Climate-Smart Agriculture Program Small Grants Round 1

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 Small Grants Round 1 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 30 April 2024 and closed on 4 June 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.

As part of the Small Grants investment stream, the grants will support farmers and land holders to adopt sustainable agriculture best practices, as well as facilitate and implement practice change. The grants will improve management of our natural resources and increase sustainable on-farm productivity and resilience to climate change.

Projects funded through this grant opportunity will contribute to the following Small Grants outcomes:

▪ **Outcome 1:** Farmers, land holders and community groups have increased knowledge and skills in implementing best practice, locally applicable, climate-smart, sustainable agriculture approaches, including practices that conserve natural capital and biodiversity.

▪ **Outcome 2:** There is an increase in the number of farmers, land holders and/or communities that have adopted climate-smart, sustainable agriculture practices.

The Small Grants round was identified by the department as a key mechanism to encourage First Nations engagement and participation in climate-smart, sustainable agriculture projects and initiatives funded through the Climate-Smart Agriculture Program, including incorporating Indigenous knowledge and supporting First Nations enterprises.

Selection Process

The Community Grants 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 applications and provided advice to inform the funding recommendations to the Financial Delegate.

The panel assessed shortlisted applications in accordance with the guidelines. The panel's consideration of assessed applications was based on:

- applications meeting the compliance requirements outlined in the guidelines

- how well an application scored against the assessment criteria in the guidelines

- the amount of detail and supporting evidence provided relative to the size, complexity and grant amount requested.

- the extent of public good and value for money offered through the application

- the available funding envelope

- geographic and industry spread.

Selection Results

There was a strong interest in the grant opportunity with the requested funding and number of applications exceeding the funding available through this grant opportunity. The preferred applicants demonstrated their ability to meet the requirements outlined in the guidelines through strong responses to the assessment criteria.

The Community Grants Hub notified unsuccessful applicants of the outcome of their application in writing.

This feedback is provided to assist grant applicants to understand what strong applications addressed and what was considered a high-quality response to the assessment criteria.

Criterion 1

Value for Money (weighted 30%)

Outlined the project activities they proposed to undertake and how these activities would address public good and value for money (noting section 2.5). Strong applications included details of:

- the activities the applicant proposed to undertake, with the proposed activities being eligible in accordance with section 5.1 of the guidelines

- the grant funding amount sought and how it is appropriate to the outcomes the proposed activities would achieve

- the public benefits that would be achieved through the proposed activities, including:

    o the benefits which are additional to those that would otherwise be achieved, and

    o how these benefits exceed the amount of grant funding sought

- any financial or in-kind contributions the application, or others the applicant have partnered with, would make to enhance the value of the proposed activities and the project

- whether the applicant has previously received funding from the Australian Government for this or a similar project, and if so, how this project would be coordinated with and amplify the outcomes of both projects.

Criterion 2

Linkages to Grant Purpose and Outcomes (weighted 30%)

Outlined how the proposed project activities would meet the Small Grants outcomes. Strong applications included details of:

- one or more of the Small Grants outcomes (outlined in section 2.2 of the guidelines) to be achieved by the applicant's proposed activities, and how the applicant planned to measure success. The proposed activities were eligible and clearly aligned with the grant outcomes

- if there were overlaps of proposed activities with those proposed or funded through other Australian Government initiatives (as outlined in section 2.2 of the guidelines), how these would be aligned to ensure no duplication

- the type of evidence that the applicant would use to demonstrate the implementation and effectiveness of the activities to be carried out

- the applicant's demonstrated experience in measurable output and outcome reporting, monitoring and evaluation, including the demonstrated experience of any project partners.

Criterion 3

Project Delivery (weighted 30%)

Outlined their capacity, capability, and resources to undertake and complete the applicant's proposed activities. Strong applications included details of:

- the skills and experience of the personnel that would be allocated to deliver the proposed activities, including the skills and experience of any project partners. This included personnel with skills, experience and qualifications that are applicable to the proposed project activities

- the applicant's demonstrated experience in delivering similar activities and outcomes, or general community-based activities

- the applicant's structure, governance and business management systems, detailing how this would support the applicant's proposed activities.

Criterion 4

First Nations engagement (weighted 10%)

Outlined whether the proposed activities were being led by, or involved meaningful engagement with, First Nations people, groups, or entities/organisations. Strong applications included details of:

- whether the applicant is a First Nations person, group, entity or organisation

- whether any of the applicant's proposed activities would be led by, or involve, a First Nations person, group, or entity/organisation

- whether the applicant's proposed activities/project were co-designed with First Nations people, groups, or entities/organisations

- where applicable, the extent to which the applicant plans to engage with First Nations people through the proposed activities/project, including outlining whether the applicant has existing relationships or partnerships to support this engagement.

Individual feedback

Individual feedback will be provided for this grant opportunity. Applicants seeking individual feedback should submit their request to NHTprograms@aff.gov.au. We encourage applicants to thoroughly review the feedback provided in this document. Requests for individual feedback will only be accepted within 30 days of receipt of the outcome of your application. Feedback will be provided within 60 days of receipt of the request.