



Support Plantation Establishment Round 3 (Batch 1)

Feedback for applicants

The Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (the department) has provided the following general feedback for applicants of the Support Plantation Establishment Round 3 (Batch 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 11 October and closed on 13 November 2024.

The Support Plantation Establishment Program budget provides \$73.76 million (GST exclusive) in grant funding over 4 years from 2023–24 to 2026–27. The funding supports the establishment of new long-rotation softwood and hardwood plantation forests and assists the sector to respond to the projected growth in demand for domestically sourced timber resources.

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 reviewed and considered all applications through a Demand Driven grant process.

The eligibility evaluation panel (the 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's consideration of applications was based on the Plantation Management Plan, Plantation Management Plan endorsement coversheet, indicative project budget and other required attachments.

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.

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

General feedback

This feedback is to assist grant applicants to understand for this grant opportunity what generally comprised a strong application and provides guidance in completing applications for future batch opportunities within Round 3.

Eligible entity types

To be eligible, applicants had to be one of the following entity types:

- Company
- Corporate State or Territory Entity
- Incorporated Association
- Indigenous Corporation
- Sole Trader
- Cooperative
- Partnership.

If applying as a Trustee on behalf of a Trust, the Trustee had to be an eligible entity type as listed above.

Applications from consortia were acceptable, as long as there was a lead applicant who was solely accountable to the Commonwealth for the delivery of grant activities and was an eligible entity as per the list above. Eligible organisations could form a consortium with ineligible organisations.

Applicants were required to have an Australian business number (ABN) which verified their eligible entity type.

Eligibility

Strong applications provided all required documentation as outlined in the guidelines.

This included:

- a plantation management plan which met all requirements detailed in the *Guidance for meeting the requirements of the Plantation Management Plan*, especially:
 - clear demonstration of long-term access to the land, and that the proposed plantation forest complied with relevant planning and environmental regulations.
 - detailed maps which clearly identified internal areas which would not be planted due to retained native vegetation, watercourses, and infrastructure such as roads and firebreaks.
 - outlining the planned timings of the plantation establishment activities which the grant funding was sought for and ensured all dates were after the earliest activity start date of the batch the applicants had applied to. These dates were published in the guidelines.
- time-stamped satellite imagery which demonstrated that the land the new plantation would be established on had not been used as a plantation or native forest for the last 7 years this included:

- a clear time-stamped satellite image of the site from 7 years prior to the time of application.
- a clear time-stamped satellite image of the site from as recently as possible and no later than 2 years prior to the time of application.
- a Plantation Management Plan Endorsement Coversheet, signed by a suitably qualified forestry professional which endorsed all of the project's requirements listed in the guidelines.
- if applicants sought to undertake Support Plantation Establishment and an Australian Carbon Credit Unit (ACCU) Scheme project in the same project area, provision of their ACCU Scheme project ID at the time of applying for Support Plantation Establishment grant funding.
 - this enabled their application to the Support Plantation Establishment to proceed while the associated ACCU Scheme application was assessed by the Clean Energy Regulator.

Individual feedback

Unsuccessful applicants were provided with contact details from the department to seek individual feedback, where appropriate.