# Traceability Grants Program – Round 3

General feedback for applicants

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**Acknowledgement of Country**

We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of Australia and their continuing connection to land and sea, waters, environment and community. We pay our respects to the Traditional Custodians of the lands we live and work on, their culture, and their Elders past and present.

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This general feedback is provided to assist grant applicants to understand what generally comprised a strong application and the content of quality responses to the assessment criteria for the Traceability Grants Program – Round 3.

### Overview

The application period for the Traceability Grants Program – Round 3 grant opportunity opened on

5 February 2024 and closed on 18 March 2024. It was an open-competitive grant opportunity offering up to $4.0 million with $2.0 million available in 2023-24 and $2.0 million available in 2024-25.

The Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF or the department) received 73 eligible applications and 11 of those applications were approved for funding by the Grant Round Decision Maker, to a value of $4.0 million (GST excl.).

This grant round provides the opportunity for successful applicants to contribute to enhancing traceability for Australian and regional agricultural industries and consumers, and will support collaborative agricultural traceability projects that will assist implementation activities under the [National Agricultural Traceability Strategy 2023 to 2033](https://www.agriculture.gov.au/biosecurity-trade/market-access-trade/national-traceability#toc_0) (the strategy).

Projects developed under this grant program will foster mutually-beneficial outcomes, shared learning, innovation, capacity building, technical expert engagement and provide mechanisms for practical collaboration amongst producers and supply chain participants to improve agricultural traceability.

There was a strong interest in the grant round and successful applications were of a very high standard. All applications were assessed according to the procedures detailed in the Grant Opportunity Guidelines (GOGs).

### Selection Process

Applications were assessed through an open-competitive grant process outlined in the GOGs. The department assessed applications to determine if they complied with the eligibility requirements of the program, and ineligible and non-compliant applications did not progress to assessment.

A Selection Advisory Panel (SAP) was established by DAFF comprised of two employees of the department (one as chair) and two members from industry with expertise and knowledge relevant to the grant round. The SAP considered all eligible applications and mandatory attachments (including the risk assessment, budget template and letters of support (for consortia applications)) having regard to:

* whether the project or any of its elements meet all eligibility requirements as set out in the GOGs
* a varied spread of projects across agricultural products
* overall innovative nature of the project and potential benefit to stakeholders
* applicant capacity to deliver the project
* existing and/or potential market failure
* value for money
* minimising possible duplication with other Commonwealth/state/territory government programs/service delivery (if known).

Each applicant was required to address the following assessment criteria, and the SAP scored applications between 0 and 100 based on how well they demonstrated merit against each criterion:

* Criterion 1: Project alignment to the grant program purpose, objectives and outcomes (25 points)
* Criterion 2: Suitability and effectiveness of the project to achieve its aims (25 points)
* Criterion 3: Capacity, capability and resources to deliver your project (25 points)
* Criterion 4: Value with money and degree of innovation in the project (25 points)

The SAP met to consider applications, and applicants recommended for grant funding were identified based on the strength of their responses to the assessment criteria and their demonstrated ability to meet the grant requirements outlined in the GOGs. An independent Probity Officer was present at this meeting. The SAP subsequently submitted a Selection Report, which provided recommendations of applications to be funded having regard to the grant funds available for decision by the delegated decision maker.

### Selection Results

Eleven applicants were approved for funding under the Traceability Grants Program – Round 3.

The successful applicants met the eligibility requirements outlined in the GOGs and rated highly against all of the assessment criteria. Further detail about what constituted a strong response to each criterion is provided below in the ‘General feedback for applicants’.

### General feedback for applicants

Successful applicants proposed grant activities that were innovative; addressed the grant program objectives, outcomes and assessment criteria to a high degree; provided value for money; provided evidence the project outputs could lead to future adoption across multiple agricultural sectors and commodities; and the project outcomes would offer long-term benefits to industry and Australian agriculture. Successful applicants also provided a detailed proposal, risk assessment, and budget template that included very good responses to all of the assessment criteria, plus provided letters of support from consortium partners if applying as a consortium.

### Criterion 1

#### Project alignment to the grant program purpose, objectives and outcomes (25 points)

In addressing this criterion, applicants were expected to clearly demonstrate:

* the project's overall aim(s) and why it is important, including how it will align to the three targeted priority areas for action (4, 6 and 9) of the strategy referred to in section 2.1
* which priority action areas the project will deliver against and how will it achieve them
* partnership(s) and collaboration in the project, for example: across industry, scientific organisations; cooperative research centres; state, territory or local governments; corporate Commonwealth entities; universities; or public and private research organisations
* the long-term benefits that your activities will deliver to industry and Australian agriculture.

Table 1 Strong application examples for Criterion 1

| Strong applications | Example |
| --- | --- |
| Clearly described the project’s overall aims, identified why they were important, and how the project would align to Priority Areas for Action in the strategy. | Strong responses demonstrated how their project’s overall aim(s) would enhance agricultural traceability by consistently reporting against sustainability frameworks and meeting emerging international requirements and standards. They clearly provided:* a list of project aim(s) and identification of why they were important, including impacts on affected stakeholders, a particular commodity, or what the broader impact would be on the agricultural industry, and
* clear identification of how the project’s aim(s) would align with the objectives of the strategy.
 |
| Clearly described how their project was supported by evidence. | Strong responses demonstrated an evidence base for their project. They clearly provided:* a well-designed and well-written proposal that was built on prior research or proofs of concept, and
* reasons for why their chosen method was preferred.
 |
| Clearly identified which grant program objectives and outcomes(s) the project would deliver against and described how it would achieve them.  | Strong responses outlined a clear methodology, required resources, and identified partnerships that would be used to achieve the relevant program objectives and outcomes. They clearly provided: * a proposal that identified relevant grant program objectives and outcomes, with strong articulation of the different aspects of the project, and clear and achievable outcomes, and
* a proposal that clearly articulated activities, risks and methodology.
* A proposal that included key activities listed against the Priority Areas for Action in the strategy
 |
| Clearly listed their identified partnerships and collaboration in their projects.  | Strong responses demonstrated their proposal had support from related stakeholders, including identification of collaboration partners as well as consortium arrangements where applicable and attached letters of supports. They clearly provided: * information on who has been consulted as part of the development of the project,
* support from relevant stakeholders including technology partners, scientific organisations or research centres, government agencies and/or across industry, and
* a strong consortium arrangement and/or strong relationships with relevant stakeholders with sufficient letters of support from across industry and government.
 |
| Described their project’s long-term benefits to industry and Australian agriculture | Strong responses demonstrated how their project would contribute to the development of innovative and practicable proposals to improve agricultural traceability. They clearly provided: * a proposal that was an innovative yet appropriate use of technology in agricultural traceability,
* a proposal that had a wide application across commodities other than its targeted commodity,
* evidence that the public benefit outweighed the private benefit, and
* evidence that the project would strengthen sector-wide interoperability.
 |

### Criterion 2

#### Suitability and effectiveness of the project to achieve its aims (25 points)

In addressing this criterion, applicants were expected to clearly demonstrate:

* the activities they will undertake including how, where and when they will occur
* how the proposed methodology(ies) or approach(es) to undertaking the project activities will assist with achieving the project’s aim(s)
* the specific partner(s) involved in the project and the activities they will undertake to support achieving project outcome(s)
* how progress towards achieving the project’s outcome(s) will be measured
* potential risks to the success of the project and how these are to be managed or mitigated.

Table 2 Strong application examples for Criterion 2

| Strong applications | Example |
| --- | --- |
| Clearly described where and when project activities would be undertaken.  | Strong responses clearly articulated project phases and activities. They provided: * information on how all proposed activities would be undertaken across the project timeframe, and
* identification of risk points and allowance of slippage time.
 |
| Clearly described how their proposed methodology(ies) or approach(es) would assist with achieving the project’s aim(s)  | Strong responses clearly outlined the project’s aim(s) and how they would achieve the desired program outcomes through the proposed methodology(ies). They provided: * a suitable methodology and cross-disciplinary approach,
* sufficient details in their methodology(ies) to assess the feasibility of the project and identification of how it would achieve the project’s aim(s), and
* a well-designed project proposal that appeared achievable based on the clear method.
 |
| Demonstrated how their identified partnerships would support achieving project outcome(s). | Strong responses demonstrated appropriate industry engagement and partner support in their projects. They provided: * a clear description of how stakeholders would support achieving the desired project outcome(s), including letters of support from consortium partners and other stakeholders,
* identification of the right partners to be involved to ensure the project approach was feasible, and
* an outline of how relationships would be built beyond their direct network to ensure the project’s success.
 |
| Demonstrated how they would measure progress towards the project’s outcome(s). | Strong responses demonstrated a thorough understanding of how they would define and measure their progress throughout their project timeframe. They provided:* a breakdown of the project’s desired outcome(s), and
* key milestones which were measurable and achievable and were clearly in support of the outcome(s).
 |
| Demonstrated how they would manage or mitigate potential risks toward project outcome(s).  | Strong responses identified potential risks to the success of their projects and outlined how these would be managed or mitigated. They clearly provided:* a well-articulated description of the project’s potential risks.
* appropriate processes and strategies to manage and mitigate the project’s potential risks.
 |

### Criterion 3

#### Capacity, capability and resources to deliver your project (25 points)

In addressing this criterion, applicants were expected to clearly demonstrate:

* the organisation’s ability to deliver the outcomes, their track record (if any) in delivering similar projects, and access to (and availability of) personnel with the right skills and experience relevant to the project
* how the applicant will pro-actively manage and monitor their project, including taking responsibility for oversight
* how the organisation will work with partners, and engage agricultural industry and other relevant stakeholders to inform grant activity design and delivery
* how the applicant will manage risks to their organisation and partners that could affect grant activity design and delivery.

Table 3 Strong application examples for Criterion 3

| Strong applications | Example |
| --- | --- |
| Described how the organisation would deliver the outcomes and demonstrate their track record in delivering similar projects, and their access to personnel with the right skills and experience. | Strong responses identified the organisation’s capability and experience in agricultural traceability together with its capacity to deliver outcomes. They clearly demonstrated:* that the project could be taken from concept to implementation through their access to personnel with the right skills and experience,
* experience through providing details of previous work or research of similar a similar nature and budget, and
* identification of relevant stakeholders who could fill any organisational gaps in knowledge or experience.
 |
| Demonstrated how the organisation would manage and monitor the project effectively. | Strong responses demonstrated the organisation’s capability to implement, manage and monitor a government-funded project and outlined appropriate governance structures. They provided:* evidence that the proposal used an established platform for their project’s administration and governance,
* strong articulation of different aspects of the project,
* information on how the governance structure would engage with risk, and
* information on how the project would be governed including relevant partners or consortium partners.
 |
| Described how the organisation would work with partners to engage agricultural industry and other relevant stakeholders and end users throughout their project. | Strong responses demonstrated initial engagement and collaboration with identified partners and industry stakeholders. They clearly provided:* a thorough understanding of the relevant stakeholders and how to engage to make the project successful, and
* information on how to facilitate the adoption of project outcomes that would meet the needs of agricultural stakeholders.
 |
| Demonstrated how they would effectively manage organisational risks. | Strong responses clearly identified:* organisational risks that could affect the delivery of the project, and how future risks would be identified, and
* details of how the organisation would manage any obstacles and organisational risks, including linking this to the timeline of delivery.
 |

### Criterion 4

#### Value with money and degree of innovation in the project (25 points)

In addressing this criterion, applicants were expected to clearly demonstrate:

* how the funding requested is proportionate to the aim(s) of their project
* any co-contributions by their organisation or participatory partner(s) in the project (including financial and in-kind contributions)
* any future financial or private benefit(s) that may accrue from delivering on the project
* how their project outcomes could be applied across other agricultural sectors or the supply chain in the future to reduce barriers to adoption of agricultural traceability and support regulatory and commercial compliance capability.

Table 4 Strong application examples for Criterion 4

| Strong applications | Example |
| --- | --- |
| Demonstrated how the funding requested was proportionate to the aim(s) of the project. | Strong responses demonstrated how the requested funding amount was appropriate for the project scope and activities. They provided:* a well-articulated budget clearly connected to project activities, and
* budget figures that were considered appropriate to the cost and implementation of the project activities.
 |
| Listed any co‑contributions by their organisation or participatory partner(s) in the project. | Strong responses listed any co-contributions. They clearly provided:* details of partner(s) who would contribute to the cost of their projects and the extent of their contribution, and
* details of project partners’ additional support through cash and/or in-kind contributions that would add value to the delivery of the project.
 |
| Described future financial or private benefit(s) that would be realised from delivering the project. | Strong responses described gains that may accrue from the project. They clearly described:* parts of the project that would provide benefit beyond the participating organisations and how those benefits might be shared, and
* how their project outcomes might be implemented across the agricultural supply chain.
 |
| Described how the project would deliver an innovative outcome and/or practice for addressing an industry-identified problem. | Strong responses described how the project’s outcome(s) would address an industry-identified problem. They clearly identified:* an industry-identified problem and existing solutions, and how the project would deliver an innovative outcome or practice, and
* how the project would be made user-friendly for the relevant audience(s).
 |
| Described how the project would be adopted for use and how it could be expanded across different agricultural commodities and products. | Strong responses demonstrated how their projects could be adopted and scaled. They clearly outlined:* a clearly-articulated description of how the project could be expanded to be adopted/adapted by other agriculture sectors and the legacy provided by the project.
 |