australian Marine Park Network
- b) ecologically sustainable use and enjoyment of the natural resources within marine parks in the Australian Marine Park Network, where this is consistent with objective (a).

Including through projects which aim to:

1. improve capacity of regional and Indigenous communities to deliver outcomes that support ongoing management and health of Australian Marine Parks.
2. develop tourism operator capability to deliver environmentally and culturally appropriate, high-quality recreation and tourism experiences in or associated with Australian Marine Parks, contributing to Australia’s visitor economy.
3. improve ecosystem health and understanding of marine park values and the pressures impacting on them, including, but not limited to, projects with the recreational and commercial fishing sectors and the seafood industry.



Strength	Example
<p>Strong applicants:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">clearly articulated the “problem” or “need”clearly outlined the proposed “solution” (grant activities), and identified their expected impact, value or importanceidentified the clear, specific and achievable project outcomes which contribute to the delivery of Australian Marine Park management program (or management strategies) outcomesreferenced the relevant Australian Marine Parks management plan or plans.	<p>Strong responses demonstrated/described:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">how the project supported management of an Australian Marine Park in Commonwealth watershow the project supported the outcomes of one or more management programshow specific activities would achieve actions related to the management programsthe activities to be undertaken, project outcomes, monitoring and evaluation, in-kind contributions, and risks and dependenciesthe need for the project and/or the gaps the project will meethow the proposed project does not duplicate other activitieshow the proposed project leverages off existing knowledge (if available). <p>Weaker responses did not clearly demonstrate or did not demonstrate to a comparable degree:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">the specific deliverables of the grant activity, and/or how the grant activity would be implementedhow the project would support Australian Marine Parks and management program outcomeshow marine park users’ engagement would be facilitated by the project.



Criterion 2 (25%) – Demonstrate stakeholder engagement and community benefits

Strength	Example
<p>Strong applicants:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">identified and described the involvement of key stakeholders and industry bodies in the proposed project (including evidence of expressions of support or commitment from project partners and contributors where applicable)outlined any Indigenous and/or regional community engagement which would be achieved through the project objectives, including participation or support, and identified economic, environmental, social, and cultural benefits which will be delivered to Traditional Owners of Australian Marine Parksexplained how their organisation's activity will achieve positive outcomes for the wider community, targeted marine user groups or stakeholders which would not occur without grant funding, including jobsidentified wider economic and social benefits (including fostering new commercial opportunities in areas of high need; more efficient use of resources)for projects which involve or provide benefits for Indigenous communities (section 2.1), stronger applications included a letter of support from an entity or entities with responsibility for representing Traditional Owners of the proposed area of activity.	<p>Strong responses demonstrated/described:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">involvement of key stakeholders, including Indigenous and community groupsthe partnership arrangements with co-contributorshow stakeholder engagement would occur and how it would lead to improved activity outcomes. <p>Weaker responses did not clearly demonstrate or did not demonstrate to a comparable degree:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">high levels of co-contributions from their organisation or other partnershow key stakeholders, community and/or Indigenous groups would be involved in the project.



Criterion 3 (15%) – Demonstrate your capability to deliver the project on time and within budget

Strength	Example
<p>Strong applicants:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ used examples to demonstrate their organisation’s capacity and experience with developing and implementing similar projects▪ identified areas of risk or uncertainty relating to delivering their project (including safety, regulation or industry standards), and how those issues might be handled (proportionate risk management)▪ explained the relevant skills, experience and qualifications held by key personnel and their role in managing the project▪ outlined the governance, management, financial and administration systems which their organisation will use to support the implementation and delivery of the activity to achieve positive outcomes for all stakeholders on time and within budget.	<p>Strong responses demonstrated/described:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ the experience of the key personnel and organisation in administering grants and securing outcomes▪ how partner organisations also had the capacity to successfully deliver similar projects▪ key personnel with the appropriate skills and experience, and how those key personnel were engaged in the project deliverables▪ established governance and administrative arrangements within their organisation and with key partners. <p>Weaker responses did not clearly demonstrate or did not demonstrate to a comparable degree:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ how key personnel would be involved in managing the project and their capabilities▪ the organisational systems in place to support the delivery of the project as described in the project plan.



Criterion 4 (15%) – Demonstrate how your activity will achieve value for money

Strength	Example
<p>Strong applicants:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ outlined how all costs associated with the delivery of their organisation’s activity are price competitive▪ outlined how any large expenditure item (items over \$50,000) were justified to achieve the objectives of the project▪ demonstrated high levels of co-contributions (financial and in-kind) from your organisation and/or other parties (such as external partners or state or territory funding schemes/ grants)▪ identified opportunities for lower cost solutions (i.e. partial funding options or cost savings), where appropriate.	<p>Strong responses demonstrated/described:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ how project outcomes would be additional to existing activities▪ a budget which was value for money, realistic and market value▪ how the project would benefit the wider community▪ how the budget is proportioned in an effective way to achieve project outcomes▪ the co-contributions of partners involved in the project▪ in-kind contributions <p>Weaker responses did not clearly demonstrate or did not demonstrate to a comparable degree:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ financial or in-kind contributions from the applicant or partners▪ reasonable budgeted costs in relation to the project, including administration and capital costs.