



Community Stewardship Grants Guide: Information for a better application

Overview

The Community Stewardship Grants are an initiative of the Western Australian Government managed through the State NRM Program at the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development (DPIRD).

This is a guide for applicants on some of the ways to improve an application for this year's round of the Community Stewardship Grants and provides additional detail to supplement the Community Stewardship Grants guidelines. Applications must be submitted using the online application form in SmartyGrants available at [Home Page - Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development, Western Australia \(smartygrants.com.au\)](https://www.smartygrants.com.au).

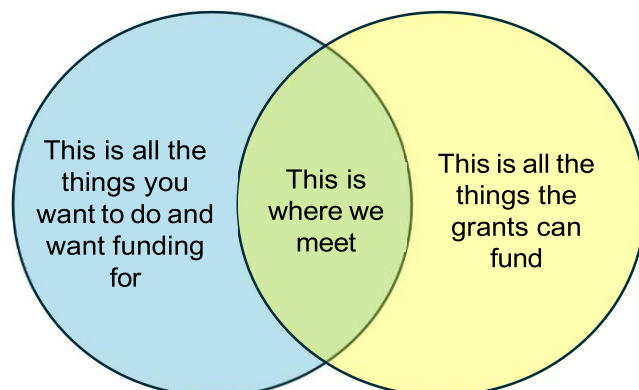
All queries regarding the Community Stewardship Grants should be directed to the State NRM Program Team on +618 6551 4428 during business hours, or via email to snrmo@dpiird.wa.gov.au.

Plan your application

Your organisation will want to do many different projects and no one funding body will be able to fund everything. You should have a reasonable idea of the projects you wish to undertake so when funding opportunities come your way, you can target your applications to that funding.

The Community Stewardship Grants are no exception. They will not be able to fund everything you wish to do.

It is worth taking the time to see where the program outcomes intersect with the wants of your organisation. Apply for projects that occur in that intersection.



Write your application

The application is where you tell your story:

- Answer the questions being asked
- Provide context and tell the project's story
- Be clear and concise
- Dot points and lists help to manage word limits
- Don't be flashy or use complicated language – say what you mean to say
- Don't assume knowledge
- Don't use jargon without explaining it
- Include the evidence that supports your application.



The large Assessment Panel consists of 6 people that are appointed by the three NRM Ministers after the applications have closed. Do not assume that they should know anything about you, your group, your past achievements, or your landscape.

Do not assume that because you have had previous funding through the State NRM Program that the panel will know everything about your new application or continuing project. State NRM Office staff may be familiar with your projects but the Assessment Panel are mostly external to the project and require this information in your application.

You will need to write your applications in such a way that these six people, who know nothing about your history or your projects, can understand what it is that you want to do and why. You need to supply all the information that you want the Assessment Panel to consider and give context for your projects.

Assessment criteria

The merit of each application is assessed against the following criteria:

- clear NRM outcomes that align with the Community Stewardship Grant Outcomes (30%)
- evidence of local community involvement in each phase of the project lifecycle at design, planning and implementation, including engagement with Aboriginal people (30%)
- a reasonable and well justified funding request that demonstrates value for money (30%)
- sound planning and demonstrated ability to manage the project (10%).

Applicants need to **demonstrate** each of the above criteria through the responses within the application form, as well as through the evidence attached to the application.

Justification is where you explain to the panel why you need to do things in a particular way, at a particular cost. Make sure there is enough detail in the application form, the workplan and attachments for the panel to understand what you need to do, how you need to do it, who you need to do it, and how much that will cost.

If any of your funding requests are outside guidelines limitations then you will need to provide extra detail to justify these.

Limitations of activities

There are limitations to funding that can be requested for specific activities, or limitations to activities. Projects which have activities which fall outside these limitations will need to provide additional information and justification, including quotes where necessary.

Project coordination expenses

Project coordination or other grant-funded project roles are subject to the following limitations:

- The request for any grant funded base salary must not exceed \$101,000 per annum pro rata (excluding GST and on-costs) in the first year and must not exceed an annual increase of 3% per annum in future years.
- Salary on-costs (such as superannuation, leave expenses, payroll tax and workers compensation insurance) must not exceed 25% of the grant funded salary expenses (excluding GST).
- The total of all grant funded positions must not exceed 1.0 FTE (full time equivalent) in any calendar or financial year of the project.

General materials and expenses

- Applicants may request up to a maximum of 15% of the project's proposed grant funded budget for all other activities for administration and operational expenses.
- Funding for fencing materials is limited to a maximum of \$6,000 per kilometre.
- Boundary fencing is ineligible for funding.
- Project specific travel is capped at 88c per kilometre.
- A maximum of \$6,000 per ha can be requested for weed control.
- A maximum of \$6,000 per ha can be requested for revegetation.
- Seedlings must be purchased for no more than \$4 per stem.
- A minimum of 800 stems per hectare must be planted.
- Local provenance species are preferred where possible.
- Watering is considered an in-kind contribution.
- Funds cannot be requested to pay landholders for site preparation or planting.



Supporting information and attachments

You will need to attach all evidence to demonstrate why your application should be considered for funding. More competitive projects have better evidence and justification.

Essential attachments

Applicants should pay close attention to attachments that need to be provided to support the application and provide justification for grant funding.

Applications **must** include:

- Signed **Sponsorship Agreement**: this is required if the application is made under a sponsorship arrangement
- **Maps** of on-ground activities and landscape: which show the works planned and the landscape scale context, if relevant
- The **workplan**: this is an essential component of the application and must be completed in Microsoft Excel format using the 2026 workplan template; the workplan is a combined project plan and budget
- **Letters of support/commitment**: a letter or similar from each organisation that will co-contribute cash, other resources, or effort to the project, including volunteer support
- **Landholder permissions**: written confirmation that land access permission from all relevant land-owners/managers has been obtained at the time of applying.

Recommended attachments

Value for money is one of the key assessment criteria of the grants. Applicants are strongly encouraged to include the following attachments:

- indicative quotes for any services provided by a third party, such as contractors, consultants or presenters
- indicative quotes for purchase of assets
- additional written information which can provide further context or detail to support the application, particularly if the project includes activities which are outside guideline limits.

Other attachments recommended to support the application include:

- strategies, plans, maps, diagrams, or other evidence of the strategic importance of the project
- copies of any documents that are referenced in the application.

Please ensure attachments are labelled meaningfully so it is clear what the file contains.

Completing the form

Applicants should pay close attention to information that needs to be completed within the application form to ensure that it can be assessed appropriately.

Ensure that you are answering the question being asked.

Conflict of interest

A conflict of interest is a situation arising from a conflict between the performance of duties or activities as a member of an applicant organisation, sponsored organisation, or contractor, and an individual's private or personal interests, including financial gain. These interests can also be indirect such as those involving family, friends, or associates.

Applicants must declare and describe any conflict of interest (actual, perceived or potential) in the appropriate section of the application form.

Declarations help to ensure conflict of interest can be managed openly and transparently. They do not rule out a project from consideration.

If you are unsure whether you have a conflict of interest, please contact the State NRM Program team to discuss your situation.



Sponsorship agreement

The Sponsor organisation applies for and receives the grant funding (if successful) on behalf of the unincorporated group which undertakes the project activities. The nature of the arrangement is detailed in a Sponsorship Agreement, and details must also be reflected in the application and workplan.

Applicants must use the **Sponsorship Agreement** template which can be downloaded from the grant round information page, 'BEFORE YOU BEGIN', accessed via [Home Page - Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development, Western Australia \(smartygrants.com.au\)](#) by selecting the relevant grant round.

If a Sponsor organisation intends to provide consulting or contracting services to the project, such as project coordination, then this should be noted in the 'conflict of interest' section of the application. In the 'contractors and consultants' section, Sponsors must justify why they should be considered the preferred provider of that service.

Continuing projects

Applications may be made for projects that are a continuation of, or an addition to, previously funded State NRM Program grants. All previous projects must be identified in the relevant section of the form.

Evidence of the area, scope, and success of previous works will be required to justify why a continuation of funding should be considered.

You will be expected to include additional mapping to show the extent of past works, information regarding the success of previous projects, and detail on how this application will add value, improve outcomes, and build on past success.

Devolved grants

In a devolved grant process, the successful applicant organisation receives the grant funding. The applicant runs their own expression of interest or grant application and assessment process prior to awarding funds or grant-funded materials to selected applicants, private landholders or other organisations to deliver the proposed works.

Applications for devolved grants (or similar activities) **must** include the following details:

- the purpose of the devolved grants;
- why devolved grants are the most suitable approach;
- the criteria that will be (or has been) used to guide the selection and approval process, such as a draft version of the guidelines and assessment criteria and
- how the applicant will ensure the public vs private benefit is balanced, such as requiring a 50:50 co-contribution from participating landholders.

Devolved grants: expectations of private landholders undertaking revegetation or fencing

Landholders that receive funding from the State NRM Program through a devolved grant must be made aware of, and are required to adhere to, the following conditions:

- Landholders are responsible for their own site preparation
- Revegetation must be protected with stock exclusion fencing
- Stock must be excluded from revegetation areas for a minimum of 5 years after planting
- Landholders are responsible for the upkeep of fencing for a minimum of 10 years after installation.



Landholders will be required to sign a **Landholder Agreement** with the applicant organisation prior to the release of any funds.

More information can be found in [Landholder permissions and agreements](#).

Project location

Applicants are required to provide detail on the location/s of their proposed project activities. The online application form requires applicants to enter the address of the project's primary location; this will automatically populate the map.

If a street address is not available, choose a nearby street then relocate the pin on the map to the correct location. The primary location could be:

- the place where the majority of project activities will take place, or
- a central point if the project activities are dispersed across a large area.

Mapping

If the project involves on-ground activities, applicants are required to upload and submit a map for each project site. Mapping can be very helpful in telling the project's story.

Each site map should clearly identify:

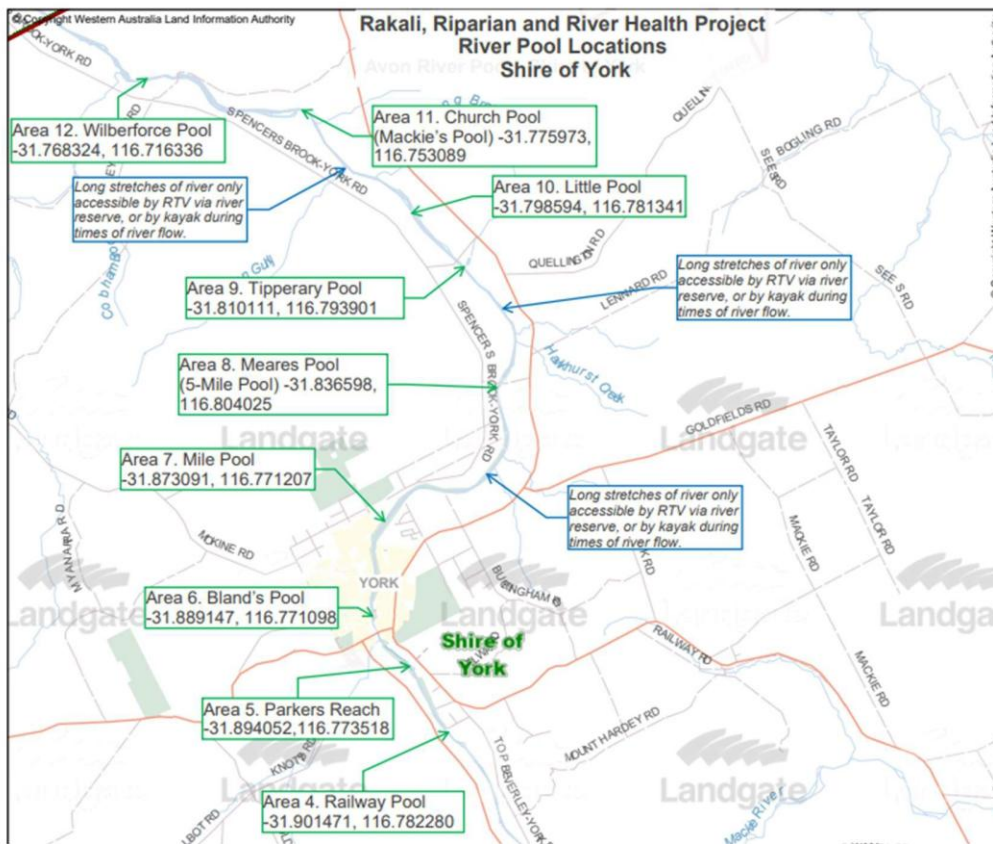
- the type of activity or activities that will be undertaken (on ground works)
- the extent or area of each activity, for example:

- length of fencing
- area of revegetation or weed control
- area of vegetation survey
- location of camera traps or feral animal traps.

If there are multiple sites or properties, an overarching map that locates these sites in a regional landscape context is also required. The landscape map should show each site and its relative size, as well as showing landscape features, such as waterways, national parks or reserves, or other significant landholders.

Maps must be provided in either Word, pdf, jpg or png format; shape files will not be accepted. Label the map to identify the project activities and site/s – it doesn't have to be fancy; it just has to be clear. Highlighter and neat printing works just as well as text boxes.

Examples of good mapping:



Landscape map showing all sites covered by the project.



Site map with area outlined and detail of the works to be undertaken.

Stakeholder engagement

One of the key assessment criteria is evidence of local community involvement in each phase of the project lifecycle at design, planning and implementation. Including evidence of stakeholder engagement shows the Assessment Panel that the project is well planned and supported by the community.

Stakeholders include people or groups in the community that may influence or be affected by your project. Stakeholders may be able to help you design a project which has better outcomes and more support. They can include:

- Aboriginal people
- landholders and land managers in the project area
- local government authorities

- neighbouring groups and landholders
- Recognised Biosecurity Groups
- regional NRM groups
- relevant Western Australian government departments
- other organisations conducting similar or complementary work.

The Community Stewardship Grants encourage projects which address issues at a landscape scale, and it is important that consultation occurs with other groups or landowners in the area who may have an interest in the proposed activities.



Applicants should keep a record of consultations, including who, when and where the contact occurred and the result of the discussion.

Letters of support

Applicants can demonstrate community support for the project through letters or emails which show that the community is aware of the project, wants the project to happen, is willing to be involved in the project, and willing to contribute to or participate in the project.

A letter of commitment from an organisation or individual confirms the value of the project to the Assessment Panel through a commitment to offer a co-contribution to the project should the grant application be successful.

Consultation with Aboriginal people

DPIRD respects the Traditional Knowledge of Traditional Custodians of the land and sea; the intangible and tangible aspects of the whole body of cultural practices, resources and knowledge systems developed, nurtured, and refined by Indigenous people and passed on by them from generation to generation as part of expressing their cultural identity.

The State NRM Program acknowledges that Traditional Owner knowledge, expertise and time is valuable.

Western Australia's vast Aboriginal cultural heritage is protected by the *Aboriginal Heritage Act 1972*. Native Title is governed by the *Native Title Act 1993 (Cth)*. Any land that is a site of an approved or pending Native Title Claim, is bound by that law.

Applicants are no longer required to contact representatives of the Aboriginal community relevant to the Country on which they are working as part of the application process unless there is a requirement under Native Title or Aboriginal Heritage legislation to do so; or if the proposed project includes capturing or sharing Traditional Ecological Knowledge.

Applicants **are** still required to include Aboriginal engagement and consultation within project implementation, and funding may be requested to cover relevant costs for engagement, consultation and participation.

Engagement is based on the principles of **free, prior, and informed consent**. The outcome of free, prior and informed consent is providing the right and opportunity for Aboriginal organisations to say 'yes' or 'no' to the use of their land based on comprehensive, accurate, timely, and easy-to-understand information.

More information on Engaging with Aboriginal People is provided in a separate document, Community Stewardship Grants Guide - Engaging with Aboriginal people.

Landholder permissions and agreements

Applicants **must** provide written permission (such as a letter or email) from the landowner and/or manager of each property where there will be on-ground activities, or which needs to be accessed to undertake on-ground activities.

If a proposed project is to take place on land where Native Title exists, approval must be evidenced with permission from the relevant Registered Native Title Body Corporate (RNTBC). Native Title is governed by the *Native Title Act 1993 (Cth)*. Any land that is a site of an approved or pending Native Title Claim, is bound by that law.

Landholder agreements are used to clarify and formalise the roles and responsibilities of private landholders participating in the project, including where and when works will take place, and outlining expectations of the landholder after the work is complete.

Successful applicants will be required to provide a signed landholder agreement with each participating private landholder. Landholder agreements are also required for devolved grant recipients once selected.



Biosecurity and animal welfare

It is imperative that all appropriate licenses, permits, or permissions have been sought and appropriate consultation has been undertaken.

It is the responsibility of the applicant to investigate what permits and licences are required for the project, to be compliant with the *Animal Welfare Act 2002*, *Biosecurity and Agriculture Management Act 2007*, *Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016* and *Biodiversity Conservation Regulations 2018*.

More information can be found at the links below:

- [Biosecurity and Agriculture Management Act 2007 | Agriculture and Food](#)
- [Using animals for scientific purposes | Agriculture and Food](#)
- [Licences and permits | Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions](#)

At a minimum, you will need to demonstrate that you have sought advice regarding what licenses, permits, or permissions are necessary, and that you understand the process required to obtain them, should your application be successful.

To ensure that funds requested through this program do not duplicate the work of Recognised Biosecurity Groups (RBGs), evidence of consultation with the relevant RBG must be included, including information regarding priority species, and how the project will complement or extend activities already being undertaken by the RBG.

The workplan

The workplan is a combined project plan and budget in a Microsoft Excel workbook and **must** be used. Without a completed workplan on the correct template, your application will not be considered.

The workplan is a valuable tool to set out what resources and budget will be required to undertake the project, and who will be funding those resources. It is also a critical component of the application that helps the Assessment Panel determine if the project is properly planned and costed and demonstrates value for money.

All project costs, co-contributions, and calculations must be provided **excluding GST**.

In the workplan, applicants must:

- Consider the funding limitations for activities
- Provide sufficient detail on each activity to show what is being proposed, where and when it will happen, and why this is important – the cells in the workbook expand to accommodate as much information as you wish to include; there are no word limits
- Provide detail on how each expense relates to the activity, such as who will be doing a specific aspect of the activity; include a breakdown of calculations if needed
- List all co-contributions of cash and other resources, including the source, quantity and estimated value (do not include GST)
- Include at least one measure for each activity (such as, hectares of weed control, kilometres of fencing, number of participants attending an event).

The **2026 workplan template**, including a worked example, can be downloaded from the grant round information page, 'BEFORE YOU BEGIN', accessed via [Home Page - Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development, Western Australia \(smartygrants.com.au\)](#) by selecting the relevant grant round.

Also available to download is the Activity Measures and Evidence guide.

Value for money

Value for money is one of the key assessment criteria. The following information is provided to assist applicants in developing their workplan and demonstrating the value for money aspect of the project.

Applicants are strongly encouraged to include the following attachments:

- indicative quotes for any services provided by a third party, such as contractors, consultants or presenters
- indicative quotes for purchase of assets
- additional written information which can provide further context or detail to support the application, particularly if the project includes activities which are outside guideline limits.

Co-contributions (cash and in-kind)

Co-contributions are resources donated to the project or provided through other funding sources and usually take the form of either 'cash' (such as income or donated materials) or 'in-kind' (such as labour, time, machinery hire, equipment use, consumables, or materials).

Co-contributions are usually in addition to business as usual and show that project partners are willing to put in effort and resources to ensure that the project is successful.

Applications that demonstrate a greater value of co-contributions are preferred because they:

- indicate the project has good support from stakeholders
- demonstrate that planning and effort that has already gone into the project
- illustrate the leveraging power of each dollar of State NRM grant investment.

Applicants should clearly identify, accurately describe, and value all co-contributions in the application and workplan and must provide evidence from the contributing organisation, such as a Letter of Commitment.

The Volunteer benefits calculator - Volunteering WA for individuals and organisations is a useful tool to help determine the full value of volunteer effort.

Letters of commitment

Applicants should include a letter from each contributing organisation that provides confirmation of the value of the co-contribution offered and details the resources and/or services it will contribute directly to the project which are in addition to business as usual. This is the evidence which supports the co-contribution amounts.

Letters of commitment must be signed by a representative of the organisation with the authority to commit the cash or in-kind co-contributions.

If not provided with the application, successful applicants will be required to provide these during the contracting process prior to funds being released.

Project coordination expenses

Project coordination and other project roles are eligible activities for Community Stewardship Grant funding, subject to the limitations listed above.

Applicants must provide a sufficient level of detail on the work the grant funded positions will be doing to justify the request (this can be provided in the workplan or separately). Salary and salary on-costs should be itemised separately in the workplan.

Basic monitoring activities (such as fixed-point photo monitoring, drone photography or photos and registrations) should be included in project coordination (officer time) expenses.

Project coordination and management expenses must be commensurate with the nature and scope of the project, as well as the work the positions will be doing, to be considered value for money.

Grant requests that lack detail or are not considered to be commensurate with the activities and work proposed may be reduced.



Administration and operational expenses

Applicants may request up to a maximum of 15% of the project's proposed grant funded budget for all other activities for administration and operational expenses. These are project-specific costs which are additional to business as usual and should consider the size and nature of the project. Administration and operational requests that are not considered to be commensurate with the activities proposed may be reduced.

Administration and operational expenses may include:

- office expenses (such as lease of space, lease of equipment, additional utilities, phone, internet, cyber security, printing, etc.)
- general communications, HR and Finance support
- general travel (such as regular committee or board meetings, regular travel between operational sites, etc.)
- insurances (public liability, professional indemnity, volunteers, workers compensation, vehicle cover, etc.).

Audit expenses may be requested separately for a single, end of project financial audit for projects valued over \$50,000 (large applications only).

The following is an example of how to calculate the maximum administration grant request:

Example Budget

Grant activities:

Coordinator salary	\$10,000
On-costs at 25%of salary	\$2,500
Seedlings	\$15,000
Delivery charge	\$2,000
Workshops x3	<u>\$6,000</u>
Grant activities subtotal	\$35,500

Administration maximum:

15% of grant activities subtotal	<u>\$5,325</u>
Total project grant request	\$40,825

Sponsorship fee

Applications submitted under a sponsorship arrangement are entitled to request a sponsorship fee of up to 10% of all other funded activities. This should be clearly identified and detailed in the workplan.

As the sponsor organisation usually provides at least some administration activities, an additional funding request for administration costs for the sponsored group should be commensurate with the administration needed.

Project specific travel

The nature of some projects, particularly where large distances are involved, may require specific travel arrangements (such as to on-ground sites or events in a remote location).

Applicants may seek grant funding to cover the costs of travel that is specifically related to the delivery of a particular project activity. This must be itemised and described separately in the workplan.

Project specific travel expenses should be shown in the workplan at the actual cost, up to a maximum of 88c per kilometre.



Purchase of materials

If you plan to request funding to purchase materials, such as seedlings or fencing materials, quotes are not required unless you exceed any maximum allowable rates set out in [Limitations of activities](#).

However, quotes demonstrate to the Assessment Panel that you have planned and costed the project well, and that it is good value for money.

Contractors and consultants

Grant funding can be used to engage consultants and contractors. The costs for engaging contractors or consultants must be commensurate with the nature and scope of the project. It is essential to provide sufficient detail to show value for money.

Applicants requesting funding must:

- itemise services provided by the consultant or contractor in the workplan (using separate lines)
- provide a description in the relevant section of the application form including:
 - why it is essential to the project to engage a contractor/consultant
 - the name and qualifications of the preferred service provider/s
 - what services are being provided.

Indicative quotes from service providers demonstrate that the project budget is well-researched, and that the applicant has considered value for money when choosing their preferred provider. Quotes should specify the cost of the services and provide a detailed breakdown of what will be delivered.

If not supplied at application, successful applicants will be required to provide detailed written quotes as a condition of funding.

If an applicant's organisation, its members, or an affiliate intend to provide consulting or contracting services to the project, this should be noted in the ['conflict of interest'](#) section of the application. In the 'contractors and consultant' section of the application, applicants must also justify why they should be considered the preferred provider of the service. This can include evidence about the competitive rate or advantage that is offered over other providers (for example, location, local knowledge, or prior experience).

Aboriginal Rangers, Elders and Traditional Owners

Grant funding can be used to support projects that contract Aboriginal Ranger groups to deliver project activities. Applicants planning to work with Aboriginal Rangers must clearly outline how the services provided to the project, including employment costs, consist of new or additional work outputs that are not funded through other means (such as the Aboriginal Ranger Program).

Applicants are encouraged to refer to the *Rangers (National Parks) General Agreement 2020* available at [Agreements » Western Australian Industrial Relations Commission](#) which provides the award rates for Ranger employment.

Grant funding can be used to support Aboriginal Elders and Traditional Owners to consult on and participate in NRM events and work activities on Country that relate directly to an NRM outcome; noting that this excludes sitting fees for boards or committees.

Traditional Owner knowledge, expertise and time is valuable, and funding may be requested to cover relevant costs for engagement, consultation and participation.

Detail on how local Traditional Owners will be consulted or will participate in the project should be included in the application and workplan.

State or Federal Government services

If you are requesting grant funds to purchase government services, then this must be fully explained and justified.

Employment costs for employees of Western Australian or Australian Government agencies are ineligible for funding.

Monitoring, evaluation and evidence for reporting

Monitoring and evaluation activities are critical to being able to tell if your project's activities are addressing the goals of your project. Evidence of achievement is a requirement of reporting under the State NRM Program.

The establishment of a monitoring and evaluation framework is an important first step in planning for and verifying if the project has been successful. Applicants are encouraged to think about how the project will need to be monitored and reported on, should the application be successful.

There are many different ways of monitoring and collecting evidence, however, the level of monitoring should be consistent with the size and scope of the project. Types of monitoring and evidence include:

- Camera or video footage
- Data collection to show change over time
- Interviews or surveys of participants
- Mapping or imagery
- Participant or volunteer registrations
- Photo point images
- Photos of activities.

Some important points to consider when preparing your application:

- the time to undertake basic monitoring activities (such as fixed-point photo monitoring, drone photography, or photos and registrations) should be included in any project coordination expenses
- purchase of equipment for monitoring (such as remote sensing cameras) may be considered for funding.

Promotion and communications

All projects funded in full or in part by the State NRM Program must correctly acknowledge the funding provided by the Western Australian Government. This also applies to recipients of devolved grant funding.

Applicants are required to list how you plan to promote the work being done in the project and how you will communicate with your community (including acknowledgement of State NRM Program funding).



Important Disclaimer

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