



DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING, INDUSTRY & ENVIRONMENT

Environmental Restoration and Rehabilitation 2020 Program Guidelines

NSW Environmental Trust



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How to use this guide

These program guidelines provide an overview of the NSW Environmental Trust’s Environmental Restoration and Rehabilitation grants program, including the types of organisations that are eligible to apply for funding and the types of activities that may be funded under the program. The guidelines also outline how applications will be assessed and what to expect if you are awarded a grant.

Funding available

There are two streams of funding available under the Environmental Restoration and Rehabilitation Program in 2020.

Program	Total funding available	Minimum Core project funds grant funding	Maximum Core project funds grant funding	Duration of funding
New entrants	\$1,000,000	\$50,000	\$100,000	2 – 3 years
Experienced	\$3,000,000	\$50,000	\$150,000	3 – 4 years

When you have established which stream is most suitable for you, please ensure that you comply with the relevant requirements for that stream.

Enquiries or questions

NSW Environmental Trust

Telephone: 02 8837 6093

Email: info@environmentaltrust.nsw.gov.au

Closing date for applications: 3pm, Monday 14 December 2020

Part 1: About the program

The **Environmental Restoration and Rehabilitation Program** is a contestable grants program seeking to achieve long-term beneficial outcomes for the NSW environment.

Funded by the NSW Environmental Trust the program encourages and enables community and government organisations to protect, conserve and restore our valuable natural environment.

Program objectives

The Environmental Restoration and Rehabilitation grants program seeks to:

‘Assist community and government organisations to contribute to the ongoing sustainable management and stewardship of significant environmental assets and services in NSW’.

The program is implemented in accordance with a formal program logic (Appendix 1: Restoration and Rehabilitation Grants Program – Program Logic) that articulates the objectives and expected outcomes of the program.

Outcomes of the program will be delivered through achievement of the following program objectives:

- Improve and protect the quality of ecosystems and environmental assets managed by community groups, land managers and stakeholders.
- Enhance the management of environmental assets by facilitating the development of environmental expertise and stronger partnerships between individuals, community groups, governments and industry.
- Provide an appropriate, effective and sustainable mechanism to deliver Government policy, priorities and outcomes.

What’s new for 2020–21?

1. Implementation of the Trust’s Strategic Plan 2020–24

Since last year’s funding round, the Environmental Trust has undertaken a major strategic review and developed a strategic plan. Significant changes have been made to the Restoration and Rehabilitation Program for this round to ensure alignment with the new plan.

The NSW Environmental Trust’s Strategic Plan 2020-24 has identified three overarching priorities to direct funding over the next four years:

- Strengthen the NSW natural environment – a healthy natural environment is the foundation for our health and wellbeing.
- Support native species and their habitats – thriving native flora and fauna rely on healthy habitats.
- Reduce human induced impacts on the environment – human induced impacts are one of the largest challenges facing our environment.

From within these overarching priorities, the **immediate funding priorities applicants need to address** as part of the 2020 Restoration and Rehabilitation Program are:

- supporting threatened species recovery
- addressing climate change impacts on the natural environment – both mitigation and adaptation.

Applicants must consider at a practical level, how their project will contribute to the delivery of either one or both of these **immediate funding priorities**. The extent to which an application addresses these priorities will be taken into account when assessing applications.

Further guidance on how to address this in your application will be provided in both [Part 3: What can be funded](#) (Eligible activities) of this Guideline and in the [Developing Your Application guide](#).

More information on the [NSW Environmental Trust's Strategic Plan 2020-24](#) to guide your application is available on the [Trust's website](#).

2. New funding streams

Two funding streams will be offered this year:

- Stream 1 – New entrant
- Stream 2 – Experienced

Each stream offered is based on an applicant's level of grant project management experience and/or capacity. They have a different funding level and timeframe allocated for delivery. **Applicants may only apply for funds under one stream.**

A new element of both funding streams is the breakdown of project budgets to include Core Project Funding (CPF) and Project Support Funding (PSF). Further detail relating to these items can be found in the [Developing Your Application guide](#).

Table 1 Summary of key features of funding streams

	Stream 1: New entrant	Stream 2: Experienced
Implementation timeframe	2 – 3 years	3 – 4 years
Core project funds (CPF)	\$50,000 – \$100,000	\$50,000 – \$150,000
Project support funds (PSF)	Additional funding of up to \$15,000	Additional funding of up to \$20,000
Maximum available funding (includes both CPF & PSF)	\$115,000	\$170,000

There are three project activities eligible to be included in the additional Project Support Funds (PSF):

- Project Monitoring – up to 10% of CPF value. For example:
 - Stream 1: 10% of \$50,000 (CPF) equals \$5000
 - Stream 2: 10% of \$150,000 (CPF) equals \$15,000

- Media and Communications – up to \$4000
- Financial audit – up to \$1000 for non-government applicants.

Further detailed information on the two funding streams and how to apply them to your project is provided in [Part 2: Eligibility](#), and the [Developing Your Application guide](#).

3. Project management, third party assistance and recruitment of project staff

- Project management and coordination of activities are capped at 30% (includes salary and salary on-costs) of the total Core Project Funds (CPF).
- Third parties who have assisted in the development of an application may bid for Trust funded work if the grant is awarded. However, grantees must clearly demonstrate that they have ruled out any potential or perceived conflicts of interest during the recruitment of these third party contractors.
- Recruitment of project staff using Trust funds is permitted via either a merit based or direct appointment of an existing staff member (certain conditions apply).

Further detailed information under each of the three points above is provided in [Part 3: What can be funded](#) (Eligible activities) and the [Developing Your Application guide](#).

4. Procurement guidelines

A new [Grantee guide to procurement for Environmental Trust projects](#) has been developed to assist applicants/grantees to align their procurement activities with [NSW Government Procurement Policy](#).

5. Habitat structures

Habitat creation structures (e.g. nest boxes) will only be funded when:

- target species are clearly defined
- need for the structure and how it will assist the target species is clearly articulated, including an assessment of the requirement of the structure against the availability of appropriate naturally occurring habitat i.e. hollows in trees
- proposed structures are appropriate for species' needs
- appropriate technical advice has been sought on the design features for proposed structures
- a monitoring regime inclusive of both monitoring and maintenance activities is included.

If you require further information on these changes, please contact the Trust.

Getting started

Step 1

Download and read the program guidelines (this document).

Step 2

Check your eligibility.

- Is your organisation eligible? (refer to [Part 2: Eligibility](#)).

- Are your activities suitable for this program? (refer to [Part 3: What can be funded](#)).

Step 3

Access the [Grants Management System \(GMS\)](#) to register and complete an application. The GMS will automatically assign you a project reference number. This reference number should be used in any correspondence with the Trust.

Important timeframes for this round

Applications open **3 November 2020**.

Applications close **3pm on 14 December 2020**.

Assessment of applications will commence in February 2021, with successful projects announced in June 2021.

A two-month project planning process will take place in July–August 2021. During this period, grantees will review their project, and consider any changes needed to deliver project outcomes. They will then submit a detailed workplan and project budget for Trust approval.

A funding agreement will then be sent to successful applicants for signature. It must be returned to the Trust within 30 working days of receiving the offer, or the offer of funding may be withdrawn.

Projects should aim to commence between **1 September 2021 and 31 October 2021**.

Part 2: Eligibility

Eligible applicants

- Two funding streams will be offered. Applicants will need to identify which stream they are eligible to apply for and may only prepare applications under **one** stream. Further, all applicants must adhere to the eligibility criteria for either community groups/organisations and government provided below.

Table 2 Definition of eligible community groups/organisations and government

Community groups/organisations	Government
<p>Must be not-for-profit organisations including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community groups • Incorporated associations • Incorporated non-profit organisations • Non-commercial cooperatives • Companies limited by guarantee • Non-government organisations • Trusts. 	<p>The following government organisations may apply:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • State government agencies and/or statutory committees • Councils • Regional organisations of councils • Other local government-controlled organisations • Universities (only eligible to apply for funding for projects on their own land).

Stream 1: New entrant

Restricted to applicants who have:

- no previous and/or limited grants experience
- newly formed organisations with limited restoration and rehabilitation project delivery experience.

Definition of ‘limited’

Applicants who have only been awarded a maximum of one Trust grant previously remain eligible for Stream 1. Refer to ‘*Which stream am I eligible for?*’ flow chart in the [Developing Your Application guide](#).

Stream 2: Experienced

Open to all groups/organisations that are not eligible for Stream 1.

Tip

- Community organisations that are not incorporated are only eligible to apply if they appoint an eligible organisation as administrator. The administrator must meet the eligibility requirements for community or government organisations and will be responsible for managing Trust funds in line with [NSW Government Procurement Policy](#) (refer to the [Trust’s summary](#)). The administrator will be a signatory to the funding agreement and will assist you with reporting requirements. See the Budget section of the [Developing Your Application guide](#) for more information.
- You may be asked for further information to verify your not-for-profit status.

Important information

- Organisations may submit a maximum of three applications.
- Only one application per organisation may be funded.
- To ensure distribution of funding across New South Wales, and in recognition of the challenges of delivering projects in remote locations, an **exception will be made** for those applicants seeking funding for projects located in western NSW. Areas where this will apply are for applicants located in areas serviced by [Western Local Land Services](#), [North West Local Land Services](#), [Central West Local Land Services](#), [Riverina Local Land Services](#) and [Murray Local Land Services](#). These organisations will be allowed to **submit three applications**, of which **a maximum of two may be funded**.

Ineligible applicants

Individuals, industry joint ventures, for-profit businesses and profit-distributing corporations (limited by shares) are not eligible to apply. If you are unsure, whether your group is eligible to apply, please contact the Trust on 02 8837 6093.

Past performance

Please note that the Trust will take into consideration any record of past poor performance in respect of previous grant projects, or any history of non-compliance with statutory or regulatory obligations when assessing eligibility.

A risk rating will be applied to your organisation and/or administrator. The applied risk rating will form part of your project’s assessment and will be used to determine any additional special conditions in the funding agreement.

If it is considered that past negative performance presents a substantial risk to the timely and effective performance of the project, an applicant will be asked to respond to the negative determination and this response will be taken into consideration alongside the overall merits of the application.

Part 3: What can be funded

Eligible activities

Table 3 below gives examples of the kinds of activities that may be funded under an Environmental Restoration and Rehabilitation grant. It covers a wide range of on-ground restoration type activities, however, grants are by no means limited to the examples provided.

Note

Guidance, suggestions and examples to assist you to link how your project contributes at a practical level to the delivery of either or both the immediate funding priorities may be found within the [*Developing Your Application guide*](#).

Table 3 **Activities eligible for grant funding**

Activity	Description
Bush regeneration (Assisted Natural Regeneration)	The practice of naturally restoring native plant communities and reinforcing an ecosystem’s ongoing natural regeneration process. Many activities listed below contribute to bush regeneration.
Capacity building	Training, up-skilling and/or educating volunteers, community members and landowners in Natural Resource Management techniques to improve the tangible environmental outcomes of a project.
Signage and educational resources	Educational or interpretive resources relating to the project outcomes that increase community awareness of the benefits to the environment associated with the project and influence positive behavioural change.
Erosion control	Works to protect soil stability (e.g. to prevent water quality degradation to adjacent waterways from stormwater run-off or wind-driven sediments). The Trust will not fund clean-up activities that fall into waste management activities. Applicants proposing erosion control works should clearly specify the methods they intend to use and provide detailed costs in the project budget.
Fencing	Installation of <u>wildlife-friendly fencing</u> to restrict access to restoration areas including temporary protection of revegetation plots.

Activity	Description
Fire	<p>Strategic burning of an area to control weeds or for ecological purposes. Engagement with the relevant fire authority (i.e. Rural Fire Service and/or National Parks and Wildlife Service) is typically required if burning is proposed. Your application should identify if you will be conducting an ecological or a cultural burn (i.e. using traditional Aboriginal burning techniques to achieve an ecological outcome), as the outcomes and associated activities may require different management strategies (see Appendix 1: Restoration and Rehabilitation Grants Program – Program Logic).</p>
Formalisation of tracks	<p>Upgrading or rationalisation of existing tracks that are causing degradation on sites of high conservation value. Upgrading of tracks or construction of new tracks for amenity or recreation purposes are not eligible.</p>
Habitat creation structures (e.g. nest boxes)	<p>Installation of natural and/or artificial structural habitat for fauna that incorporates features that mimic the characteristics of their nesting or shelter habitat. Applicants must clearly specify the target species and use structure designs appropriate to species' needs; indicate who they have/will consult when designing structures; and apply a monitoring regime that includes a monitoring and maintenance plan inclusive of triggers for removal/discontinuation (e.g. utilisation by a pest species).</p> <p>Projects that propose structures won't be supported if applicants have not clearly articulated the need and how they will be used to assist the target species. The Trust strongly recommends using the following to plan these project activities: 5 step Decision Flowchart included in Wingecarribee Shire Council's Nest Box Guide and Learning from nest boxes – monitoring and storing data.</p>
Pest animal management	<p>Strategic long-term control of feral pest animal species through physical intervention to facilitate the recovery of native animal and plant species. For best effect, projects should be aligned with Local Land Services management plans for the target species and be conducted in concert with neighbours regardless of land tenure.</p>
Project management and activity coordination	<p>Costs associated with the project management and coordination of project activities are capped at 30% (includes salary and salary on-costs) of the Core Project Funds (CPF). These funds should be used to maintain a consistent and high standard of project management and to cover costs associated with coordination of project activities.</p> <p>Project monitoring activities should not be included under these project costs. Instead funds allocated under the Project Monitoring component of PSF i.e. 10% of the CPF should be used for this purpose.</p> <p>Note: While this may be budgeted for, prioritisation will be given to projects that maximise on-ground activities.</p>
Employment of Project staff	<p>Staff may be employed with the use of project funds. Employment may occur under either of the two processes outlined below:</p> <p>Option 1: a merit based, advertised recruitment process for a new staff member.</p> <p>or</p> <p>Option 2: Direct appointment of an existing staff member who has:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Previously been appointed through a competitive and transparent recruitment process (i.e. merit based and advertised) when first engaged with the organisation. 2. Completed a previous contract and now have the spare capacity to be redeployed to the project under a new contract.

Activity	Description
Revegetation	<p>Introduction of local native plant species through the planting of tubestock, direct seeding, brush matting or transplanting. Used typically only where a viable native seed bank does not already exist on a site.</p> <p>Species selected and therefore, seed collected for revegetation activities, need to consider how this selection will be impacted by climate change. Applicants are strongly encouraged to follow guidance provided in Climate-ready Revegetation to ensure climate change resilience is considered when planning for future revegetation activities.</p>
Seed Production Areas/orchards	<p>These are locations specifically designed to cultivate native species intended to harvest seed for use in future restoration and rehabilitation projects. A key focus of these projects should be to prepare for climate change resilience, whereby the adaptive potential of species and vegetation communities is maintained, through careful species and provenance selections, and through maximising genetic diversity. Further, project design should aim to select and plant species diversity from multiple plant strata and link to longer term restoration and rehabilitation initiatives across your geographic region. Applicants are encouraged to incorporate concepts outlined in both Climate-ready Revegetation and the standards and case studies found on the Seed Production Areas for Ecological Restoration webpage.</p>
Threatened species	<p>On-ground works that provide direct benefits for threatened species, such as planting of feed/shelter trees, or the mitigation of known threats.</p> <p>When planning a project where either/or a threatened species or ecological community is considered to be the focus of the project, the project should align to the principals of the Saving our Species (SoS) Framework. The SoS Framework provides an overview of threatened species management in New South Wales. A focus on Priority Management Areas or Sites as defined by the SoS Program is favourable but not essential. Understanding SoS Priority Management Areas, Sites and management actions will assist you to choose the location of your project and the actions that will benefit the species at that location. The SoS Priority Management Areas, Sites and management actions will be displayed in the SoS database.</p> <p>It is strongly advised to contact the appointed Species Project Coordinator responsible for the statewide management of your proposed threatened species/ecological community before designing your project. Please contact the Trust on 02 8837 6093 to be advised on the correct contact.</p> <p>Note: Appropriate licences must be obtained prior to commencing a project where works impact threatened species or occur within defined threatened ecological communities. Contact the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment licencing team if you are unsure of which licences you need to obtain.</p>
Weed management	<p>The Trust will fund weed control initiatives defined under Regional Strategic Weed Management Plans (covering both regional and statewide priorities) that guide that jurisdiction’s implementation of the <i>Biosecurity Act (2015)</i> General Biosecurity Duty. Trust funding will only be available to support projects that seek to achieve environmental outcomes rather than economic outcomes (e.g. primary production). Funds may be requested to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement weed control activities that address an environmental issue/problem (e.g. facilitate the recovery of a native plant species or community or ecosystem function). • Protect an environmental asset (e.g. threatened species, population and Endangered Ecological Community). • Please refer to the ‘Core Business’ and ‘Weed Management’ activities under the Ineligible Activities list to provide additional guidance on how to

Activity	Description
	<p>determine whether weed management activities are the statutory responsibility of land managers/holders.</p> <p>For further information refer to each Regional Strategic Weed Management Plan and the NSW Government's NSW WeedWise webpage.</p>

Tip

The Trust welcomes applications for projects that address any of the program objectives, not just traditional environmental and biological rehabilitation.

It is recommended that in the 2020–21 round, applicants should propose a diverse range of project activities to mitigate the risk of potential for drought.

Ineligible activities

Activities listed in Table 4 below are not eligible for funding.

Table 4 Activities not eligible for grant funding

Activity	Description
Administration	Operational costs of organisations that are not project specific, and that exceed 10% of the total CPF funds sought, will not be funded. Examples of these costs include office rent, stationary, computer, internet and phone expenses, position specific recruitment advertising.
Aesthetics, amenity, and recreation	Projects primarily focussed on improving aesthetics, local amenity or recreational opportunities. The focus of all projects must be on delivering benefits for the NSW environment.
Built environment	Construction, restoration or rehabilitation of buildings, roads or facilities.
Core business	<p>Activities where an existing organisation or individual is legally responsible for the task (e.g. implementing a Biosecurity Direction or Biosecurity Undertaking) or where funds obtained through a grant are used for cost-shifting purposes.</p> <p>Projects that, in the normal course of events, are clearly the core business of local or state government authorities or the applicant organisation.</p>
Devolved grants and stewardship payments	<p>Devolved grants or offering grant funds to other organisations or individuals to manage, is not permissible under this grant program.</p> <p>Stewardship payments or providing monetary compensation to organisation or individual to maintain or improve the environmental values of their land (as opposed to providing fencing materials for example) are also ineligible.</p> <p>Trust funds must be managed directly by the applicant or their appointed administrator, and all financial transactions must be managed in line with the approved budget and NSW Government Procurement Policy. In addition, a grantee may not devolve purchasing decisions to a third party unless they can demonstrate a working understanding of NSW Government Procurement policy and procedures (e.g. works may be taking place on National Parks and Wildlife (NPWS) land, and they may require you to use contractors on their preferred supplier list).</p>

Activity	Description
	Projects where multiple landholders are identified and engaged in a catchment or regional scale project that is run by a coordinating grantee, are considered to be partnership projects rather than devolved grant projects. In this situation, the coordinating grantee will be responsible for the management of all Trust funds.
Equipment	Capital equipment purchases (such as vehicles, trailers and machinery), unless it is evidently more cost effective to purchase than lease equipment for the life of the project.
Employment of project staff	Salaries of staff not covered under either Options 1 or 2 defined in Employment of project staff within the Staff recruitment and employment section of this document.
Facilitating changes of land tenure or resource licencing	Expenses associated with any activities resulting in the transfer of land, resource licencing (e.g. water extraction licences – either private or public) etc. between landholders will not be considered.
Maintenance	Ongoing maintenance of projects to which organisations have previously committed. Routine property maintenance such as lawn mowing and gardening is also ineligible for funding.
Habitat creation structures (e.g. nest boxes)	'General' structures proposed where the target species, need and use of the structures for target species have not been identified, no evidence of having sought technical advice for design has been provided and a lack of commitment to develop and implement a monitoring and maintenance plan.
Project planning	Development of overarching project plans will not receive funding, however, site management plans, which will be implemented as part of the project, may be considered.
Research	Projects that focus on research and are not specifically linked to on-ground outcomes for the project. Surveys, data collection, mapping etc. may be carried out for the purpose of gathering evidence required to demonstrate the effectiveness of on-ground works and approved project activities. Projects with a primary focus on the gathering of data or other research activities will not be funded.
Retrospective activities	Activities carried out or committed to prior to accepting and signing the funding agreement.
Waste management	Projects with a primary focus on litter, waste management and research. See Waste Less, Recycle More or the Environmental Research Grants Program for potential funding opportunities.
Weed management	Projects that seek to implement weed control activities under Biosecurity Directions or Biosecurity Undertakings will not be funded. These weeds are the core responsibility of landowners and are enforceable by Local Control Authorities. Control of weeds that seek to achieve an economic outcome (e.g. to address a problem/issue impacting primary production) are the core responsibility of the landowner and will not be funded.

Note

Applications seeking more than either/or Core Project Funds or Project Support Funds in either stream in Trust funding will be deemed ineligible.

Part 4: Program governance

Probity

The Trust places high importance on the integrity and transparency of program and project governance. All funded projects must be delivered in accordance with legal and regulatory requirements, as well as other accepted governance and project management standards. Value for money in project delivery is also a significant priority for the Trust. Audits may be carried out by the Trust to check on compliance with these requirements.

Procurement

To conform to relevant governance and probity standards, the Trust requires all grantees to follow NSW Government procurement policy. This relates to all major budget items, such as the purchase of materials, or the engagement of contractors. **It also includes ensuring that goods and services are only paid for once they have been satisfactorily delivered.**

All contractors (including consultants) must be chosen on their merits and ability to effectively deliver the work. Grantees will select contractors or consultants using a competitive process where required by the [NSW Government Procurement Policy](#). The [Grantee guide to procurement for Environmental Trust projects](#) provides a summary of the NSW Government policy requirements as they are likely to apply to a Restoration and Rehabilitation grant project.

More detail is provided in the guide, however, as an example: unless selected through an open competitive process, the value of work to any single contractor (or consultant) must not exceed \$30,000 in total during the life of the funded project. For any contract valued at \$30,000 or more over the life of the project, you must secure a minimum of three written quotations.

The conditions of tendering shall be the same for each tenderer on any particular tender process and all tenders must comply with the [NSW Government Code of Practice for Procurement \(2005\)](#).

Documentation relating to and demonstrating open competitive procurement must be retained by the grantee for audit purposes, and information will be required in milestone reports.

Statement of business ethics

All providers of goods and services, including project managers and project partners, are required to observe the following principles when carrying out work for your proposed project:

- help prevent unethical practices in business relationships
- declare actual or perceived conflicts of interest.

All contracted and sub-contracted staff, or associated staff, are expected to comply with the [Department of Planning, Industry and Environment Statement of Business Ethics](#). If you employ sub-contractors in your work, please make them aware of this statement and our expectation that they will abide by it.

Conflicts of interest

All staff and contractors are required to disclose any potential conflicts of interest. You are also expected to advise of any actual, potential or perceived conflict of interest when you do business. This includes procurement, grants, direct negotiations, sponsorships, partnerships, third party service provisions, etc. Examples of conflict of interest are found in the [*Developing Your Application*](#) guide.

If works are to be conducted on land owned by a member of the applicant organisation, you must outline how you have managed, and will manage, the potential conflict of interest.

Staff recruitment and employment

The Trust supports the employment of new or existing staff to manage and implement projects and will pay for their salaries where:

- a range of applicants can compete for Trust funded employment opportunities
- recruitment using Trust funds is transparent and accountable
- the Trust is not effectively reimbursing an organisation for salaries it has already budgeted for, or for work that is part of its core business.

Recruitment of project staff using Trust funds may either occur through:

Option 1: a merit based, advertised (external or internal e.g. Expression of Interest) recruitment process for a new staff member.

Note

A position description for the position must be included in your application.

Option 2: Direct appointment of an existing staff member who has:

- previously been appointed through a competitive and transparent recruitment process (i.e. merit based and advertised) when first engaged with the organisation
- completed a previous contract and now has the spare capacity to be redeployed to the project under a new contract.

Note: If Option 2 is selected, then you must provide the following as an attachment with your application:

- position description
- curriculum vitae
- short explanation justifying the appointment of this staff member without using the new staff member recruitment process (Option 1) including:
 - why this person will be engaged using this method e.g. skills, expertise, local knowledge, etc.
 - outline how you have applied merit selection principles to make this decision especially if the project officer was involved in the preparation of the application and there may be either a potential or perceived Conflict of Interest
 - how you will clearly differentiate between time spent on the Trust funded project, projects funded through other sources e.g. other government grants, private funding, sponsorship etc. or other duties.

Note

Recruitment of staff should occur after you have been awarded a grant.

Reporting on implementation of the recruitment process

To demonstrate transparency of recruitment/employment grantees will be required to provide supporting information on both the recruitment process undertaken and how selection was made. This information will need to be provided with either your first progress report or in subsequent progress reports if new staff are either recruited or replaced. Information required (where relevant) will include:

- evidence of advertisement (either external or internal)
- number of applicants interviewed, and date of the interview panel convened
- copy of the internal document used for recording and approving employment of the staff member at the conclusion of the recruitment process.

Third party assistance

While applicants are encouraged to seek collaboration from other project partners, careful consideration is required around any commercial relationships. Applicants are welcome to seek third party assistance to develop their project and complete their application, however, any costs associated with this service cannot be reimbursed using Trust funding.

The NSW Government is committed to ensuring transparent and equitable access to government funded opportunities. Third parties who have assisted in the development of an application may bid for Trust funded work if the grant is awarded. However, grantees must clearly demonstrate that they have ruled out any potential or perceived conflicts of interest during the recruitment of these third party contractors by implementing transparent processes and providing adequate justification for their selection. In particular, you must demonstrate that no commercial advantage was gained by third parties as a result of their early involvement in project planning. You will be required to provide documentation in milestone reports to demonstrate how you have addressed this.

Part 5: Developing your project

Workplan

Grantees are required to implement a project management framework referred to as a workplan (previously known as a Project Implementation Plan/PIP or Monitoring and Evaluation Plan). The workplan seeks to assist grantees to define what their projects will deliver, including:

- the outcomes to be achieved i.e. environmental, social and project management (mandatory)
- what, and when, activities will be undertaken to achieve each outcome
- how activities will be implemented, monitored and evaluated.

In your application you will prepare a preliminary workplan to broadly define project outcomes and activities in your application. If you are successful in securing a grant, you will then complete a more detailed workplan (using a template prepared by the Trust) within two

months (40 working days) of receiving correspondence confirming your grant. Refer to *Part 7: Managing your grant* for more information.

Both the preliminary and detailed workplans contain a 'Project Management' outcome that includes mandatory activities such as project planning and budget preparation and monitoring, evaluation and reporting that grantees must plan for and include as part of the implementation of your project.

Tip

The Trust's Grants Administration team are available to answer questions and guide you on the preparation and development of your project work plan.

Monitoring and evaluation

Your workplan will require you to build a strong monitoring and evaluation framework into your project so that environmental improvements can be effectively measured and demonstrated. The implementation and evaluation of each activity will allow for adjustments to be made to improve outcomes.

Monitoring

The Trust requires effective and consistent evidence-based monitoring of project activities. You must demonstrate how you will monitor project activities by identifying and building monitoring techniques into your workplan. The use of monitoring methods will vary depending on the nature of the work being carried out, however, our aim is to ensure that minimum standards are created by establishing the following:

- consistent monitoring methods are used to measure activity implementation and progress e.g. photo monitoring, mapping, participant surveys, etc.
- benchmarks/baseline data at the commencement of projects and individual activities that may be used to clearly demonstrate the outcomes your work is achieving over the life of the project.

Note

The Trust has developed a [Monitoring Directory](#) to clearly explain the required monitoring methods for all the different types of activities you may undertake in your project.

Evaluation

These methodologies may also vary between projects, however, they should occur as part of your project's annual review (incorporating adaptive management concepts) and reporting process. This may involve people from your organisation, with relevant stakeholders/partners, examining the implementation of your workplan over the previous stage, assessing strengths and weaknesses then integrating improvements/changes (for both activities and timing) into a revised work plan for the following year.

Part 6: Assessing your application

The flow chart in Figure 1 explains what will happen after you have submitted your application.

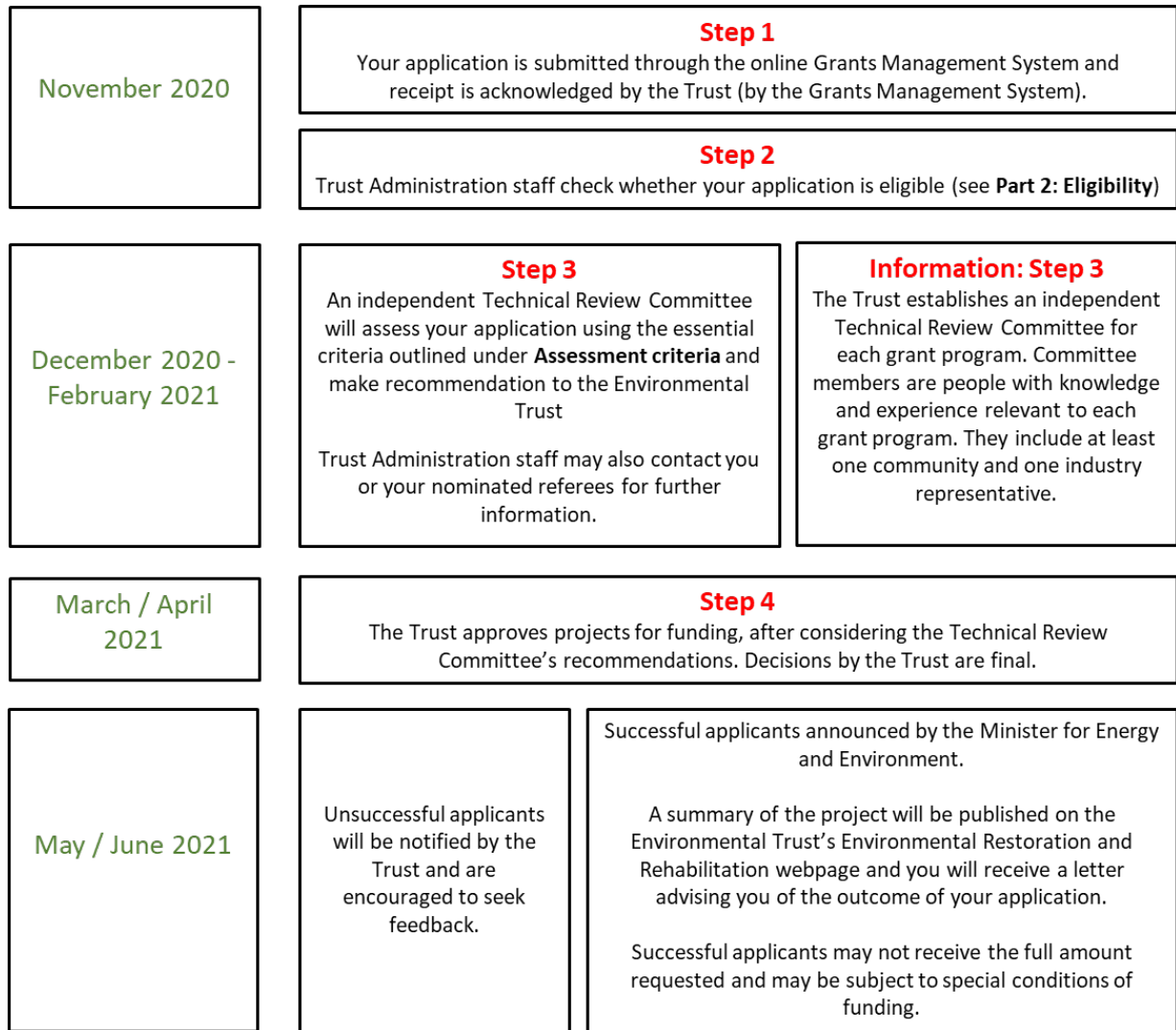


Figure 1 Timeline of assessment process

Assessment criteria

Trust grants are selected following a merit based process. Eligible applications will be assessed by an independent Technical Review Committee (TRC) against the assessment criteria set out below.

The TRC uses information in the application forms to assess your project. Your application should be prepared with these criteria in mind.

1. Tangible environmental outcome

- Clear explanation of the environmental issue to be addressed.
- Demonstrated need for the project, and appropriateness of proposed actions.
- The project will make a clear contribution toward the Environmental Restoration and Rehabilitation Program objectives.

2. Project activities and outcomes

- Activities clearly targeted towards achieving proposed outcomes.
- Project demonstrates long-term benefits beyond the life of the grant.
- Activities have considered the two immediate funding priorities applicable to the Restoration and Rehabilitation Program listed under the NSW Environmental Trust's Strategic Plan 2020-24.

3. Planning and method

- Sound project planning and method.
- Climate Change and threatened species considerations are included in project planning and design.
- How well the identified monitoring activities demonstrate the success of the project.
- How well the proposal addresses risk factors that have the potential to jeopardise the achievement of expected outcomes.
- Timeframe is realistic for achieving the proposed outcomes.
- Likelihood of project to build community capacity to protect the environment and strength of collaboration.

4. Capacity to deliver

- Demonstrated knowledge, skills and expertise in relevant fields of the applicant and/or project partners.
- Degree of community involvement and how this will be achieved.
- Capacity and commitment to undertake and complete the project.
- Demonstrated commitment to continuing support the project's outcomes beyond the life of the grant.

5. Value for money

- Extent to which the budget supports the projected objectives and whether it will ensure the viability of the project overall.
- The likely environmental benefit of the proposal relative to the amount of grant funds.
- The reasonableness of the budget items.
- Appropriateness of the mix in the total budget between:
 - materials and other direct project costs
 - professional expertise
 - in-kind support (e.g. equipment, machinery) and/or cash contributions from applicant and other organisations
 - voluntary expertise/labour.

Part 7: Managing your grant

If you are successful in receiving an Environmental Restoration and Rehabilitation Program grant, you will be notified in May–June 2021.

Starting work

If you are awarded an Environmental Restoration and Rehabilitation grant, you will be required to undertake a two-month project planning process in July–August 2021. During this period, you will review your project, and consider any changes needed to deliver project outcomes.

You will then be required to submit the following documents before starting your project:

- A detailed workplan (including project budget) for Trust approval. Assistance (e.g. webinars) will be available to help you develop your workplan.
- The Trust will send you a funding agreement after development and approval of your workplan (including budget) by Trust Administration.
- Submit a Tax Invoice for the first instalment of your grant and send to Trust Administration with your signed funding agreement. Your project should start between 1 September 2021 and 31 October 2021.

Once grantees have received notification from the Trust that the workplan has been finalised and **approved** and you have signed and returned the funding agreement, you should gather benchmark/baseline data in accordance with your workplan so your project can clearly demonstrate the social and environmental outcomes being achieved.

Funding agreement

The funding agreement sets out the terms and conditions associated with the grant.

The Trust may also place additional conditions specific to your project. Your Grants Administrator will discuss these conditions with you.

Note: The funding agreement is a standard document for all grantees. The agreement will not be changed at the request of the grantee.

Tax invoice

A tax invoice for each instalment of your grant is required, including GST if applicable.

Tip

The Trust's Grants Administration team are available to answer questions and guide you on the preparation and development of the required project documentation.

During your project

Grantees are required to prepare and submit milestone reports after each stage throughout their projects. Reporting and payment schedules will be outlined in the funding agreement. Milestone reports provide the grantee with the opportunity to review their own progress, as well as provide the Trust with updates (including supporting evidence) on activities, achievements and expenditure, in line with approved workplan.

Note

Milestone reports are required at the completion of each stage of works.

Each milestone report will also include an opportunity for you to review your progress and update your workplan for the forthcoming stage's activities. This should occur after you have conducted a self-evaluation with your project stakeholders/partners. Lessons learned and any incomplete or new activities, with revised implementation timeframes, should be integrated into a revised annual workplan.

Each milestone report is reviewed by a representative of the Trust with technical expertise relevant to your project. The revised annual workplan will also be used by reviewers to determine whether grantees have thought critically about the previous stage's work and addressed any outstanding issues or problems adequately.

If your report demonstrates that your project is progressing well, the next instalment of your grant will be authorised and your Grant Administrator will provide you with feedback from the reviewer. If the project is underperforming, funding instalments may be withheld while you work with your Grants Administrator to identify and implement strategies to bring the project up to speed.

The Trust recognises that variations to your project are sometimes required and these may be negotiated with your Grants Administrator at any time throughout your project.

Milestone and final reports based on the outcomes and activities in your workplan will be submitted online through the Grants Management System.

Completing your project

When your project is complete, grantees are required to submit a final report reflecting on achievements.

Like milestone reports, a representative of the Trust will review your final report. An evaluation of grantee performance is made at this point and a risk rating applied. This rating will be used when assessing future applications.

Your Grants Administrator will provide you with feedback on your project, and formally acquit your grant.

Privacy

We use the information you supply to us for processing and assessing your application. While we do not publicly release your application as a matter of policy, we may be required to do so under the *Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009* or other lawful requirement.

The Trust may also disclose information that you supply to us for evaluating its grant programs. If you require strict commercial and/or personal confidentiality, you should address this in your application.

Appendix 1: Restoration and Rehabilitation Grants Program – program logic

Ultimate Goal: Contribute to the ongoing sustainable management and stewardship of significant environmental assets and services in New South Wales.

Program Objective: Enhance the management of environmental assets and services through the facilitation and creation of social capital between individuals, community groups, governments and industry.		Program Objective: Improve and protect the quality of a diverse range of ecosystems and environmental assets and services managed by community groups, land managers and stakeholders.		Program Objective: Provide an appropriate, effective and sustainable mechanism to deliver Government policy, priorities and outcomes through the Environmental Restoration and Rehabilitation Program.		
Intermediate Social Outcomes		Intermediate Environmental Outcomes		Intermediate Governance Outcomes		
Capacity Building	The capacity of organisations and communities to conduct environmental activities, practices and projects is enhanced and supported.	Ecosystem assets and services and changing climate	Measurable improvement to ecosystem function and services at locations that hold important environmental assets/services and cultural significance.	Policy	The program contributes to the delivery of government priorities and/or value adds to the achievement of other on-ground government initiatives.	
	Knowledge and skills on environmental asset and service practices are documented, shared and applied on-ground.		Best practice environmental management actions are applied to support measurable and sustainable environmental outcomes.		The program is consistent with all relevant government policy and legislation.	
	Groups and organisations develop skills and experience to engage and recruit members of their local and broader communities to participate in environmental management activities.		Pilot innovative techniques and methodologies through on-ground activities that lead to broader community and industry adoption and improvement of on-ground good practice.	Cultural Respect	The program design and delivery acknowledge and respects Aboriginal culture and traditions and promotes consultation and engagement of the Aboriginal community and organisations where possible and relevant.	
	Emerging groups develop skills and expertise in defining, measuring and improving ecological processes that lead to successful ecosystem rehabilitation.		Planning for revegetation/seed production and habitat restoration activities consider how a changing climate will impact the future adaptive capacity of selected species to be planted and how the adaptive potential of sites may be facilitated.		Governance	Projects are delivered in accordance with the approved project application/plan and stated objectives are met.
	Groups have improved capacity to source and secure funds and/or resources for the ongoing maintenance of projects.		Project outcomes are determined using effective, standardised monitoring methods which are applied on all projects.			Projects are managed by grantees following best practice project management principals and utilising adaptive management processes.
Community Engagement	Community awareness on the value and importance of healthy environments, and the issues affecting their local environment, are raised, and they are motivated to take action.	Monitoring	Short term monitoring established for each project to measure achievement of project objectives.	Governance	All projects are acquitted, and grant funds expended appropriately through grantees meeting their reporting and other obligations.	
	Lessons and opportunities arising from projects are shared and used to generate interest and involvement in future projects and for adaptive management purposes.		Medium to longer term project outcomes are monitored to measure sustainability of investment and benefit to the environment.		Uncertainty and incomplete information associated with changing climate requires the application of adaptive management processes obtained through regular observation of project performance and outcomes.	

Increased participation	An increase in the involvement of a broad cross section of the community in environmental management actions supported by the Restoration and Rehabilitation program.
	Cultural land and water management perspectives are acknowledged to promote and engage Aboriginal community participation in the planning and implementation of on-ground activities.
Partnerships developed	Community, government and industry organisations engage in partnerships and strengthen collaborations.
Monitoring	Project outcomes are determined using effective, standardised monitoring methods which are applied on all projects.
	Short term monitoring established for each project to measure achievement of project objectives.
	Medium to longer term project outcomes are monitored to measure how social capital has influenced/benefitted delivery of on-ground activities and environmental stewardship.

Foundational activities and assumptions

Development of program guidelines, application forms, budget and project planning and reporting templates.	Grant program advertised in appropriate communication channels (workshops, networks, news, Trust webpage etc).	Applications received and assessed by suitably qualified Technical Review Committee with recommendations going to Trust for approval.	Adaptive management based on effective application of the program evaluation framework.
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