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# Climate-Smart Agriculture Program Capacity Building Grants Round 1

## Feedback for applicants

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The Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (the department) has provided the following general feedback for applicants of the Climate-Smart Agriculture Program Capacity Building Grants Round 1 grant opportunity.

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

## Overview

The application submission period opened on 22 February 2024 and closed on 28 March 2024.

The Climate-Smart Agriculture Program will support Australia's agriculture sector to drive climate-smart, sustainable growth, and protect Australia's natural capital by funding best practice sustainable agriculture and natural resource management activities through multiple investment streams.

The intended outcomes are to drive agricultural productivity, competitiveness, and sustainability by supporting farmers and the agricultural sector to:

- adopt climate-smart practices that reduce emissions and build resilience to climate change
- understand and benefit from participation in carbon and biodiversity markets
- apply natural resource management practices that improve soil health and protect natural capital and biodiversity.

As part of the Capacity Building investment stream, this grant opportunity will support farmers to increase their awareness, knowledge and skills of best practice climate-smart sustainable agriculture approaches. It will also increase the capacity and capability of community, 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 undertook the initial screening for organisation eligibility and compliance against the requirements outlined in the Grant Opportunity 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.

The panel assessed shortlisted applications in accordance with the Grant Opportunity Guidelines.

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

- compliance with the Grant Opportunity Guidelines
- how well the application responses addressed the assessment criterion in the Grant Opportunity Guidelines
- the amount of detail and supporting evidence relative to the size, complexity and grant amount requested
- the extent of public good and value for money proposed by the application
- risks relating to the project
- the available funding envelope
- geographic and industry spread.

## Selection Results

There was a strong interest in the grant opportunity and applications were of a high standard. The requested funding and number of applications far exceeded the funding available through this grant opportunity. The preferred applicants demonstrated their ability to meet the grant requirements outlined in the Grant Opportunity Guidelines through strong responses to the assessment criterion.

The Community Grants Hub notified applicants of the outcome in writing, where their applications did not meet the requirements outlined in the Grant Opportunity Guidelines.

This feedback is provided to assist grant applicants to understand what comprised a strong application and the content of quality responses to the assessment criterion.

### **Criterion 1: Value for Money (weighted 25%)**

Outline the project activities you proposed to undertake and how these activities addressed public good and value for money.

Strong applications described:

- the activities they proposed to undertake (noting the eligible grant activities listed in section 5.1 of the Grant Opportunity Guidelines)
- how the grant amount requested was appropriate to the outcomes that the proposed activities would achieve (noting there are minimum and maximum grant amounts specified in section 3.1 of the Grant Opportunity Guidelines)
- the public benefits that would be achieved by the proposed activities:
  - which were additional to those that would otherwise be achieved
  - exceeded the amount of the grant sought.



- any financial or in-kind contributions 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
- any previous funding received from the Australian Government for this project or a similar project, and outlined how this project would be coordinated with and amplify the outcomes of both projects.

### **Criterion 2: Linkages to Grant Purpose and Outcomes (weighted 25%)**

Outline how you ensured your proposed project activities met the Capacity Building grant outcomes.

Strong applications described:

- one or more of the Capacity Building grant outcomes (outlined in section 2.1 of the Grant Opportunity Guidelines) to be achieved by their proposed activities, and how success would be measured
- where proposed activities are soil-related, how they aligned with Australian Government soil initiatives (as outlined in section 2.1 of the Grant Opportunity Guidelines)
- the types of evidence they would provide to demonstrate the implementation and effectiveness of the activities to be carried out
- their demonstrated experience in measurable output and outcome reporting, monitoring and evaluation (this could also apply to any project partners that may be managing reporting and monitoring and evaluation for their project).

### **Criterion 3: Project Delivery (weighted 30%)**

Outline your capacity, capability and resources to undertake and complete your proposed activities.

Strong applications described:

- the skills and experience of the personnel that would be allocated to their proposed activities, including personnel of any project partners
- demonstrated experience in delivering similar activities, or general capacity building activities
- their structure, governance and business management systems, detailing how this would support their proposed activities.

### **Criterion 4: First Nations Engagement (weighted 20%)**

Outline whether your proposed activities were led by, or involved meaningful engagement with, First Nations people, groups, or entities/organisations.

Strong applications described:

- whether they are a First Nations person, group, entity or organisation
- whether any of their proposed activities would be led by, or involve, a First Nations person, group, or entity/organisation
- whether their proposed activities/project was co-designed with First Nations people, groups, or entities/organisations



- the extent to which they planned to engage with First Nations people through their proposed activities/project – this may have also included outlining whether they have existing relationships or partnerships to support this engagement, and/or a First Nations engagement plan.

## Individual feedback

Individual feedback will be provided for this grant opportunity. To request individual feedback please follow the instructions as set out in section 9.1 of the Grant Opportunity Guidelines.