



**Community  
Grants Hub**  
Improving your grant experience



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# Future Drought Fund - Resilient Landscapes

## 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 Future Drought Fund Resilient Landscapes Program 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 24 September 2024 and closed on 19 November 2024.

The Future Drought Fund (FDF) is a \$5 billion commitment that provides secure and continuous funding for programs and projects that support Australian farmers and regional communities to build their drought and climate resilience.

## 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 assessed and considered all 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 reviewed and ranked applications and provided advice to inform the funding recommendations to the Financial Delegate.

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

- review of the compliant and eligible applications
- panel members expertise to rank the top applications
- how well the responses met the assessment criteria
- whether the project demonstrated value with relevant money
- how the proposed activities compared to other applications
- consideration of the capability of the project team to deliver
- identified risks and the proposed mitigation strategies for the department and the Commonwealth

## 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 based on the strength of their responses to the assessment criteria.

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

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

## Criterion 1

### Project Description (15%)

Briefly describe the project's contribution to the drought and climate resilience of Australian agriculture.

When addressing the criterion, applicants:

- Provided a synopsis which described how the project would demonstrate the implementation and scaling of practices, technologies or approaches that manage natural resources on farm, build drought and climate resilience through improving landscape function and ecosystem services and support activities that identify tipping points, or thresholds, that impact natural capital.
- Highlighted the innovative nature of their proposal and its use of contemporary and/or Indigenous best management practices.
- Described the extent to which the project would contribute to the Resilient Landscapes Program outcomes, and outlined the project's alignment to, not duplication of, other drought and climate resilience activities, and contribution to improved economic, environmental and social resilience prior to, during and following drought.

### Strong applications:

- Strong applications provided a well-developed project description which clearly outlined the objectives, scope and feasibility of the project, and its alignment with the Program's priorities of transformational change and impact at landscape scale. Strong applications demonstrated a multidimensional approach with a mature plan for implementation.
- Strong applications emphasised farmer-centred learning, leveraging a strong network of consortium members to ensure effective local advice and established relationships, effectively combining problem-solving with enhanced expertise.

## Criterion 2

### Project Design (30%)

Describe the elements of your project which will deliver resilient landscapes and the objectives of the Future Drought Fund.

When addressing the criterion, applicants:

- Described the methodology, design and conduct of the project, including theory of change and MEL Plan. Ensured planned MEL activities are efficient, robust and in alignment with fund level monitoring, evaluation and learning expectations and be designed to deliver efficient and effective outcomes for stakeholders.
- Outlined the practices, technologies or approaches to be tested in comparison to other practices, technologies or approaches including evidence to justify claims of potential impact.
- Outlined their data management strategy including data standards, data management, stewardship arrangements, and interoperability of the data to ensure data and knowledge obtained from activities under the FDF is shared, respected, and freely made available in the public domain. This included the data collected as part of MEL indicators monitoring.
- Described their target audiences, how they would engage with them, disseminate the results and promote their project to support transformational change, foster collaboration to improve integration, coordination, communication, planning and implementation of drought resilience activities, and avoid unnecessary duplication across multiple scales including farm, community, regional and national levels.

#### **Strong applications:**

- Strong applications incorporated a range of interconnected activities that addressed the primary project goals. This approach enhanced the robustness of projects and demonstrated a comprehensive strategy.
- Strong applications provided an overall logical design, with detailed justification for each component.

## Criterion 3

### Value for Money (15%)

Describe how your proposed activities represent value for money in the use of public funding.

When addressing the criterion applicants provided a budget, using the mandatory template, and demonstrated:

- How their project proposal is value for money including the public and private good benefits.
- The quality and quantity of co-contributions, including cash and in-kind contributions.
- Any leveraging of related government, private and philanthropic investments.
- The anticipated scale of impacts and benefits of the project relative to the funding sought.

#### **Strong applications:**

- Strong applications were characterised by well-justified funding requests relative to their substantial in-kind support, a clear articulation of both public and private benefits, and a

collaborative approach that harnessed local expertise and stakeholder engagement for lasting impact.

- Strong applications indicated a high level of commitment from consortium partners which suggested effective cost-sharing, enhancing the overall feasibility of the projects.

## Criterion 4

### Project Management (40%)

Describe the capacity, capability and resources, including personnel and facilities, that will enable you to deliver the project and its MEL activities.

When addressing the criterion applicants provided a Theory of Change, using the mandatory template, and demonstrated, using examples of prior experience where applicable:

- The knowledge, skills and experience of all project participants, including consortium partners. Included access to facilities, equipment, technology, demonstration sites and other resources.
- Their ability to manage and deliver long-term projects on time, within budget including experience in project management, governance, administration, budgeting, MEL, risk management and communications.
- Their understanding and ability to apply program logic and Theory of Change in project design and implementation, including the monitoring of outcomes achieved through systematic application of MEL.
- Described any intended collaborations to delivery capability. Successful projects would involve a range of partners, which may include farmers, farming system groups and natural resource management organisations. Where appropriate, this may involve meaningful engagement with First Nations people, groups or entities/organisations.

#### Strong applications:

- Strong applications demonstrated robust capabilities and proven experience in their respective fields, indicating the project's feasibility. Strong applicants displayed the ability to effectively manage projects within timelines and employ best governance practices, supported by a solid monitoring, evaluation, and learning (MEL) approach that considered risks.
- Strong applications included diverse partnerships which encompassed various social and economic groups, including First Nations peoples, facilitating opportunities for collaboration, engagement and project impact.

## Individual feedback

To request individual feedback please follow the instructions as set out in the Grant Opportunity Guidelines section 9.1.

Individual feedback will be available upon request. Applicants seeking individual feedback should submit requests to [resilient.landscapes@aff.gov.au](mailto:resilient.landscapes@aff.gov.au). Requests for individual feedback will only be accepted within 20 days of your receipt of the outcome of your application. Feedback will be provided within 40 days of receipt of the request.