



Climate Smart Agriculture Program Partnerships and Innovation Grants

Feedback for applicants

The Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (the department) has provided the following general feedback for applicants of the Climate Smart Agriculture Program's Partnerships and Innovation Grants, 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 8 April 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
- drive agricultural growth, while adopting sustainable natural resource management practices that protect and conserve natural capital and biodiversity.

The Partnerships and Innovation grant opportunity will support large scale projects to be delivered across Australia by consortium arrangement. The projects will develop, trial and implement new and innovative tools that lead to practice change and reduce pressure on Australia's natural resources while increasing productive and profitable agriculture industries and systems. The investment will help accelerate and support the adoption of climate-smart and sustainable agricultural practices on-ground by funding projects that reduce greenhouse gas emissions, increase carbon sequestration and build resilience in farming systems to the impacts of climate change.

The grant opportunity will contribute to the following Partnerships and Innovation grant outcomes:

- **Outcome 1:** by 2028 Partnerships and Innovations grants will have increased the number and area of Australia's agriculture sector entities and land managers that have trialed, developed and/or implemented innovative technologies, tools or practices to improve the uptake and use of **sustainable agricultural practices leading to the protection and enhancement of our soil, water and vegetation resources**.
- **Outcome 2:** by 2028 Partnerships and Innovations grants will have increased the number and area of Australia's agriculture sector entities and land managers that have adopted practices which have or will **build resilience** to the impacts of **climate change, increase carbon sequestration** and/or **reduce emissions** in farming systems.
- **Outcome 3:** by 2028 Partnerships and Innovations grants will have supported the operationalisation and **uptake of industry sustainability frameworks and credentials** and will have increased the number of sustainable agricultural practices that meet evolving market access requirements.



Selection Process

The Community Grants Hub (the 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 was 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 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
- 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 number of applications submitted far exceeded the grant funding available. 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 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

Criterion 1: Project Delivery – Demonstrated capacity and capability of the consortium to deliver the proposal

Strong applications described and demonstrated:

- their experience in delivering projects similar in scope and scale to the proposal
- a detailed project scope, including information about how the proposal would be delivered and implemented
- their capacity to carry out the project activities and successfully achieve the project outcomes
- their capacity to develop, implement, manage, monitor and report on the project activities that would be carried out, on time and within budget
- their experience in, and plans for, administration of the grant and management of the grant funds
- the skills and experience of the personnel allocated to the proposed activities, including personnel of any project partners
- their capability to assess and manage risk.

Criterion 2

Link to Grant Purpose and Outcomes – suitability and relevance of the project objectives and activities to the Partnerships and Innovation Grants purpose and outcomes

Strong applications described:

- the project objectives, including what the applicant wants to achieve with the project
- why the project is important and worthwhile
- the activities to be undertaken, including who would participate, who would deliver the activities, and when.

Criterion 3

Innovation – the suitability and contribution of innovation in the project

Strong applications described:

- genuinely innovative practices, methods or tools the project would develop, trial or implement, and included information about:
 - how the innovation being delivered differed from standard or common practice, including how the activity would build on or complement (and not duplicate or repeat) previous activities at this location or in this industry, and how the innovation would meet an identified need.
 - the extent to which the project was underpinned by proof of concept plus robust scientific research and evidence demonstrating its usefulness, and had been informed by, and would build on, current best practice.
 - the technical feasibility of the project activities and any risks and potential unintended consequences.
- how the innovation would support the industry/ area to practice change leading to increased response to climate change. This included how they would build climate resilience and reduce greenhouse gas emissions, by maintaining or improving the condition of Australia's soil, water and vegetation resources and the sustainable use of natural resources and biodiversity. Strong applications included information about:
 - how the innovation was suitable for adoption by Australia's farming, fisheries, aquaculture or farm forestry businesses and other land managers.
 - how the applicant would encourage adoption of the innovation by agrifood industry and other land managers using effective communication and extension methods. This included the use of new and innovative extension methods.



Criterion 4

Value for Money – outline the project activities you propose to undertake and how these activities address public good and value for money

Strong applications described:

- the budget for the project and the project activities
- how the grant amount requested was proportionate to the outcomes the project would achieve and the activities carried out
- the public benefits that would occur because of the project, including:
 - what would be the benefit to the target stakeholders from achieving the objective?
 - what would be the benefit to the broader community from achieving the objective?
 - what value would the project add that would not have occurred without it?
- whether they had previously received funding from the Australian Government for this project or a similar project, and if so, outlined how this project would be coordinated with and amplify the outcomes of both projects
- the amount of financial or in-kind co-contributions the applicant, or others they had partnered with, would make to enhance the value of the proposed activities, and offset the amount of private benefit provided by project activities.

Individual feedback

Individual feedback will be available upon request. Applicants seeking individual feedback should submit requests to NHTprograms@aff.gov.au.

Requests for individual feedback will only be accepted within 30 days of receipt of the outcome of your application. Feedback will be provided within 30 days of receipt of the request.