



Department of
Primary Industries and
Regional Development

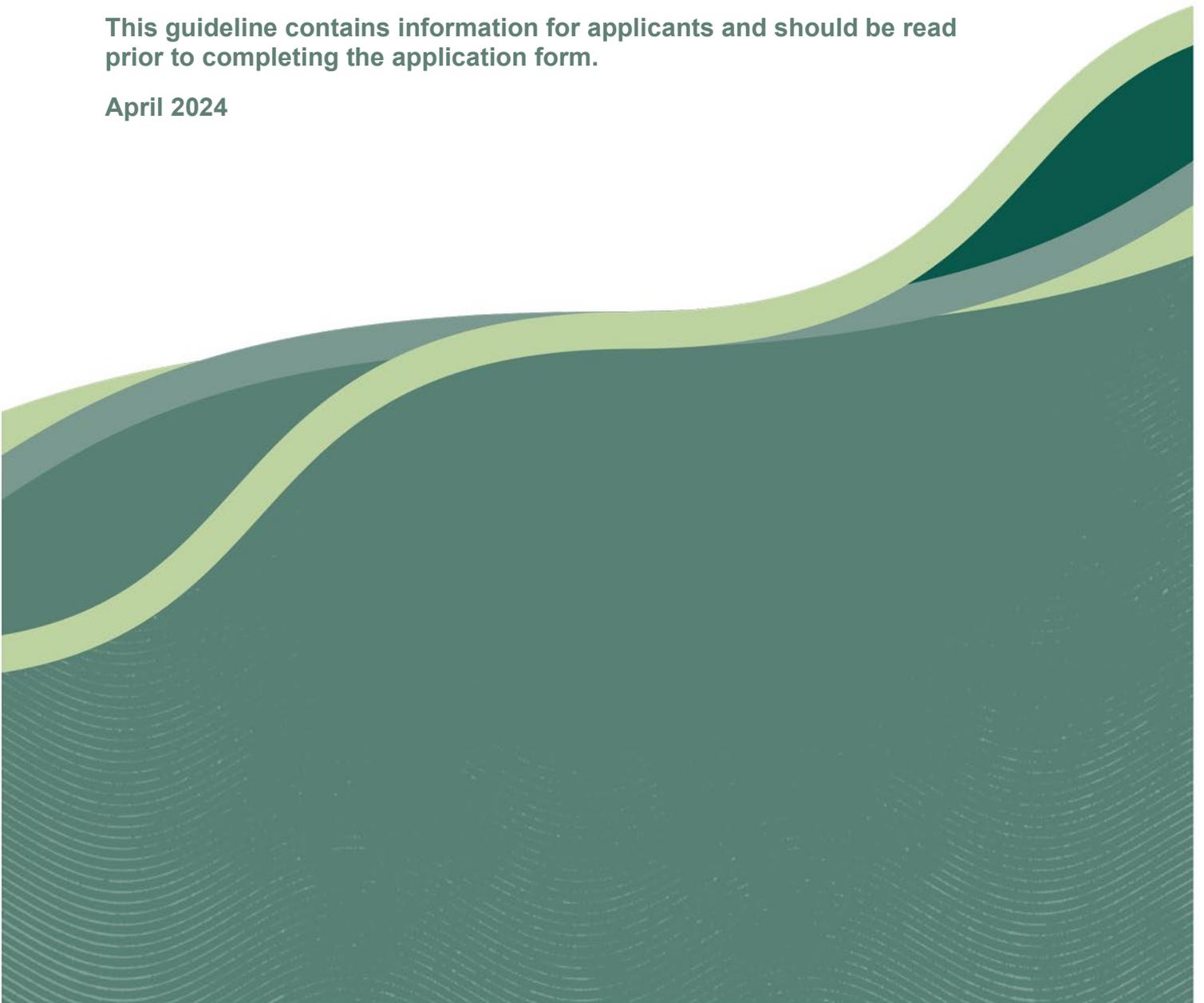
Protect
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Southern Forests Infrastructure Support Scheme

Scheme Guidelines

This guideline contains information for applicants and should be read prior to completing the application form.

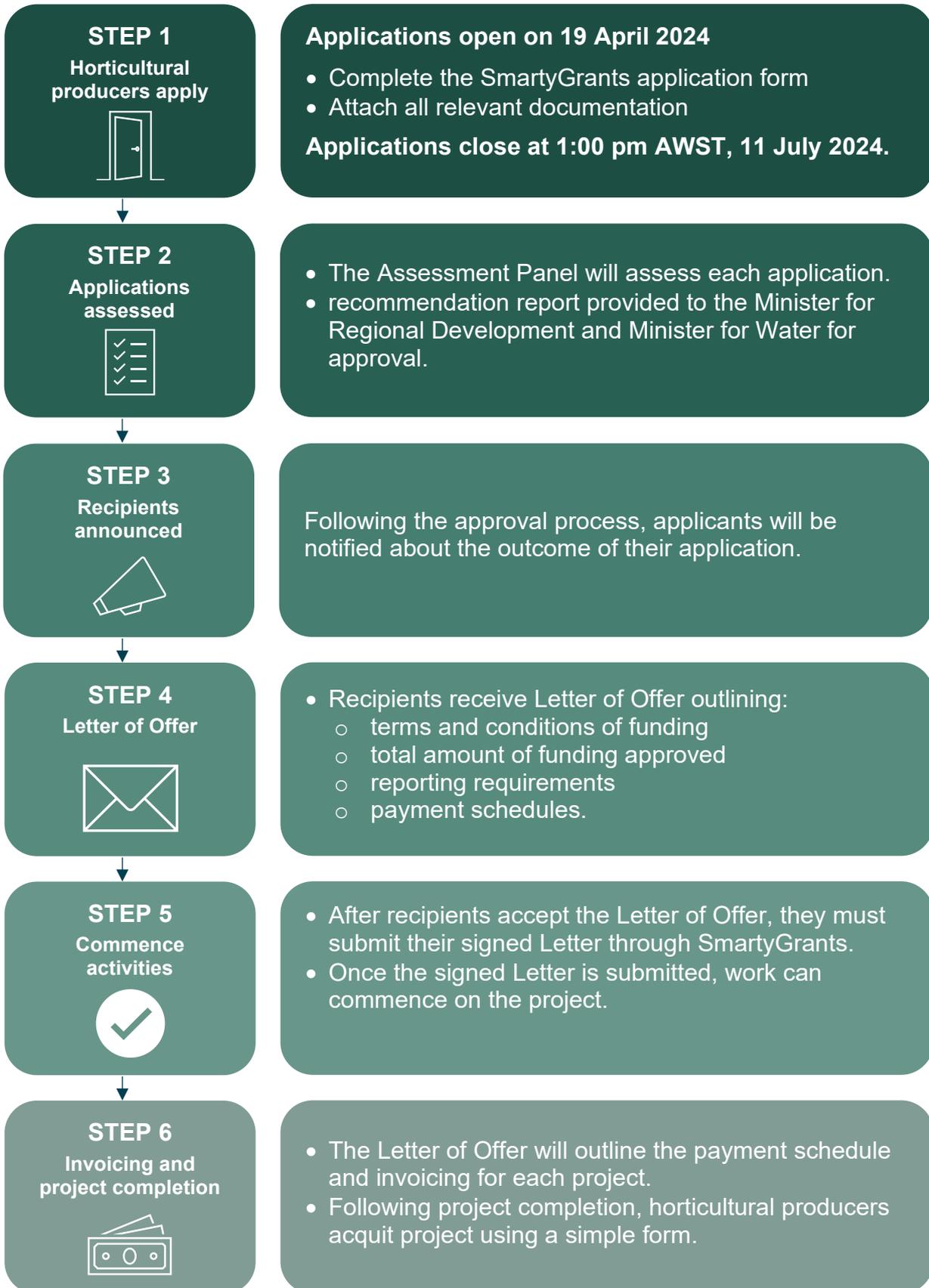
April 2024



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1.0 Process



2.0 Scheme Overview

2.1 Background

The Western Australian Government understands the climate change challenges faced by the horticulture producers in the Warren-Donnelly region and is committed to providing support. In October 2022, the Southern Forests Irrigation Reference Group was appointed to provide advice on measures to deliver water security to the Warren-Donnelly horticulture industry.

In response to the group's recommendations, the WA Government will co-fund projects that:

- Improve water security for horticulture businesses.
- Provide benefits to the broader Warren-Donnelly community; and
- Consider the water needs of the environment.

2.2 Southern Forests Infrastructure Support Scheme

The Southern Forests Irrigation Infrastructure Support Scheme is a subset of the above that aims to support farmers in the Warren-Donnelly region to be better prepared to meet the prospect of reduced water availability due to the impacts of climate change. The Scheme will be open to eligible landowners to construct suitable infrastructure on their property that will provide better water security and improve sustainability.

2.3 Objectives of the Southern Forests Infrastructure Support Scheme

- Improve water security for horticultural producers in the Warren-Donnelly region to better prepare against the impacts of climate change.
- Provide practical support to horticultural producers to strengthen their water management practices.
- Improve water management through increased measurement and monitoring; and
- Support horticultural producers in enhancing water use efficiencies and highlight the importance of planning for future water needs.

2.4 Funding limits and timeframes

Based upon the amount of funding requested, there are three categories of funding that apply. They include:

- Under \$20,000
- \$20,001 to \$50,000
- \$50,001 to \$100,000.

The number of questions and level of detail required will increase subject to the funding category selected. The objective of the Scheme is that funding be distributed to as many applicants as possible. Further funding rounds may be considered subject to take up and available funding.

Applicants must demonstrate a cash funding contribution of 50% of their project. The Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development (DPIRD) will provide a 50% contribution on an applicant's project up to \$20,000, \$50,000 or \$100,000 depending on

funding category selected. Funding will be released in one final payment at the end of the project. However, DPIRD may consider alternative payment schedules of up to one interim payment on a case-by-case basis, but this will need to be requested by the applicant at the time of application along with a justification for why it is needed.

The timeframes are listed below:

- Applications open on 19 April 2024
- Applications close at 1:00pm AWST on 11 July 2024
- Applications will be open for 12 weeks.
- Infrastructure must be able to be delivered within two years of funding approval, longer periods for larger projects may be considered on a case-by-case basis.

2.5 Activities that can be funded

The Scheme is outcome focused; applicants will need to clearly describe what is being asked for and how it will improve water security. While the following is provided as guide for what infrastructure is eligible and not eligible, other infrastructure may be considered if a strong case is provided.

Activities that can be funded	
	Water efficient irrigation delivery improvements, including new or upgraded systems: sprinkler, drippers, automation systems and software.
	Water measurement devices, including probes and water meters, as well as systems for monitoring and measuring dam levels, water flows, on-farm usage, and soil moisture—whether new or upgraded.
	Evapotranspiration measures such as bird/crop netting which have proven benefits of reducing crop water use as well as crop protection from birds, hail and storms.
	Farm dam bypass system, either new or upgrades to existing systems.
	Must be future/proposed works; retrospective items will not be considered. Items must be infrastructure that can demonstrate to the Assessment Panel's satisfaction that it will improve water security.

The aim of the Scheme is to distribute funding to a wide range of horticultural producers across the Warren-Donnelly region. To support this objective, successful applications in the first instance will be limited to one property per landholder. You may submit multiple applications but only one will be selected if all selection criteria are met. Multiple properties from the same or related applicants may be considered in subsequent rounds, contingent upon the uptake of the current round and the availability of future funding.

Infrastructure applied for can be bundled or singular; however, the total cap for contribution is 50% of the applicable funding category per landholder.

2.6 Activities that CAN NOT be funded

The following activities and projects will not be eligible under the Scheme	
	Onstream dam construction that seeks to be larger than their licenced water allocation will not be considered as current water allocation policy does not allow this.
	Ancillary infrastructure such as outbuildings, fencing and tracks
	Farm machinery, equipment, and vehicles
	Farm labour and other inputs, including wages, contractors and consultants associated with usual farming activities.

3.0 Applicant Eligibility Requirements

3.1 Eligibility requirements

To be considered for funding through this Scheme, applicants need to complete and submit an online application through the SmartyGrants grant management tool. Completed applications must be submitted before 1:00pm AWST on 11 July 2024.

3.2 Eligibility criteria – who can apply for funding?

To be eligible to apply for funding applicants must:

- Be a commercial horticultural producer in the Warren-Donnelly region with a minimum annual gross turnover of \$100,000, or documented progress towards this turnover. If you are currently unable to demonstrate an annual turnover of \$100,000 and above, you must include details in your application of the investment steps you have made to date to support the expected likelihood (and timing) of this threshold being met in your forward business planning.
- Apply as landowner or lessee (landlord consent to be provided).
- Demonstrate that operations are in the Warren-Donnelly region (refer to Figure 1); providing address or map of the property will help confirm this.
- Have a current Australian Business Number (ABN) or Australian Company Number (ACN).
- Advise if multiple applications for different properties have been submitted. (Multiple applications will be assessed, but only one successful application per entity, landowner, or lessee is allowable.)
- Provide bank account details for funding disbursement.

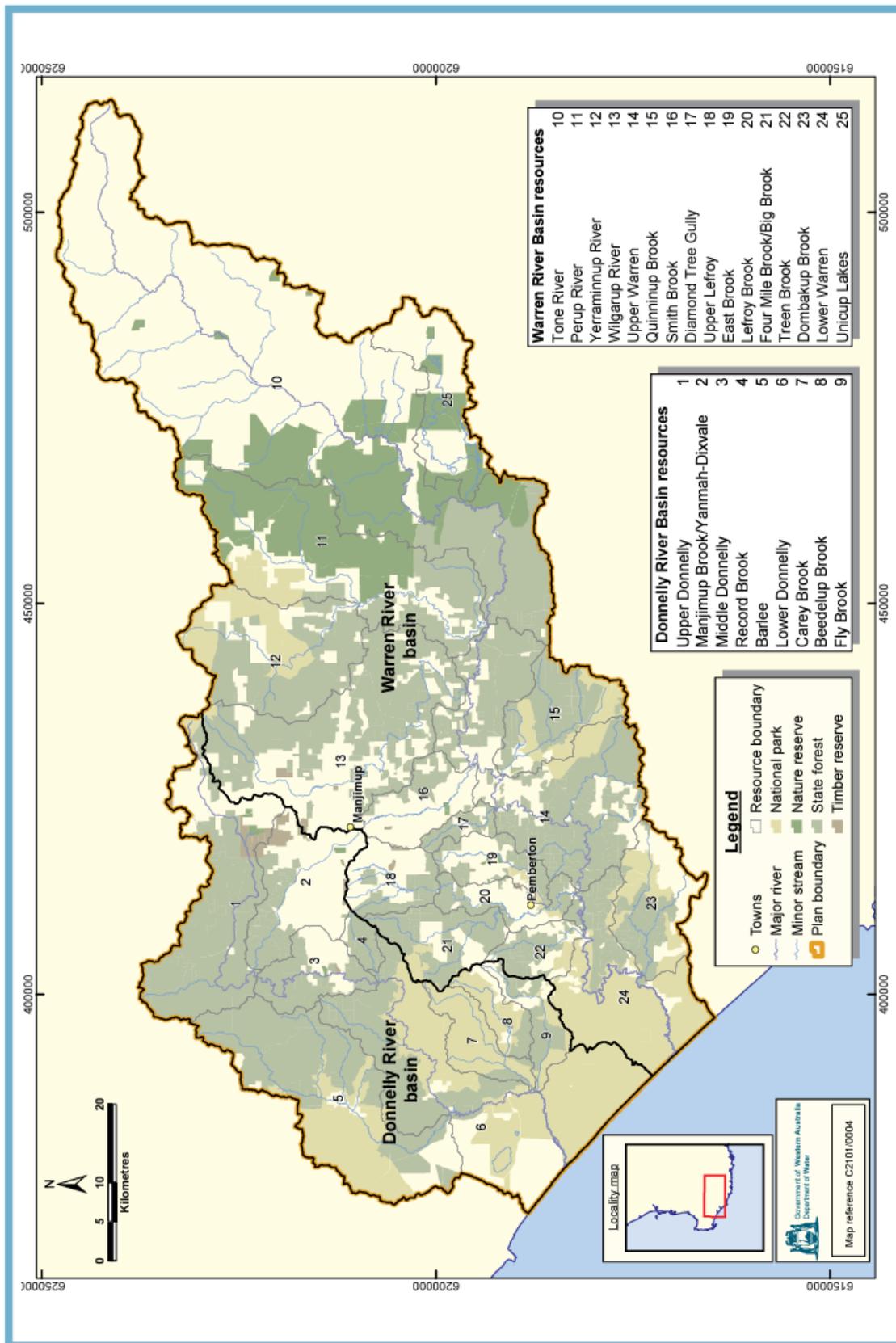


Figure 1: Warren-Donnelly region (as described in the Warren-Donnelly Surface Water Allocation Plan 2012).

3.3 Applicants who are specifically NOT eligible

Applicants will not be eligible for funding if the property is located outside of the Warren-Donnelly region.

3.4 Applicant funding contribution

Applicants will be required to commit to a cash funding contribution of 50% of their project. This will be formalised through a Letter of Offer to recipients. DPIRD will provide a 50% contribution on an applicant's project up to \$20,000, \$50,000 or \$100,000 depending on the funding category selected.

In-kind contributions do not count towards the required co-contribution.

4.0 How to apply for funding

4.1 Application process

All applicants must submit an online application through SmartyGrants; submissions via other methods, such as email or post, will not be accepted. The link to the application form is here: [SmartyGrants link](#). Submissions must be received by 1:00pm AWST on 11 July 2024. Late submissions will not be accepted.

- The application process will seek the following information:
 - Questions to verify the applicant's eligibility to receive funding.
 - Providing a detailed account of the proposed activity and requested funding amount.
 - Qualitative questions (see Online application section below).
 - Providing supporting documentation and evidence.

Applications will be assessed against Scheme eligibility and the information provided in the application.

Online application

As part of the application process, the applicant will be required to answer questions to confirm eligibility, and a series of qualitative questions based on the funding category selected. Responses are not required to be exhaustive but must cover essential matters to demonstrate that the requested infrastructure has been adequately considered and will improve water security. The questions and guidance notes will be embedded in the SmartyGrants application form.

4.2 Resources available

It is important that applicants submit a clear and well-developed application that answers all compliance questions, addresses the criteria, and provides the documentary evidence required.

To enable applicants to submit quality applications, DPIRD provides:

- Detailed information about the Scheme on our [website](#).
- Scheme Guidelines
- Frequently Asked Questions
- Scheme Flyer

- A dedicated email address (sfiss@dpiird.wa.gov.au) for enquiries about the Scheme.

5.0 Assessment – How will the applications be assessed?

5.1 Assessment process

The assessment process aims to objectively identify eligible applicants to whom funding could be awarded. DPIRD will manage the application process and administer the Scheme.

The assessment will be carried out in the following manner:

- All applications will be assessed against compliance and eligibility criteria by an Assessment Panel.
- Applications that do not meet the eligibility criteria will not progress to a qualitative assessment.
- A recommendation report will be developed from the assessment process and will be provided to the Minister for Regional Development and Minister for Water
- All decisions are final, and no appeals will be considered.

5.2 Qualitative assessment criteria

In considering each applicant's response to questions in the online application form, the Assessment Panel will be asked to make an assessment on the following themes:

- Confidence in how proposed measures will improve water security.
 - e.g. proven technology, past experience, practical applications, budget certainty etc.
- Confidence in the delivery of the project through methodology and degree of planning into developing the requested measures.
 - Has the applicant considered all relevant issues, information and made necessary investigations?
- How proposed measures fit within an overarching plan.
 - Do the measures stand alone, are they dependent on other actions or do they form part of holistic plan?
 - Does the applicant have existing, proven, and practical systems and processes?
 - Has the applicant obtained/will be obtaining the necessary approvals in order to commence the project in a timely manner?

The degree to which the above is considered will be dependent on the level of funding requested.

5.3 Conflict of Interest

Assessment Panel members will complete a Conflict of Interest (COI) declaration as part of the assessment process. Panel members will not participate in the assessment of

applications where there is any real or perceived COI. The Assessment Panel Chair will be responsible for making judgements regarding COI.

5.4 Decision and notification

The Minister for Regional Development and Minister for Water will make the final decision on successful projects under this Scheme, based on the information contained within the recommendation report provided. All applicants will be informed of the outcome of their application via email.

5.5 Agreement Arrangements

Recipients will receive a Letter of Offer via email including:

- terms and conditions of funding
- total amount of funding approved
- reporting/ auditing requirements
- payment schedules.

Recipients will be required to accept the Letter of Offer by signing and uploading the signed Letter of Offer to SmartyGrants. Once this is completed, work may commence on the proposed project.

Projects should be completed by December 2026. Longer periods may be considered on a case-by-case basis.

6.0 Reporting and payment arrangements

Funding will be released in one final payment at the end of the project. However, DPIRD may consider alternative payment schedules of up to one interim payment on a case-by-case basis, but this will need to be requested by the applicant at the time of application along with a justification why it is needed. The reporting arrangements and milestone payment schedules will be reflected in the Letter of Offer. Payments are made electronically to nominated accounts.

6.1 Tax information

Funding provided to recipients under the Scheme is regarded as payment for a supply. GST-registered grant recipients will therefore be liable for GST in connection with the grant.

The grant will be increased by the amount of GST payable. Recipients must provide a tax invoice for the GST inclusive value of the grant.

Applicants are encouraged to seek tax advice on the potential implications of obtaining funding.

6.2 Personal Information and disclosure of information

Applicants are informed that DPIRD is subject to the *Freedom of Information Act 1992 (WA)*, which provides a general right of access to records held by the state government agencies and local governments.

6.3 Intellectual Property

Any intellectual property rights that may exist in an application will remain the property of the applicant or the rightful owner of those intellectual property rights.

Any part of an application considered to contain any intellectual property rights should be clearly identified by the applicant. The applicant grants to the state (and will ensure that relevant third parties grant) a non-exclusive, irrevocable licence to use and reproduce the intellectual property for the purpose of administering the fund.

7.0 Contact Information

For further information about the Scheme, please contact sfiss@dpiird.wa.gov.au

8.0 Case examples

8.1 Multiple applications

Tom is involved with three properties under different legal structures: he owns the first property individually, the second is owned by a company where Tom serves as director, and he is a lessee of the third. According to the scheme guidelines, Tom is eligible to apply for all three properties. However, if the evaluation process deems all applications meet the criteria, only the highest-ranking one will be recommended for ministerial approval. While DPIRD will conduct general ownership inquiries, it is Tom's responsibility to disclose if multiple applications are submitted through related parties. Failure to disclose this information could result in ineligibility for the grant.

8.2 Joint applications

Jeff and Jack, who are neighbours, plan to build shared infrastructure on their properties. The scheme guidelines allow for two applications with the appropriate funding cap. For instance, if the total project cost is \$100,000, Jeff and Jack would each contribute \$50,000 and apply for \$25,000 in funding. Although they must submit separate applications, it must be clearly stated that both relate to a single project.

8.3 Funding caps and infrastructure bundling

Sue intends to install water-efficient sprinklers and upgrade her farm's dam bypass system. Although these are distinct activities, they can be combined into one project application. The total value and funding requested will dictate the number of questions and the level of detail required in the application.

8.4 Milestone payments

Joan plans to install bird netting on her property but is concerned about her ability to finance the entire project until completion. Although DPIRD prefers to issue a single final payment upon completion, they may consider an interim payment at their discretion. Joan must request this in her application and justify the need. DPIRD will assess each request individually and is not obligated to agree to any alternative payment arrangements.

9.0 Glossary of Terms

Applicant – the entity/individual who makes the application for funding.

Application – an application (or relevant part of an application) made to the state for funding under the Scheme.

AWST – Australian Western Standard Time

DPIRD – Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development

DWER – Department of Water and Environmental Regulation

Scheme – Southern Forests Infrastructure Support Scheme

Guidelines – document containing information about the Scheme for applicants that should be read prior to completing the application form.

Recipient – successful applicant becomes a recipient when decision maker has approved their application.

SmartyGrants – online grant management software tool used by DPIRD.

Important Disclaimer

The Chief Executive Officer of the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development and the State of Western Australia accept no liability whatsoever by reason of negligence or otherwise arising from the use or release of this information or any part of it.

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