

NSW Department of Climate Change,  
Energy, the Environment and Water

# Low Carbon Landscapes grant guidelines



May 2025



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## Acknowledgment of Country



Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water acknowledges the traditional custodians of the land and pays respect to Elders past, present and future.

We recognise Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' unique cultural and spiritual relationships to place and their rich contribution to society.

Artist and designer Nikita Ridgeway from Aboriginal design agency – Boss Lady Creative Designs, created the People and Community symbol.

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**Low Carbon Landscapes grant guidelines**

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# 1. Introduction

## 1.1. The Primary Industries Productivity and Abatement Program

The [Primary Industries Productivity and Abatement Program](#) (PIPAP) is a key element of the [NSW Net Zero Plan Stage 1: 2020-2030](#). This plan outlines NSW's commitment to halve our emissions by 2030 while safeguarding our prosperity and protecting our way of life.

PIPAP supports landholders, including farmers and Aboriginal and public land managers across the state, to reduce their emissions, increase the amount of carbon stored in soils and vegetation, and enhance biodiversity on their land alongside production.

NSW Government is investing \$105 million in PIPAP through to 2030. The \$10 million Low Carbon Landscapes grant program is one of the initiatives under this program.

## 1.2. Purpose of these guidelines

These guidelines provide information to applicants for Low Carbon Landscapes grant funding, including:

- purpose and description of the grant program
- eligibility and merit assessment criteria
- the application and assessment processes
- how funding will be awarded and managed by the NSW Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water (the Department).

These guidelines should be read alongside the [frequently asked questions](#) published on our website.

Note: Definitions of key terms used in these guidelines are provided in Appendix A: Terms and definitions.

The Department may deliver multiple grant rounds, with the potential to focus the funding criteria differently in each round according to NSW Government priorities and market context. Additional guidelines will be developed for future rounds.

## 2. About the program

### 2.1. Key details

Item	Description
Funding available	\$10 million
Grant amount	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Up to \$500,000 for projects with one target landscape area</li> <li>Up to \$1,000,000 for projects with 2 to 5 target landscape areas</li> </ul>
Project duration	Up to 3 years
Application opening	7 May 2025
Application closing	7 August 2025 5:00pm AEST
Notification of outcome	October-November 2025
Source agency	NSW Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water
Decision maker	Executive Director, Climate Change and Sustainability, NSW DCCEEW

Table 1 Key details

### 2.2. Purpose

The purpose of the Low Carbon Landscapes grant program is to scale up high quality carbon abatement from the primary industries and land sector, by supporting the development of financially viable projects which can attract investment.

### 2.3. Objectives

The objectives of this funding are to:

- support a range of ambitious, landscape-scale, high quality carbon abatement projects in the primary industries and land sector through the initial stages of project development, up to the point where they are able to secure investment
- develop a range of financially viable models for project delivery
- increase private sector investment in high quality carbon abatement projects in the primary industries and land sector.

## 2.4. Scope

The scope of the Low Carbon Landscapes grant round covers the initial stages of project development for landscape-scale, high quality carbon abatement projects in the primary industries and land sector, up to the point where they are able to secure investment. This should include a focus on developing a financially viable model for project delivery and identifying suitable sources of private investment to enable on-ground implementation.

This grant round will not fund on-ground implementation of carbon abatement projects or subsequent management or maintenance of these projects.

Carbon abatement activities within the scope of this grant program include:

- increasing carbon storage in vegetation, soils, coastal, or marine areas across all land types
- reducing emissions from livestock, land use, land use change, and forestry.

This grant cannot be used for projects related to:

- energy use and transport-related emissions
- technological carbon dioxide removal from the atmosphere and geological storage.

While the focus is on carbon abatement, funded projects must aim to achieve this in a way that delivers other benefits. These other benefits are referred to as co-benefits and can include:

- improvements to biodiversity, water quality, soil health, or climate resilience
- Aboriginal cultural benefits
- social and economic benefits for local communities
- productivity gains or other commercial advantages for primary producers.

## 2.5. Description

### Overview

The Low Carbon Landscapes grant program will fund the initial stages of development for landscape-scale projects which aim to deliver carbon abatement alongside other benefits.

Successful applicants will receive grant funding to cover the costs of project development for up to 3 years, up to the point where they are able to secure investment.

The grant amount available is:

- up to \$500,000 for projects with one target landscape area
- up to \$1,000,000 for projects with 2 to 5 target landscape areas



Proposals must include a focus on developing a financially viable model for project delivery, by investigating opportunities to generate revenue, benefit from cost savings and access investment. Different approaches are welcomed, including innovative financial/business models. Examples include:

- selling carbon credits through the Australian Carbon Credit Unit (ACCU) scheme or other voluntary carbon market schemes
- selling biodiversity credits through the NSW Biodiversity Offsets Scheme or other conservation funding initiatives
- selling Nature Repair Market credits
- selling ecosystem services, such as improved water quality and natural flood management benefits, resulting from land management improvements
- enhancing productivity or reducing costs for primary producers
- gaining a commercial advantage, such as improved market access or market retention by achieving business or supply chain targets or requirements
- increasing asset value
- accessing sustainable finance.

### **Project design**

Guidance on project design and determining a target landscape area is provided in Section 7.

Project activities will vary depending on local needs and any work that has already been undertaken in the target landscape, but generally we foresee 3 project stages. Examples of activities each stage could include, and the expected outcomes from each stage, are described below.

#### **Stage 1: Scoping**

Activities in this stage should include:

- engaging with land managers, local communities and other stakeholders within the target landscape area, including Traditional Owners or Aboriginal community representatives, and developing a shared vision and objectives
- mapping relevant landscape features, collecting data, and understanding the local and regional context
- identifying specific opportunities to achieve carbon abatement and co-benefits by improving land or livestock management, or restoring vegetation and soils within the target landscape.

At the end of Stage 1, the project is expected to have:

- identified specific opportunities for further assessment
- confirmed land managers are interested
- updated carbon abatement estimates if the opportunities have evolved since the application stage
- developed a detailed project plan describing the specific activities that will be undertaken in Stages 2 and 3.

If the scoping stage cannot confirm specific opportunities worth assessing further, and land manager interest, the project may be discontinued.

If applicants have already undertaken scoping in the target landscape area and are able to include a detailed project plan in their application, this does not need to be repeated and the application can exclude this stage.

### **Stage 2: Landscape planning**

Activities in this stage should include:

- assessing the feasibility, costs and benefits of the identified opportunities, including their carbon abatement potential and relevant co-benefits
- evaluating options for revenue generation, cost savings and investment and estimating the potential return on investment
- continuing engagement with land managers and other stakeholders and developing a plan for the target landscape
- engaging with potential buyers and investors.

At the end of Stage 2, the project is expected to have thoroughly explored the opportunities and developed a low carbon landscape plan detailing the opportunities being progressed to the final stage, including updates to the carbon abatement estimates.

### **Stage 3: Market engagement**

Activities in this stage should include:

- developing a financial model(s) and governance arrangements for project delivery
- negotiating with potential buyers and investors.

At the end of Stage 3, the project is expected to:

- have a financial model(s) which demonstrates how a return on investment will be achieved over time
- be able to demonstrate clear governance arrangements for project delivery



- be able to demonstrate that potential sources of investment have been thoroughly investigated
- where possible, have sufficient investment secured to start on-ground implementation.

## 2.6. Rationale

The Low Carbon Landscapes grant program has been designed to help overcome multiple barriers to high-quality carbon abatement in the primary industries and land sector. These barriers include uncertainty for landholders over which are the best opportunities to pursue on their land and the high upfront costs of assessment, planning and project design.

The emphasis is on high-quality carbon abatement with co-benefits. This reduces the risk of negative impacts that can be associated with projects focused solely on lowest cost carbon abatement. It also enables the value of multiple benefits to be combined to improve commercial viability.

By working together across a landscape, landholders and other project partners can share knowledge and resources, achieve economies of scale, and deliver larger projects with greater benefits. Larger projects are likely to be more attractive to a wider range of investors, and risk can be managed across a portfolio of interventions within the landscape.

Working at the landscape scale can be challenging due to the costs and complexities of organising different stakeholders, assessing a wide range of options, and agreeing on a shared plan that appropriately balances different objectives. Low Carbon Landscapes grants will support land managers and their project partners to overcome these challenges and make the most of the benefits offered by this approach.

Supporting a range of projects through to investment readiness will demonstrate how barriers to commercially viable, high-quality carbon abatement can be overcome. It will also generate information, tools and replicable financial models for project delivery that can benefit other market participants across NSW, beyond those directly supported by the grant round. All projects must share information and lessons learnt to build capacity within the primary industries and land sector.

## 2.7. Benefits

While each funded project will deliver different benefits across their target landscape area, we have provided some examples of who might benefit from funded projects. The following individuals and entities could be lead applicants for a project or stakeholders in a project.

### **Land managers**

Land managers involved in a funded project can better understand the opportunities presented by environmental markets and get the support needed to make informed choices and attract investment. The grants can support neighbouring land managers to work towards common goals, share knowledge and resources, realise economies of scale and achieve greater impact.

### **Primary producers**

In addition to the benefits available to land managers, by engaging with a funded project, primary producers can identify opportunities to boost productivity through improved land management, and achieve a commercial advantage by demonstrating a commitment to improved environmental performance.

### **Aboriginal land managers**

Aboriginal land managers engaged with a funded project can explore opportunities for carbon projects on Country that generate income and restore and protect Country (see [Carbon for Aboriginal landholders](#)). Carbon projects can support multiple social, cultural, environmental and economic benefits.

### **Businesses in the food and fibre sectors**

Businesses in the industry can work with producers in their supply chain to determine how they will deliver high-quality carbon abatement with co-benefits. This could contribute to corporate commitments and help meet customer and shareholder expectations.

### **Local councils**

Local councils that lead or participate in a funded project can work with their communities to develop ambitious and financially viable plans for carbon abatement. Projects offer an opportunity to achieve environmental, social and economic benefits, reduce the risk of negative impacts associated with carbon projects and contribute to councils' own net zero targets.

### **Utilities companies and infrastructure operators**

Utilities companies and infrastructure operators can understand the opportunities on their land and/or work with other land managers to achieve their environmental goals, reduce risk or costs, and increase the climate resilience of their assets.

## **Carbon credit buyers**

Carbon credit buyers can benefit from engaging in a funded project by securing a supply of high-quality carbon credits with verifiable co-benefits to help meet compliance requirements or voluntary commitments.

## **Investors**

Investors engaged in a funded project can identify high-quality investment opportunities which align with their environmental and social commitments and generate a return. Funded projects will provide the credibility, confidence and governance structures required to invest.

## 3. Eligibility

To be eligible for the Low Carbon Landscapes grant funding, an applicant must meet all eligibility criteria outlined below. While the application may represent a group of organisations, the Department will only enter into a funding agreement with the lead applicant.

### 3.1. Eligible applicants

Eligible applicants include:

- farmers or agribusinesses
- Aboriginal landholders or land managers including Traditional Owner groups, land councils or Registered Native Title Body Corporates
- not-for-profit organisations
- government entities, including NSW Government agencies and local government
- natural resource management/conservation organisations
- peak bodies or industry organisations
- producer associations
- co-operative/mutual organisations.

Carbon service providers operating for-profit are not eligible to be applicants. If a carbon service provider is involved in the project (for example as a project partner), they must be signatories to the [Australian Carbon Industry Code of Conduct](#).

Note: No organisation will be awarded more than 2 grants in this round of the Low Carbon Landscapes grant program.

### 3.2. Insurances and financial viability

The application must demonstrate that the applicant:

- holds and complies with all relevant insurances, including:
  - professional indemnity insurance (\$5 million per claim, maintained for a period of seven years following expiry of the contract)
  - public liability insurance (\$20 million per claim)
  - workers compensation insurance (as required by law)
  - products liability insurance (as appropriate, if required).
- has a valid ABN

- is not subject to any insolvency event, including the subject of an order or resolution for winding up or dissolution (other than for the purposes of reconstruction or amalgamation) or the appointment of a receiver, liquidator, administrator or similar.

## 3.3. Eligible projects

The application must demonstrate that the target landscape area:

- is not less than 3,000 hectares
- is wholly within NSW, or with a maximum of 5% of the target landscape area outside of NSW with a clear rationale provided as to why this is required
- is continuous (all land in the target landscape area is connected), or there is a clear rationale provided for the project to include disconnected areas
- includes multiple private and/or public landowners/managers, or there is a clear rationale for the project to be limited to one property only.

For applications with more than one target landscape area, each target landscape area must meet the above criteria.

The proposed project must:

- be within the scope of the grant program as described above
- not commence until after the funding agreement has been signed by all parties
- commence no later than 3 months after the funding agreement has been signed by all parties
- be completed within 3 years of commencement.

The applicant must confirm that:

- The proposed project is additional to any work already undertaken, or any work for which funding has been requested or secured from another source.
- The applicant and project partners will consult with all eligible interest holders and apply the principles of Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) when engaging with Aboriginal people/organisations and will ensure Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property rights are upheld.
- The applicant and project partners will provide project outcomes and data to the Department and agree to data being shared publicly, including case studies or summary information about the project. It is expected that this will include the applicant and project partners providing data to the Department for 1 to 3 years following the completion of the project to allow the Department to capture outcomes achieved in on-ground implementation of carbon abatement resulting from this funding.

- Information gained and products such as tools, templates and resources developed through the project will be made publicly available to help the development of environmental markets and build capacity within the sector, wherever possible giving consideration to intellectual property and confidentiality.

## 4. Timeframes

### 4.1. Timeline summary

Item	Timing
Applications open	7 May 2025
Applications close	7 August 2025 5:00pm AEST
Assessment of applications	August-September 2025
Notification and signing of funding agreements	October-November 2025
Project implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Commencement within 3 months of signing funding agreement</li> <li>• Completion within 3 years of commencement</li> </ul>

Table 2 Timeline summary

### 4.2. Application period

The online application form will open on 7 May 2025 and will close at 5pm on 7 August 2025. We may vary or extend this timeframe at our full discretion. Applications will not be accepted after the application form is closed.

### 4.3. Assessment and notification

Applications will be assessed in August-September 2025. During this period additional information may be requested from applicants.

Applicants will be notified of the outcome of their application in October-November 2025. Feedback will be offered to unsuccessful applicants. Appeals by unsuccessful applicants are not allowed. A funding agreement will be provided to successful applicants for review and signing.

### 4.4. Project implementation

Projects receiving Low Carbon Landscapes funding are expected to commence within 3 months of signing of the funding agreement. Each project must be completed within 3 years of



commencement. A schedule of project activities will form part of the funding agreement, along with a schedule for milestone reporting and progress payments.

## 5. Funding and budget

### 5.1. Grant amount

\$10 million funding is available through this round of the Low Carbon Landscapes grant program. The maximum grant amount available is:

- \$500,000 for projects with one target landscape area
- \$1,000,000 for projects with 2 to 5 target landscape areas.

### 5.2. Project budget and co-contributions

Applicants are required to provide a project budget in their application, detailing expected expenditure of grant funds, cash co-contributions and in-kind co-contributions.

Co-contributions can be provided by the applicant's organisation or through arrangements with partner organisations, non-profit organisations, or government entities. Applicants will be required to declare all sources of funding, including details of partners contributing to project costs.

Cash co-contributions are direct financial contributions to the project. In-kind co-contributions can include time, services, expertise, and goods used in the project. Cash and in-kind co-contributions are not mandatory, but are highly recommended as 'value for money' is a component of the merit assessment criteria (see Section 6).

### 5.3. Milestone payments

The Department will make an initial payment on execution of the funding agreement. Further milestone payments will be paid in instalments upon successful completion of project stages and the associated deliverables, which will be included in the funding agreement.

Applicants must develop a project plan including their proposed stages with clear deliverables and appropriate milestone payments. As outlined in Section 2.4, project activities will vary depending on local needs and any work that has already been undertaken in the target landscape, but generally we foresee three project stages. An example of stages, deliverables and milestone payments is provided in Table 3.

Stage	Start date	End date	Deliverables	Milestone payment amount
<b>Commencement</b>	N/A	N/A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Signed funding agreement</li> </ul>	Commencement payment must be no more than 20% of the grant amount
<b>Stage 1: Scoping</b>	Must be within 3 months of signing Funding Agreement	Must be no more than one year after start date of Stage 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Stakeholder engagement report</li> <li>Detailed project plan for Stages 2 and 3</li> <li>Progress report</li> <li>Financial report</li> </ul>	The amount paid upon completion of Stage 1, e.g. 40%
<b>Stage 2: Landscape planning</b>	Start date of Stage 2 is the same as end date of Stage 1	Must be no more than 2 years after start date of Stage 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Low carbon landscape plan</li> <li>Progress report</li> <li>Financial report</li> </ul>	The amount paid upon completion of Stage 2, e.g. 30%
<b>Stage 3: Market engagement</b>	Start date of Stage 3 is the same as end date of Stage 2	Must be no more than 3 years after start date of Stage 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Final report</li> <li>Case study (photographs and text content for Department use)</li> <li>Financial report (certified by an independent financial professional)</li> </ul>	The final payment must be no less than 10% of the grant amount

**Table 3** Example project stages, deliverables and milestone payments

## 5.4. Eligible expenses

Grant funds and co-contributions can be used for the following expenses:

- project administration costs (to a maximum of 10% of grant funds)
- project management and coordination costs (including contractors and/or salaries for positions that have already been accounted for in organisational budgets, provided there is a clear allocation of time directly related to project-related work)
- travel costs
- expenses associated with stakeholder engagement, such as

- events
- community consultation
- mediation/facilitation
- fees for services directly related to the project such as:
  - baseline data collection
  - carbon abatement advice
  - ecological or hydrological surveys
  - economic analysis, market analysis
  - feasibility studies
  - legal advice
  - financial advice or business case development
- costs related to engagement with Traditional Owners and other Aboriginal stakeholders, cultural heritage assessment and the expertise and time of Traditional Owners or other Aboriginal stakeholders
- fees for an independent qualified accountant to certify the Final Financial Acquittal at the end of your project (required for all grantees except Local Government and State Government agencies).

### 5.5. Ineligible expenses

Grant funding and co-contributions included in the project budget cannot be used for:

- any activities carried out or committed to before a grant is offered and accepted
- expenditure that does not directly support the successful completion of the project
- items that can reasonably be considered as business-as-usual operational costs, including but not limited to:
  - rent, maintenance costs and utilities
  - marketing, communications, promotional costs and website design
- business-as-usual staff costs unrelated to the project such as redundancy or retirement benefits, workers compensation payments, professional fees or memberships
- infrastructure and equipment that can reasonably be assumed to be integral for the core business of successful applicants, such as laptops, phones and vehicles
- salaries for positions that have already been accounted for in organisational budgets, unless there is a clear allocation of time directly to project-related work

- activities that, in the normal course of events, are the core business of the applicant where the applicant is a local or state government authority
- expenditure for on-ground implementation of carbon abatement projects, such as soil preparation, fencing, tree planting
- expenditure on equipment related to on-ground implementation of carbon abatement projects, such as machinery and tools
- expenditure on the acquisition of land for a project
- projects that fund devolved grants
- debt financing or investing of money in exchange for equity into start-ups
- legal costs associated with a consortium, disputes or funding arrangements not agreed to as part of the funding agreement.

The Department will review the project budget in each application during the assessment process. The Department may set limits on spending, make changes or exclude certain costs in the funding agreement or notify you separately.

## 6. Merit assessment criteria

This section sets out the merit assessment criteria that applications will be scored against including the weighting of each and how applicants will be expected to respond to them.

The Assessment Panel will score applications based on the merit criteria and also consider the types and locations of projects proposed, and the organisations involved. The goal is to fund a diverse range of quality projects.

Criteria	Description	Weighting
Project plan	<p>The quality and viability of the proposed project plan, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• strong rationale for the target landscape area, including strategic alignment, understanding of the natural capital assets, and awareness of the opportunities</li> <li>• project plan and budget that demonstrate a logical approach to achieve the proposed outcomes</li> <li>• a strong stakeholder engagement plan.</li> </ul>	20%
Capability	<p>The extent to which the applicant, project partners and project team have demonstrated capability and capacity to deliver the project, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• existing relationships with key stakeholders in the target landscape area</li> <li>• previous experience and expertise in planning and delivering land sector carbon abatement or restoration projects</li> <li>• previous experience and expertise in securing private investment or finance for environmental projects and/or participation in carbon or other environmental markets</li> <li>• ability to influence and support a large cohort of target land managers.</li> </ul>	15%

Criteria	Description	Weighting
Potential for carbon abatement outcomes	<p>The extent to which the application demonstrates potential for carbon abatement , including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the range of opportunities identified for carbon abatement</li> <li>the scale of potential carbon abatement associated with these opportunities</li> <li>the likelihood of achieving the described carbon abatement outcomes, including quality of risk mitigation actions identified.</li> </ul>	15%
Potential for co-benefit outcomes	<p>The extent to which the application demonstrates potential for co-benefits (environmental, social, economic and cultural outcomes other than carbon abatement) , including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the range and scale of co-benefits likely to be achieved</li> <li>how they will be measured and verified and how negative impacts will be managed</li> <li>the likelihood of achieving co-benefits, including quality of risk mitigation actions identified.</li> </ul>	15%
Potential to attract investment	<p>The extent to which the application demonstrates potential to attract investment, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>identified sources of revenue and/or cost savings</li> <li>the likelihood of generating a return on the investment required to implement the opportunities in the target landscape</li> <li>awareness of potential sources of private investment.</li> </ul>	15%
Value for money	<p>The quality and cost effectiveness of the proposed budget for the project, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the total value of cash and in-kind co-contributions as a percentage of the total project cost</li> </ul>	10%



Criteria	Description	Weighting
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the amount of grant funds requested per tonne of carbon abatement estimated from the project.</li> </ul>	
<p>Innovation and knowledge sharing</p>	<p>The extent to which the application shows potential for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>innovation in any components of the project, such as stakeholder engagement, project planning or design, measurement and verification, market opportunities, or financial models</li> <li>outputs and knowledge gained from this project to help the development of environmental markets and build capacity for high-quality carbon abatement within the NSW primary industries and land sector.</li> </ul>	<p>10%</p>

**Table 4** Merit assessment criteria

# 7. Guidance on developing your application

Information in this section is intended to help applicants understand the Low Carbon Landscapes grant program and develop high-quality, eligible applications.

Anyone interested in developing an application should also visit our website. [Frequently asked questions](#) and a recorded information session will be published on our website.

If you would like to discuss your project idea or if you have any questions about the grant program, please contact the PIPAP Market Development team at [pipap.marketdevelopment@environment.nsw.gov.au](mailto:pipap.marketdevelopment@environment.nsw.gov.au).

## 7.1. Target landscape area

This section will help applicants define an appropriate target landscape area.

### What is a landscape?

A landscape is a socio-ecological system that consists of natural and/or human-modified ecosystems, and which is influenced by distinct ecological, historical, economic and socio-cultural processes and activities. The spatial arrangements and governance of a landscape contribute to its unique character.

Within a landscape, there can be various land use types, such as agriculture, forestry, biodiversity conservation, and urban areas. The actors managing these land use types have different objectives, e.g. biodiversity conservation, agricultural productivity or livelihood security.

A landscape should be defined by stakeholders at a scale that is small enough to maintain a degree of manageability, but large enough to be able to deliver multiple functions to stakeholders with different interests. Its boundaries are set by the stakeholders involved in landscape management, and may correspond to, or be a combination of, natural boundaries, distinct land features, socially defined areas such as indigenous territories, and/or jurisdictional and administrative boundaries.

Denier, L., Scherr, S., Shames, S., Chatterton, P., Hovani, L., Stam, N. 2015. [The Little Sustainable Landscapes Book](#), Global Canopy Programme: Oxford

The target landscape area is the area within which your project will explore opportunities and can include both public and privately-owned land. It is not expected that the project will result

in changes in land management across all land within the target landscape area, but there should be a clear rationale for why the area has been selected.

Examples of a target landscape area could include:

- a water catchment area, with multiple private properties and public land such as state forests or national park, where there is potential for carbon abatement projects to mitigate flood risk to downstream communities, improve water quality and increase habitat connectivity
- a landscape dominated by producers of a certain food or fibre product, where there is potential for carbon abatement projects to address supply chain sustainability targets while simultaneously improving productivity

As per Section 3.3 of these Guidelines, the application must demonstrate that the target landscape area:

- is not less than 3,000 hectares
- is wholly within NSW, or with a maximum of 5% of the target landscape area outside of NSW with a clear rationale provided as to why this is required
- is continuous (all land in the target landscape area is connected), or there is a clear rationale provided for the project to include disconnected areas
- includes multiple private and/or public landowners/managers, or there is a clear rationale for the project to be limited to one property only.

When deciding on your target landscape area and describing the rationale for your project, important considerations include:

- why the target landscape area is particularly interesting for this grant program
- the advantages of working at the proposed scale
- specific opportunities for carbon abatement or co-benefits which relate to the features, existing land uses and natural capital assets in the target landscape
- specific opportunities for revenue generation, cost savings or investment
- strategic alignment with relevant plans, strategies, targets, frameworks, and standards
- established stakeholder relationships or supply chain presence.

### **Strategic alignment**

Strategic alignment is important because it ensures that a project is designed to contribute meaningfully to broader global, national, state or regional priorities, and demonstrates a commitment to best practice. This builds trust with stakeholders, such as investors, regulators,

and members of the public, while also demonstrating project value in the wider context of sustainability, and increasing its credibility, likelihood for investment, and long-term impact.

Examples relevant to your project may include:

- Global goals and initiatives: Science Based Targets initiative, GHG Protocol, United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, the Paris Agreement, the Global Biodiversity Framework and the Principles for Responsible Investment.
- National goals and initiatives: Nature Positive Plan, Net Zero Plan and related sector plans, Sustainable Finance Roadmap and Sustainable Finance Taxonomy.
- Disclosure and reporting frameworks and standards: Taskforce on Nature-related Financial Disclosures, Taskforce on Climate-related Financial Disclosures, Global Reporting Initiative and Australian Sustainability Reporting Standards.
- Sector-specific frameworks: Australian Agricultural Sustainability Framework and sector-specific sustainability frameworks such as the Australian Grain Sustainability Framework and Australian Dairy Sustainability Framework.
- State, regional, local strategies and plans: NSW Net Zero Plan, NSW Climate Change Adaptation Strategy, NSW Plan for Nature, NSW Koala Strategy, NSW Blue Carbon Strategy, Regional Natural Resource Management Plans, Regional Water Strategies, Local Government strategies and plans, or any other plans/strategies by your organisation, project partners, and/or key stakeholders.

## Strategic alignment examples

### Project 1

The project will enable us to identify opportunities to reduce our risks and impacts through the supply chain, which will be measured and disclosed in line with the Taskforce on Nature-related Financial Disclosures, the Taskforce on Climate-related Disclosures, and Australian Sustainability Reporting Standards requirements. Initiatives will be informed by and align with the Australian Agricultural Sustainability Framework and our Industry Sustainability Framework.

This project is part of the strategy to achieve our net zero and nature positive targets, and it aligns with our reconciliation action plan. The opportunities that will be explored in the target landscape are consistent with the regional Natural Resource Management Plan, and their implementation will contribute to national and NSW net zero and nature positive targets.

### Project 2

Outcomes from the project will contribute to several of the UN Sustainable Development Goals. We will be guided by the Principles for Responsible Investment and the Australian Sustainable Finance Institute's roadmap and taxonomy in our project design. As our opportunities are refined, we will link to relevant industry sustainability frameworks and national/international reporting standards.

The project directly addresses priorities and targets identified in our Strategic Plan and the Environmental Management Plan of our Council project partner. Opportunities we intend to explore align with and contribute to the goals of the regional water strategy and the NSW Koala Strategy. They will also contribute to the NSW Net Zero Plan, NSW Climate Change Adaptation Strategy and NSW Plan for Nature.

## Mapping your target landscape area

Applications must include maps depicting the target landscape area and surrounding features. These need to be uploaded in PDF format in the application form.

Maps provided with your application must:

- be digitally produced (not hand drawn)
- include a title, legend and scale
- clearly define the boundary of the target landscape area
- show the location of the target landscape area within the regional and/or state context

- where possible, indicate potential project areas for specific opportunities described in your application.

Good maps will demonstrate the location and scope of your project, provide context of surrounding landscape features such as waterways and vegetated and urban areas, and highlight linkages such as neighbouring conservation land or habitat corridors.

Applicants may use any suitable software available to them to create their project maps, but all maps produced must comply with the minimum requirements outlined above.

To assist applicants who may not have GIS software available to them, instructions to develop application maps using the freely available [SEED Map](#) are provided in Appendix B.

Applicants are encouraged to use a range of sources of information to inform the selection and mapping of target landscape areas, such as the tools and resources listed in Section 7.2 below.

### Multiple target landscape areas

An application can include up to five separate target landscape areas. The application needs to provide a strong rationale for why multiple target landscape areas are included. This may include leveraging strategic, operational, financial, or environmental benefits for the project.

If you propose to include multiple target landscape areas in your project, each target landscape area must meet the criteria in Section 3.4. For example, each target landscape area must be not less than 3,000 hectares. Separate maps should be provided for each area.

An alternative is to submit separate applications for each target landscape area. In this case, each application will be assessed separately.

Note: No organisation will be awarded more than 2 grants in this round of the Low Carbon Landscapes grant program.

## 7.2. Potential outcomes

This section will help applicants to identify potential outcomes from the opportunities explored in the project.

Applications need to describe the opportunities they intend to explore for carbon abatement, co-benefits and revenue generation, and estimate the potential outcomes the project could achieve following on-ground implementation. This can just be an initial estimate at the application stage, and new opportunities may be identified during the project.

The following resources might assist you in identifying opportunities and potential outcomes:

- [Understanding carbon farming](#) and [Carbon on Country](#) from the NSW Primary Industries Productivity and Abatement Program.

- [Carbon farming on your land](#) and [Regional Natural Resource Management Plans](#) from NSW Local Land Services.
- [Low emissions agriculture](#) from NSW Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development.
- [Australian Carbon Credit Units](#) from the Australian Government Clean Energy Regulator.
- Carbon Farming Outreach Program [Training Package](#) from the Australian Government Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water.
- Frameworks, strategies and plans such as those identified in the Strategic Alignment section above.

### Potential for carbon abatement outcomes

An estimate of the potential for carbon abatement is required, expressed as the number of tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent per year and/or the total tonnes estimated for a 25-year period. Applicants can use their preferred method to calculate this estimate, but must include rationale, description and supporting evidence of the method used. This will allow the estimate to be verified during the application assessment process. A range of tools and calculators are available, including:

- [LOOC-C](#): a spatial tool used to assess land-based project options under the Australian Carbon Credit Unit (ACCU) Scheme, providing indicative estimates of potential carbon abatement within the project area, in alignment with that of FullCAM.
- [PLANR](#): designed to help landholders participate in the Nature Repair Market Scheme, offering features to assess greenhouse gas emissions, evaluate biodiversity conditions, track trends in tree and ground cover, and estimate project costs.
- [FullCAM](#): a modelling tool that calculates Australia's greenhouse gas emissions from the land sector, providing estimates of carbon stock changes in soil and vegetation over time.
- [BlueCAM](#): used to estimate net carbon abatement for projects registered under the blue carbon method of the ACCU Scheme.
- Agricultural Innovation Australia [Environmental Accounting Platform](#): a tool for calculating the carbon footprint at the commodity, enterprise, and whole of business level, enabling comprehensive tracking of emissions across the supply chain.

More calculators are outlined in the Carbon Farming Outreach Program training package [Topic 3 Other Resources](#).

Applicants without an alternative preferred method for calculating potential carbon abatement are encouraged to use the [LOOC-C Carbon Abatement Calculator](#) for activities where ACCU Scheme methods apply. For each activity or method included in your application, the LOOC-C carbon abatement estimate report should be uploaded as part of your application



to enable verification. An overview of how to use LOOC-C for your carbon abatement estimates is provided in Appendix C.

## Potential for co-benefit outcomes

Co-benefits of carbon abatement projects can include, for example:

- increased biodiversity
- improved water quality
- improved soil health
- greater climate resilience
- Aboriginal cultural benefits
- social or economic benefits for local communities
- productivity gains or other commercial advantages for primary producers.

If you have identified opportunities for these or other co-benefits, you will be required to describe:

- how the co-benefit is expected to be achieved
- where the outcomes would be achieved within the target landscape and how significant they are
- how potential negative impacts will be managed
- how you propose to measure and verify the co-benefits, if known at the time of application
- evidence supporting the co-benefit opportunity, for example a regional management plan showing high biodiversity potential, climate modelling or letter of support from local community representatives.

## Potential to attract investment

Applications need to describe the potential sources of revenue or cost savings that will generate a return on the investment needed for implementation of the project. Potential sources of revenue or cost savings could include:

- environmental credit trading (for example carbon, water or biodiversity credits)
- improved productivity or cost savings for primary producers (for example reduced input costs)
- business and marketing strategies (for example new market access, increased market share or premium prices)

- improved asset value (for example land, business or share price value)
- tax management or incentives (for example deductions, offsets, subsidies or rebates)

Innovative business models with the potential to increase the return on investment for land managers are encouraged. These could include, for example, combining multiple sources of revenue or cost savings, aggregating multiple projects within the target landscape area for economies of scale, or cost-sharing models.

Demonstrating a potential return on investment will be important if the project is going to attract private investment for on-ground implementation. Sources of private investment could include:

- direct investment by the land manager or other project partners
- a loan
- equity investment by a third party.

Some banks offer green loans for projects that can demonstrate an intent to achieve environmental outcomes.

For more information see the [Environmental Markets](#) information provided by NSW Local Land Services.

### 7.3. Project plan

Applications must include a project plan which details the activities that will be undertaken in the scoping stage and provides an indication of expected activities for subsequent stages. At the end of the scoping stage, you will be required to submit a detailed project plan for the remainder of the project.

If applicants have already undertaken scoping in the target landscape area and are able to include a detailed project plan in their application, this does not need to be repeated and the application can exclude this stage.

All proposed activities must meet the scope and eligible project requirements of the grant program (see Sections 3.3 and 3.4).

### 7.4. Project budget

Applications must include a project budget which details the expenditure for the scoping stage and provides an indication of expected expenditure for later stage(s). At the end of the scoping stage, you will be required to submit a more detailed budget for the later stage(s).

The detailed budget produced at the end of the scoping stage must not exceed the approved total grant amount and all expenses must be eligible expenses (see Section 5.4) if grant funds or co-contributions are being used.

## 7.5. Partnership with Aboriginal communities

Aboriginal people maintain a deep and enduring connection to Country. By involving Traditional Owners in landscape planning, projects can integrate Indigenous knowledge systems, which have been honed over tens of thousands of years to manage ecosystems in balance with natural cycles.

Genuine partnerships can also enhance the value of projects by embedding Aboriginal outcomes into their design and delivery. Projects that do this successfully can deliver social, cultural, and economic benefits for Aboriginal communities such as employment, skills development, and cultural renewal while promoting reconciliation and shared stewardship of Country. Such projects often attract higher levels of support, recognition, and investment.

As a minimum all funded projects are expected to:

- consult with all eligible interest holders and apply the principles of Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) when engaging with Aboriginal people/organisations
- ensure Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property rights are upheld
- identify whether the target landscape area includes any areas with recognised Aboriginal peoples' rights or interests including Native Title interests or claims
- detail any consultation with Aboriginal people/organisations undertaken in the development of the application, and/or planned for the project.

Ideally, funded projects will:

- invite input from Aboriginal people/organisations such as Traditional Owners, elders or local Aboriginal land council representatives
- recognise the commitment of time and resources by Aboriginal organisations, communities and people, and allocate a budget for engagement and Aboriginal representatives' expertise and time.

# 8. Application and assessment process

## 8.1. Application model

The application process for the Low Carbon Landscapes grants is competitive. Details on the application and assessment process have been provided in the key steps below.

Applications must be completed in full and include all the information specified. If you do not provide the specified information in the format required, we may seek additional information or clarification from you. If this information is not provided, your application may be unsuccessful.

Applications must satisfy all eligibility criteria. Only eligible applicants will be assessed against the merit assessment criteria.

An assessment panel will be established to undertake the merit assessment process. The assessment panel will make recommendations regarding which applications best meet the merit assessment criteria and the objectives of the Low Carbon Landscapes grant funding.

## 8.2. Key steps

### **Step 1. Confirm that you meet all eligibility requirements prior to applying**

The application includes 3 eligibility criteria you must meet:

- eligible applicants: demonstrate that you are an eligible organisation (see Section 3.1)
- insurance and financial viability: demonstrate that you have the appropriate insurances and financial viability to complete the proposed project (see Section 3.2)
- eligible projects: demonstrate that your project adheres to the project eligibility requirements (see Section 3.3).

If any of the components of the eligibility criteria are not met, your application is ineligible, and you should not apply.

## **Step 2. Review the information in this guide and on our website to guide your application**

This document explains the objectives of this grant program, which will help you to align your project idea with the intent of the funding. The guidelines also explain the merit assessment criteria that will need to be adequately addressed for your application to be considered.

A recorded information session will be uploaded to our website, which will explain the Low Carbon Landscapes grants. A frequently asked questions page will also be available to ensure all potential applicants are provided the same information.

Please ensure you review the draft funding agreement provided on our website prior to applying, to ensure you accept it in its entirety as departures from the funding agreement clauses are discouraged and requests for departures may not be accepted.

If you have any questions, please contact the PIPAP Market Development team: [pipap.marketdevelopment@environment.nsw.gov.au](mailto:pipap.marketdevelopment@environment.nsw.gov.au). Please note that any information provided to you in response to your questions may also be added to the frequently asked questions page on our website.

## **Step 3. Fill out the application form in the Grant Management System, and submit it for assessment along with all the required documentation**

Complete and submit your application through the [Grant Management System](#) online application form before the grant application period closes.

Applications received after the due date and time (late applications) will only be accepted under exceptional circumstances, at the discretion of the chairperson of the Assessment Panel (Chairperson), who must be satisfied that the integrity and competitiveness of the process can be maintained.

After you complete and submit your application through the Grant Management System, you will receive an email with an application number to confirm your application has been received.

Note: If you do not receive an email, please contact the PIPAP Market Development team [pipap.marketdevelopment@environment.nsw.gov.au](mailto:pipap.marketdevelopment@environment.nsw.gov.au).

## **Step 4. Receive the outcome of your application**

Your application will first be reviewed against the eligibility criteria. Projects that meet all eligibility requirements will proceed to merit assessment. If your application is deemed ineligible during the eligibility review, you will receive an email.

An assessment panel will review eligible applications against the merit assessment criteria and recommend successful applicants for approval of a grant. We expect this step to take

around 6 weeks, depending on whether additional expertise or information is required to assess the applications.

During either the eligibility or merit assessments, we may ask you for more information. You will have 5 business days from the date of our written request to provide a response.

If your application is successful, we will send you a written offer and the Low Carbon Landscapes funding agreement.

If your application is not successful, you will receive an email. Feedback on your application will be available on request.

### **Step 5. If you are successful, execute the funding agreement and commence your project**

If your application is successful, we will execute the funding agreement with you. Following the signing of your Low Carbon Landscapes funding agreement, your project can commence. Your project must commence no later than 3 months after the signing of your funding agreement, including a project inception meeting with our program team.

## 8.3. Due diligence

At any time during the eligibility or merit assessment process, we may undertake due diligence on your application. Due diligence may include, but is not limited to:

- contacting identified project participants
- requesting further information from you as reasonably required by the Department in respect to the eligibility and merit assessment criteria.

We will undertake an assessment of the applicant, including due diligence checks to confirm sound financial standing. You must comply with any request for information as part of these checks. As a result of the due diligence checks, we may at our discretion require that the applicant provide a form of guarantee for the performance of the funding agreement (for example, a parent company guarantee).

## 8.4. Final decision

We have the discretion to decline, refuse or cease to assess an application at any time if we believe an application is unlikely to be successful.

Our decision is final in all matters, including the:

- approval of applications for funding
- amount of funding awarded

- terms and conditions of funding.

Resubmission of applications or requests for re-review will not be accepted, unless otherwise decided by the Department. We will advise you in writing about the outcomes of the assessment of your application.

Without limitation, the submission of your application is not, and does not represent, an agreement to negotiate an offer or guarantee funding by us. You acknowledge that we are free to cease assessment of an application at any time prior to the finalisation of the funding agreement without any liability or obligation to you or any third party (including without limitation any consortium, related bodies corporate or group member). Any actions undertaken by you or any third party arising out of or in connection with an application is at your or the third party's own risk and expense. There is no binding agreement between the parties until the funding agreement has been fully executed.

## 8.5. Additional information

For up-to-date information on this Low Carbon Landscapes funding opportunity, please visit our website.

If you have any questions about this funding opportunity, please email us at [pipap.marketdevelopment@environment.nsw.gov.au](mailto:pipap.marketdevelopment@environment.nsw.gov.au).



## 9. Funding agreements

### 9.1. Funding agreement and commercial principles

Successful applicants must enter into a funding agreement with us to receive funding. This agreement will detail the applicant's and any other relevant parties' obligations in relation to the project.

A funding agreement template, representing terms we consider appropriate, is available on our website.

We do not encourage departures from the funding agreement template. However, where you cannot accept the terms of the funding agreement template in its current form, you may use a template departures request form to clearly set out and qualify the reasons for your requested departure. We may or may not accept these departures at our discretion.

You will be given the opportunity to submit your departures request after you receive your funding offer and funding agreement.

Where you do not submit a departures table, you will be deemed to have accepted the terms of the funding agreement template. Where you do submit a departures table, the departures table will be taken as an exhaustive list of your comments on the funding agreement template.

Applicants should be aware that we expect the terms of an executed funding agreement to reflect the applicant's careful and thorough expectations for the project's development. For example, you should ensure that there is a rigorous and realistic basis for the project milestone timing, associated payments and project outcomes as set out in the funding agreement.

### 9.2. Funding offers

Any payment of funds is subject to the Department making a funding offer and the execution of a funding agreement. Applicants who receive an offer to negotiate must keep the offer confidential until the execution of a funding agreement. If a project is successful in obtaining a funding offer, the applicant must seek prior consent from the Department before making any public communications as to the outcome of the funding round.

# 10. Further information

## 10.1. Commencement and authority for Low Carbon Landscapes grant guidelines

These grant guidelines have been approved by us, the NSW Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water (the Department). The guidelines may be amended from time to time or withdrawn. The Department has the authority to award funding and execute and amend the agreements that allow the NSW Government to provide this funding.

## 10.2. Limitations

### 10.2.1. No representation, warranty or guarantee

The NSW Government, its Ministers, the Department and each of their officers, employees and agents (the Department parties) do not give any representation, warranty or guarantee, whether express or implied, in relation to the information contained in any materials released by the Department associated with the Low Carbon Landscapes grant funding, including their completeness, accuracy, currency or reliability or the process by which they were prepared. The Department parties will not give opinions regarding, legal, accounting, regulatory, taxation or any other matters. Without limiting the foregoing, in relation to those matters:

- nothing in the funding materials (including without limitation, these guidelines, or the funding agreement) is or should be regarded as advice
- you must satisfy yourself by undertaking your own investigations or seeking advice at your own cost.

Note: nothing contained in the funding material is, or may be relied upon, as a promise, guarantee, representation, or warranty.

The funding materials are not an offer, recommendation or invitation by any Department party in respect of any contract or commitment and (subject to a funding agreement being fully executed) nothing in the materials will form the basis of any contract or commitment. The applicant must rely entirely upon your own investigations, review and analysis in relation to its assessment of whether to apply to and participate in this program.

### 10.2.2. No obligation to update

The funding materials, the information contained herein and the matters to which it relates may be amended, updated or withdrawn at any time, at the Department's discretion. However,

the Department parties do not accept any responsibility to update, supplement or correct the funding materials, nor to inform applicants about any matter that may affect the funding materials.

### 10.2.3. No liability

Each Department party expressly disclaims all liability for any loss or damage incurred by any person arising from, or because of, any person's use of or reliance on any information, statement, opinion or matter (express or implied) contained in, derived from, or omitted from the materials, except for any liability which cannot be excluded as a matter of law.

## 10.3. Confidentiality and disclosure of information

Unless otherwise stated, any commercial-in-confidence information provided by you as part of, or in connection with, a registration, application or negotiation process will be treated confidentially by the Department. We may disclose commercial-in-confidence information provided by you to the following parties:

- the Minister or Minister's office
- the NSW Ombudsman and Audit Office of NSW
- Department staff, consultants and advisers
- any agency or body of the NSW Government, or any other organisation or individual considered by the Department to have a need or an entitlement to know that information (including any federal, state or territory agency or body), where the need or entitlement to know that information arises out of or in connection with the Department's assessment, verification or due diligence of any aspect of your application
- where authorised or required by law to be disclosed, to those parties.

If we disclose commercial-in-confidence information to any of the above parties, we will inform the party that the information is strictly confidential. We will otherwise only disclose commercial-in-confidence information provided by you with your consent.

## 10.4. Complaints

Complaints concerning the Low Carbon Landscapes grant funding should be emailed to [pipap.marketdevelopment@environment.nsw.gov.au](mailto:pipap.marketdevelopment@environment.nsw.gov.au). Complaints will, in the first instance, be reviewed by us. If we cannot resolve the complaint within 30 business days of receipt, we will provide details of a nominated complaints and review officer from the Complaints Team who will advise the next steps. If the complaint is still not resolved satisfactorily, the NSW Ombudsman can be reached for external review of the administrative actions of the Department.

## 10.5. Conflict of interest

Applicants must disclose any actual, potential or perceived conflicts of interest as part of their application or, if successful, as they arise during project implementation. Conflicts of interest are any factors that could compromise the judgement, decisions, or actions of a person or group of people.

Such conflicts may relate to:

- engaging consultants to assist you with the application who have advised or are currently advising the Department
- procurement or employment
- direct negotiations
- sponsorships
- partnerships
- any other situations which could lead to unfavourable advantage.

You are not automatically precluded from engaging a consultant or service provider already undertaking work for the Department. Factors which will be considered when determining whether a consultant or service provider can be engaged by a grant recipients include:

- the size of the organisation, that is a large consultancy is more likely to be able to use separate teams on a project
- the nature of the work being undertaken by the consultancy, that is similar work increases the potential for probity risks to arise
- the extent to which individuals involved had access to confidential information and whether this information is to be released to the market.

Such determination will be made in accordance with the Department delegations for expenditure.

If the engagement with the grant recipient is permitted, the Department will consider seeking assurance from the consultant or service provider that it will put appropriate processes in place to manage probity risks, for example appropriate information barriers and separation of roles.

As part of ongoing reporting requirements (such as the project milestone report), you are required to update any conflict of interests, where applicable. You will be asked whether any conflicts of interest have arisen during the reporting period or if any are likely to arise. Updated declarations and confirmations are required from you when new personnel join the project or at the commencement of a new project or phase within a project.

Note: You are advised to contact us if you are unsure whether something constitutes an actual, potential or perceived conflict of interest.

All program staff and assessment panel members will undergo a conflict of interest process as part of any application assessment.

### 10.6. Evaluation

We will evaluate Low Carbon Landscape grants to determine how funded projects have contributed to the program's objectives. We may also interview you or ask you for more information to help us understand how the grant impacted you and to evaluate how effective the funding was in achieving its objectives. Without limiting any specific reporting or evaluation requirements (or similar) set out in any funding agreement you execute with the Department, we may contact you up to 3 years after you finish your project for more information to assist with this evaluation. You consent to the use of your information for this purpose by:

- the Department
- the Minister or Minister's office
- the NSW Ombudsman and Audit Office of NSW
- Department staff, consultants, and advisors
- any agency or body of the NSW Government, or any other organisation or individual considered by the Department to have a need or an entitlement to know what information (including any federal, state, or territory agency or body), where that need or entitlement to know that information arises out of or in connection with the purpose above.

### 10.7. Grant acknowledgement

If a successful applicant makes a public statement about a funded project, they are required to acknowledge the support provided by the Department.

### 10.8. Discretion of the Department

Notwithstanding anything else in these guidelines, by applying, you acknowledge and agree the Department has the right (at its absolute discretion) to reject, refuse to consider or cease to assess an application at any time if it is of the view (at its absolute discretion) that an application is unlikely to be successful.

## 10.9. No contract or liability

Despite any part of these guidelines, or any other documentation that forms part of this process (in part or together), by submitting an application, applicants:

- acknowledge that neither the applicant nor the Department intends to create any contract or other relationship under which the Department is obliged to conduct the process in relation to the funding in any manner or at all, and that there is in fact no such contract or other relationship in existence
- accordingly, acknowledge that neither this document, nor any submission will create any legal or other obligation upon the Department to conduct the process in any manner or at all
- release the Department from any claim it may otherwise have been able to make or bring against the Department, arising out of or in connection with the Department's conduct.

Potential applicants and interested parties should refer to our website for up-to-date information: <https://www.energy.nsw.gov.au/low-carbon-landscapes-grants>

Any questions or clarifications can be sent in writing to:  
[pipap.marketdevelopment@environment.nsw.gov.au](mailto:pipap.marketdevelopment@environment.nsw.gov.au).

## 10.10. 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 another lawful requirement.

The Department may also disclose information you supply to us for the purpose of evaluating and/or auditing its grant programs. If you require strict commercial and/or personal confidentiality, you should address this in your application. More information on the Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009 is available on the website.

# Appendix A: Terms and definitions

The following terms are used throughout these guidelines.

Term	Definition
<b>Abatement</b>	See carbon abatement.
<b>ABN</b>	Australian Business Number.
<b>ACCU</b>	Australian Carbon Credit Unit.
<b>Applicant</b>	An entity referred to in these guidelines that applies for Low Carbon Landscapes grant funding.
<b>Application</b>	Submission of an application form and other required documents for Low Carbon Landscapes grant funding.
<b>Application form</b>	Document or documents issued under Low Carbon Landscapes for applicants applying for funding.
<b>Business days</b>	A day that is not a Saturday, Sunday, public holiday or bank holiday in Sydney, New South Wales.
<b>Carbon abatement</b>	Either (a) the removal of one or more greenhouse gases from the atmosphere; or (b) the avoidance of emissions of one or more greenhouse gases.
<b>Carbon sequestration</b>	The removal of carbon dioxide from the atmosphere by storing it in plants, dead organic matter or soil.
<b>CER</b>	Clean Energy Regulator.
<b>Commercial principles</b>	A set of principles made available by the Department which broadly represent how the Department expects funding arrangements to be provided and the outcomes this will achieve.
<b>Commercial-in-confidence information</b>	Any information that discloses your financing arrangements, cost structure, profit margins or full base case financial model; intellectual property for which you have an interest; any matter the disclosure of which would place you at a substantial commercial disadvantage.
<b>Conflict of interest</b>	A situation where a person decides or exercises a power in a way that may be, or may be perceived to be, influenced by either material personal interests (financial or nonfinancial) or material personal associations.

Term	Definition
<b>Corporations Act</b>	Corporations Act 2001 (Commonwealth).
<b>Devolved Grants</b>	Projects offering grants to other organisations.
<b>Eligibility criteria</b>	Criteria, set out in these guidelines, which must be met for an application to be eligible for Low Carbon Landscapes grant funding.
<b>Eligible applications</b>	An application for Low Carbon Landscapes grant funding that the Department has determined is eligible for assessment in accordance with these guidelines.
<b>Eligible interest holder</b>	A person or organisation that has a legal interest in the land on which a project is being, or will be, conducted. Project proponents must seek consent from eligible interest holders to run a project with the CER.
<b>Free, prior and informed consent (FPIC)</b>	A principle used in development projects worldwide which advocates for the right to self-determination for Indigenous people. It involves consent for projects to go ahead before they commence, being free from coercion, informed through accessible communication and collective consent from the Indigenous community.
<b>Funding agreement</b>	An agreement between the Department and a recipient under which Low Carbon Landscapes grant funding is provided to the recipient.
<b>Guidelines</b>	Approved framework for the operation and administration of Low Carbon Landscapes grant funding. Note: This document will be amended and updated as needed to be current and accurate.
<b>Ineligible expenditure</b>	Expense items or categories, as set out in these guidelines, which grant funds and co-contributions cannot be spent on.
<b>Landscape</b>	A landscape is a socio-ecological system that consists of natural and/or human-modified ecosystems, and which is influenced by distinct ecological, historical, economic and socio-cultural processes and activities. <sup>1</sup> Also see Target Landscape Area.

<sup>1</sup> Denier, L., Scherr, S., Shames, S., Chatterton, P., Hovani, L., Stam, N. 2015. The Little Sustainable Landscapes Book, Global Canopy Programme: Oxford.



Term	Definition
<b>Landscape approach</b>	<p>A conceptual framework whereby stakeholders in a landscape aim to reconcile competing social, economic and environmental objectives.</p> <p>A landscape approach aims to ensure the realisation of local level needs and action (i.e. the interests of different stakeholders within the landscape), while also considering goals and outcomes important to stakeholders outside the landscape, such as national governments or the international community.</p> <p>A landscape approach may be undertaken by one or more stakeholders who engage in actions independently, or by multiple actors as part of a collaborative, multi-stakeholder process. This multi-stakeholder process is referred to as integrated landscape management.<sup>1</sup></p>
<b>Merit criteria</b>	Criteria, set out in these guidelines, against which eligible applications will be assessed by the assessment panel.
<b>Minister</b>	The Minister with responsibility for Low Carbon Landscapes grant funding, which at the time of publishing for these guidelines is the NSW Minister for the Environment.
<b>Natural capital</b>	The world's stocks of natural assets which include geology, soil, air, water and all living things. It is from this natural capital that humans derive a wide range of services, often called ecosystem services, which make human life possible. <sup>2</sup>
<b>NSW Net Zero Plan</b>	NSW Government Net Zero Plan Stage 1: 2020-2030.
<b>NSW</b>	The State of New South Wales.
<b>On-ground implementation</b>	<p>The physical works involved in delivering a project. For carbon abatement projects this could involve activities such as soil preparation, fencing, tree planting or livestock management changes.</p> <p>Low Carbon Landscapes grant funds cannot be used for on-ground implementation or equipment or supplies related to on-ground implementation.</p>
<b>PIPAP</b>	The Primary Industries Productivity and Abatement Program.

<sup>2</sup> [United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity](#)

Term	Definition
<b>Recipient</b>	An applicant that has been offered Low Carbon Landscapes grant funding and has entered into a funding agreement with the Department.
<b>SmartyGrants</b>	The Department’s online grant administration system provided by Our Community Pty Ltd.
<b>Target Landscape Area</b>	The area defined by the application within which a project funded by the Low Carbon Landscapes grant program will explore opportunities aiming to deliver carbon abatement alongside other benefits. Criteria for eligible target landscape areas are provided in Section 3.3.
<b>The Department</b>	The NSW Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water (DCCEEW).

# Appendix B: Instructions for SEED Maps

SEED is a web-based portal where the community and government come to access, interrogate, contribute, and share NSW environmental data. It streamlines the discoverability and accessibility of environmental data, which empowers evidence-based decision making and increased trust through greater transparency.

The following instructions are intended to assist Low Carbon Landscapes grant applicants to produce maps and shape files to include with their application. For comprehensive instructions see the '[Need help?](#)' section on the SEED website.

## Part A. SEED Map overview

Go to <https://www.seed.nsw.gov.au/> and click **SEED map** on the top navigation or **Launch SEED Map**. This will open the SEED map landing page, as shown in Figure 1.

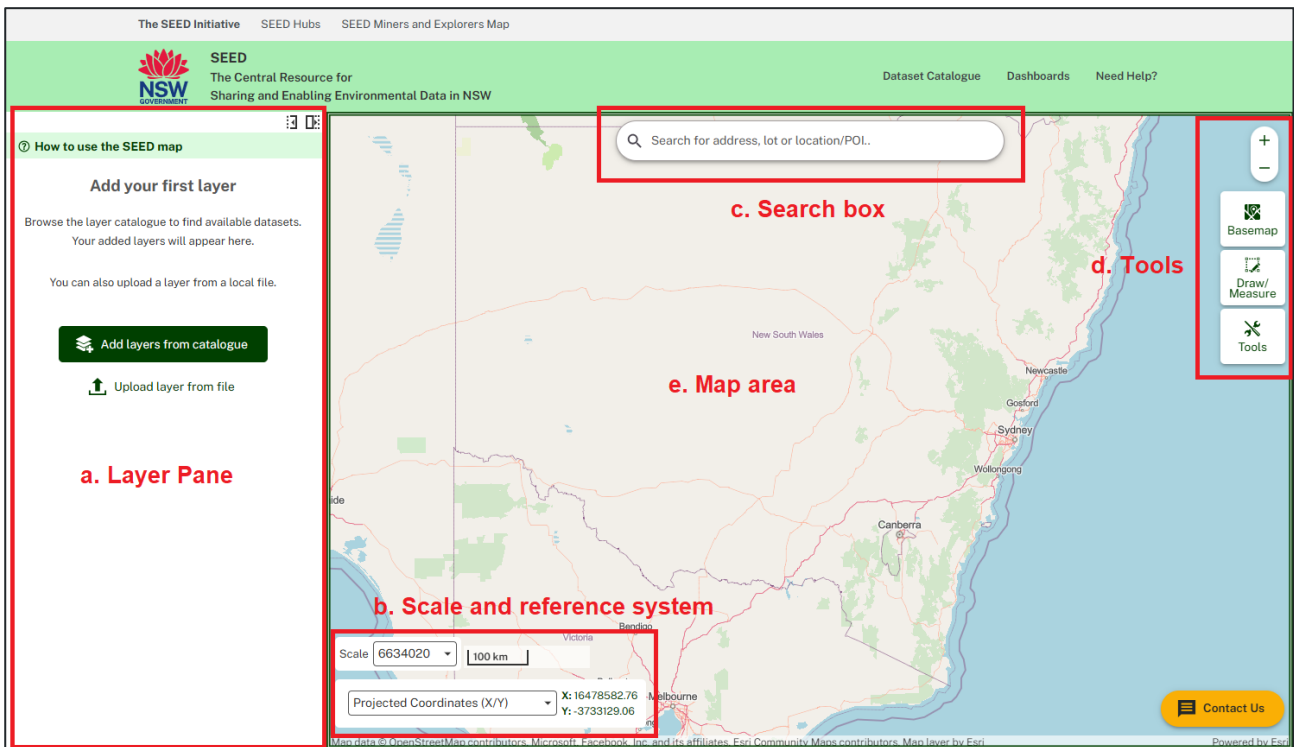


Figure 1: SEED Map overview

The SEED Map has five main parts:

- a) Layer Pane: displays all data layers added to your map. See Part E for instructions to add or upload data layers.
- b) Scale and reference system: the scale display shows the current map scale. This refreshes as you zoom in or out. The coordinates show where your cursor is. You can change the display units by clicking the arrow in the box Projected Coordinates (X/Y).
- c) Search Box: you can enter your property address in the field box for the map to display the location.
- d) Tools: these allow you to customise your map, see Figure 2 below.
- e) Map Area: the main area, where you can draw your map.




+	The plus allows you to zoom in	 <b>Draw/ Measure</b>	Add or edit points, lines, polygons and notes, take measurements and import/export
-	The negative allows you to zoom out	 <b>Basemap</b>	Options to change the map background
		 <b>Tools</b>	Includes print to produce a PDF of your map, and more advanced tools

Figure 2: SEED Map tools

## Part B. Creating a polygon using the Draw/measure tool options

Each element you create in SEED is its own graphic. To reduce clutter, use the Measure tool to create polygons instead of the Draw markup tool.

1. Choose the **Basemap** you prefer, generally either the NSW Base Map or the NSW Imagery. You can change your basemap selection at any time.
2. Search for your target landscape area using the **Search Box** or manually pan and zoom in on the map area.
3. Before creating polygons, check your units. Click **Draw/Measure** then **Measure**, then select **Units**. The 'Select Measurement System and Units' window will appear. Set the measurement system to Metric, length units to Meters, and area units to Hectares.
4. To draw a polygon, click **Draw/Measure** then **Measure**, then select **Area**. Click once on the map to set the first point of your area boundary. Draw the target landscape area by clicking on additional points along the boundary of the area. Press DELETE if you need to remove the last point. To complete your polygon, click on the first point you set.
5. After creating your target landscape area, draw additional polygons for specific features or opportunities you want to highlight within or adjacent to your area (for example potential tree planting zones, habitat corridors or biodiversity features). To

make new polygons align with the corners and sides of your existing polygons, enable snapping by clicking **Draw/Measure** then **Draw Markup**, then select **Enable Snapping**.

6. Note the 'Area' value of your polygons for later use as these will be removed in the next step to reduce clutter on your map. Write these down or save a screenshot.

## Part C. Exporting/Importing markup

7. SEED allows you to export your markup (polygons) for later use. Exporting and then importing removes the area, perimeter and line length data to reduce clutter on your map. Click **Draw/Measure**, then **Export Markup**. This automatically downloads a ZIP file named 'Results.zip' containing your shapefile (.shp) and necessary GIS attachments. In the grant application form you will be asked to upload these shape files.
8. After exporting your polygons, delete everything on the map area by clicking **Draw/Measure**, then **Clear Markup**.
9. To import the ZIP file, click **Draw/Measure**, then **Import Markup**. You will be prompted with a 'Select File to continue' window. Click **Upload** and choose the ZIP file you downloaded (for example 'Results.zip'). Click **Ok** to add your polygons back on the map.

## Part D. Annotation

10. To label your polygons or add other notes, click **Draw/Measure**, then **Add Note**. Click **Select on Map**. Click the location on the map where you want the note, then write your note in the 'Location Note' window (e.g. Target Landscape Area 5,000ha, or Riparian Tree Planting Zone approx. 500ha). You can adjust the text size and style by clicking **Display Options**.
11. To change or delete an annotation, click **Draw/Measure** then **Edit Note**, then select the annotation you wish to modify. The annotation's size automatically adjusts when you zoom in/out.

## Part E. Adding data layers from the SEED catalogue

SEED was developed for the NSW community as a central hub for environmental data. It offers a large catalogue of data layers that you can overlay on your map to provide additional insights into your landscape.

12. To add data layers, look to the left of the screen, in the Layer Pane click **Add layers from catalogue**. Select a category (for example Land) to view the available data layers (for example Land Tenure NSW). Check the box next to a layer to add it to your map. You can add multiple layers but be mindful that too many layers can clutter the map and make it difficult to interpret. You can print multiple versions of the map with different layers to overcome this problem.

- The data layers you select will appear in the Layer Pane. Tick the checkboxes to display specific layers on your map. Beside the layer name are three small vertical dots - click on these dots to adjust the layer transparency for optimal visuals. The layers you display will also appear on the 'Legends' page of your PDF map output.

## Part F. Printing your map

- Click **Tools** then **Print**. A bright rectangle will appear surrounded by the rest of the map shaded. The land within the bright rectangle will be displayed in your exported map. Adjust the zoom and pan to position your project area as desired within the bright rectangle.
- The Layer Pane on the left will change to a 'Print Map' window. Enter your **Title** which will appear at the top of the exported map (for example Landscape target area map) and **Notes** (optional, no more than 180 characters) which will appear in the bottom right corner of the exported map (for example Location, NSW). Click **Print**. After a few moments, a notification will appear at the top of your screen advising a map is being generated. Once complete, click the underlined '**Click to download**'. A new tab will automatically open with your map (and a Legend page, if you added data layers). Click the **Save** icon on the top right of the page. In the grant application form you will be asked to upload your map(s) as well as the shape files from instruction 7 above.

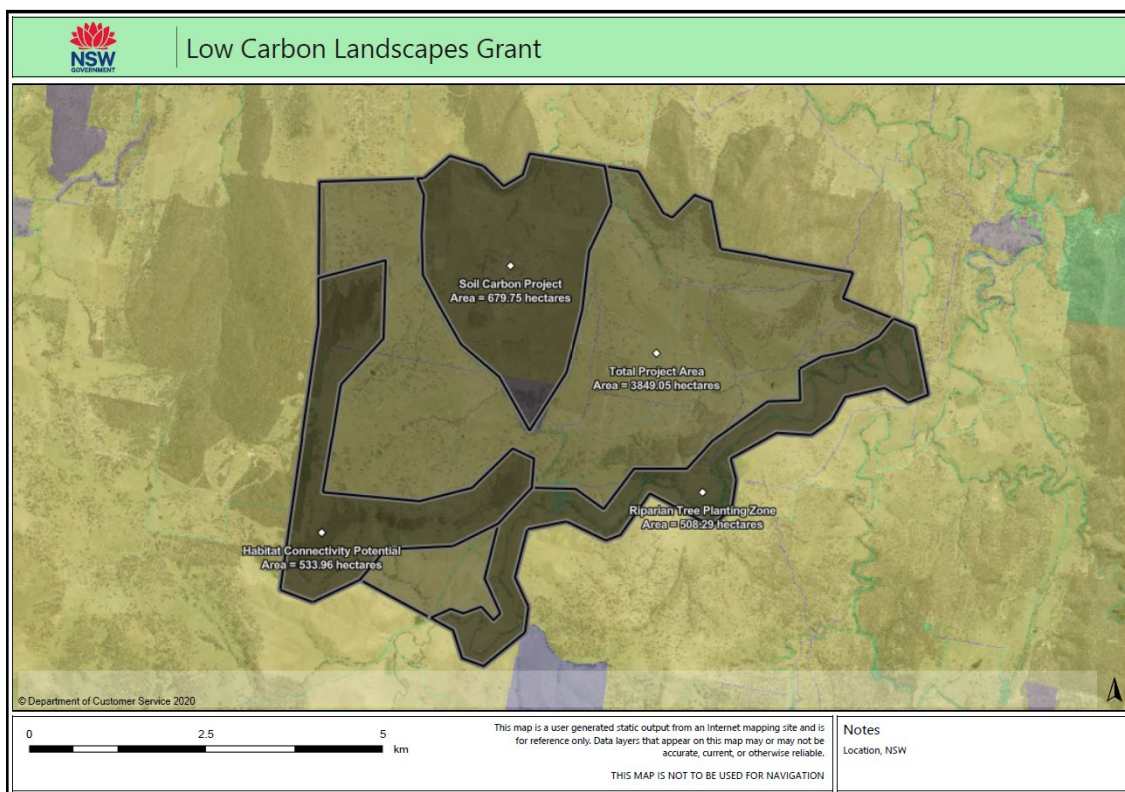


Figure 3: Sample map of Landscape Target Area with NSW Land Tenure data layer

# Appendix C: Overview of LOOC-C

The Landscape Options and Opportunities for Carbon Abatement Calculator (LOOC-C) helps landholders assess carbon abatement potential on their land under the Australian Carbon Credit Unit (ACCU) Scheme. It provides estimates based on project location, size and land condition, assisting with decisions about project viability.

The following instructions are intended to assist Low Carbon Landscapes grant applicants to produce carbon abatement estimates to include with their application. For more information and a short instructional video see the [About](#) section of the LOOC-C website.

## Farm details

1. Visit the LOOC-C website and click the **Explore your options** button to start. This will direct you to the Farm Details page.
2. Use the **Area Tool** to draw the area where you want to explore options. This size of the selected area will be shown in the bottom left corner of the map. You can only create one polygon at a time - if you want to explore different specific areas within your Target Landscape Area you will need to do each one separately.
3. Answer the questions below the map area. The options presented will vary depending on your answers. Once completed, click Next to proceed to the Method Discovery page.

## Method discovery

4. The Method Discovery page provides a summary of your farm details, an inset map of the area you selected, and a list of available carbon abatement methods.
5. For some methods a carbon abatement estimate is included on this page. For other methods there are multiple options available or additional information is needed – click the links at the bottom of the card to explore these further (for example **‘Estimate’** or **‘View Estimates’**).
6. Click **Save as PDF** to export a summary of the available methods and carbon abatement estimates.

## Method details

7. Clicking on a method card will show you more information such as:
  - a. Method details – the number of ACCUs you could be credited with annually and over 25 years, along with an overview of the method



- b. Estimate – if the selected method requires more information this section will have questions to complete, and the number of ACCUs you could be credited with will depend on the details you provide
  - c. Farm co-benefits – this section will highlight the co-benefits of adopting the selected method on your farm.
8. Click **Save as PDF** to export the details for this method and the carbon abatement estimates. Note that this PDF is more detailed than the one generated on the Method Discovery page. This PDF could be used to support your grant application as you will be asked to upload evidence to support your carbon abatement estimates.

## Next steps

9. Click **Next Steps** to access further information about the ACCU Scheme.
10. For additional details on how the estimates are calculated, visit the **About** page.





For more information

<https://www.energy.nsw.gov.au/low-carbon-landscapes-grants>