



Department of
Primary Industries and
Regional Development

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Western Australia.*

Carbon for Farmers Voucher Program

Guidelines

This guideline contains information for applicants and should be read prior to proceeding with the application.



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WA Carbon for Farmers Voucher Program

1 Background

The Western Australia Government announced in August 2019 its aspiration of net zero emissions for Western Australia by 2050. As a result, the WA Climate Policy was announced in 2020 which sets out the high-level priorities the State Government will implement to support a more climate resilient community. The Policy outlines actions that will be undertaken by local government and State Government agencies to achieve net zero emissions for Western Australia by 2050.

The Department of Primary Industries Regional Development (DPIRD) has since launched the Carbon Farming and Land Restoration Program (CF-LRP). To support participation in the CF-LRP and carbon farming more broadly, farmers may require professional advice on how to best integrate carbon farming into their business enterprises.

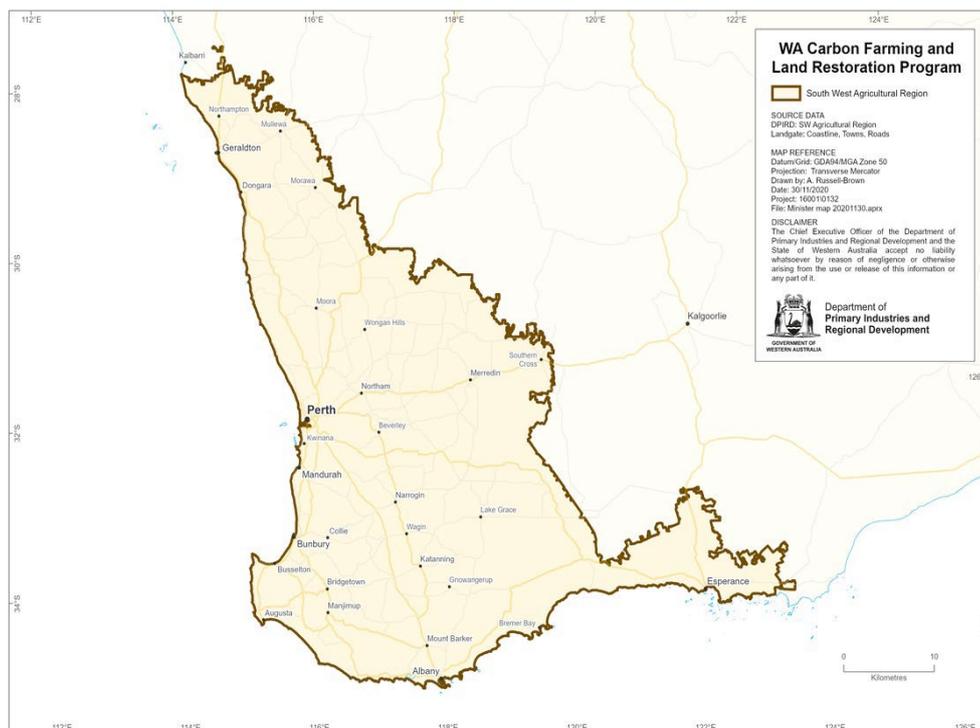
The Government has developed the Carbon for Farmers Voucher Program to support farmers develop land management strategies for soil and vegetation carbon farming projects. It encourages farmers to consider how carbon farming supports broader business objectives, and consider interactions between changing practices, climate, environment, and whole-of-system outcomes. The document should be tailored to the farmer's business needs and individual circumstances. The provision of a carbon farming land management strategy is a requirement for registration of soil carbon projects with the Clean Energy Regulator (CER).

These strategies will lead to more informed decision making and high-quality applications for future CF-LRP rounds and the registration of more WA carbon farming projects.

2 Program Overview

- The Carbon for Farmers Voucher Program will support farmers to access professional advice from independent Professional Service Provider(s) to develop land management strategies.

- DPIRD will provide templates to assist the completion of high-quality land management strategies delivered as a written report and approved by an independent assessor e.g., agronomist, environmental consultants.
- Vouchers are designed to support landholders to make sound investment decisions and build capacity and knowledge by accessing expertise on how to integrate carbon farming into farming enterprises.
- Applicants wanting to use the voucher to inform an application to Round 2 of the CF-LRP are required to have the Professional services completed and confirmed in writing to DPIRD within **three** months of the voucher issue.
- Applicants not wanting to use the voucher for applications to the Round 2 of the Carbon Farming and Land Restoration Program are required to have the Professional services completed and confirmed in writing to DPIRD within **six** months of the voucher issue.
- The applicant needs to explain how the development of a carbon farming land management strategy is likely to lead to the development of a carbon farming project.
- The Carbon for Farmers Voucher Program is accessible to farmers in the South West Land Division. See map below:



- The maximum voucher amount is \$10,000 (excl GST) with a required cash co-contribution by the Recipient of \$1,000 (excl GST) (10:1).
- Vouchers must meet the eligibility criteria as set out in these Guidelines.
- Applications are made online using SmartyGrants:
<https://agric.smartygrants.com.au/CF-VP>

3 Eligibility Criteria

3.1 Applicant Eligibility Criteria

- Be the owner of a commercial farming property based in the South-West Land Division operating a primary production business as a sole trader, partnership, trust or private company with an Australian Business Number (ABN) with a Western Australian postcode <https://abr.business.gov.au/>
- Applicants must also meet the following compliance criteria to be eligible for assistance under the program depending on the nature of their commercial structure:
 - An Incorporated Trustee can apply on behalf of a Trust provided that the Trustee has the power to apply for this voucher and will be liable for the performance under this voucher;
 - Individual Partners may apply on behalf of a Partnership provided that the Partners will be liable for the performance under this voucher.
- Agree to meet the cash co-contribution requirement of a minimum of 10 percent of the total cost of professional services, up to \$1,000 (excl GST), and any additional costs that exceed the maximum value of the voucher.
- Agree to participate in any future program evaluation such as a survey or interview with to assist the government understand the impact of this program.
- The following entities are ineligible to apply:
 - Commonwealth, state and local government agencies or bodies;
 - Publicly funded research institutions;
 - Industry associations;
 - Not-for-profit organisations;
 - Community-based organisations.

3.2 Professional Service Provider(s) Eligibility

- Applicants who meet the eligibility requirements will be requested to nominate a Professional Service Provider(s) to perform the proposed services to be supported by redemption of the voucher.
- Nominated Professional Service Provider(s) must have a business with an ABN.
- Applicants and Professional Service Provider(s) must be entirely separate entities. For example, they may not be owned by the same parent company, share governance, have common directors or be direct/indirect familial relations.
- Professional Service Provider(s) nominated by the applicant to complete consultancy works may be not-for-profit enterprises or privately owned businesses.
- Professional Service Providers can include the following provider types, and must meet criteria to be considered eligible providers:
 - Agribusiness adviser and agronomists with relevant industry qualifications including members of the AAAC (WA) members.
 - Employee of Natural Resource Management groups (NRMs) and other land care and grower groups with suitable qualifications and experience.
 - Carbon service providers (must be a signatory to the Australian Carbon Industry [Code of Conduct](#)).
 - Environmental consultant who holds relevant environmental qualifications and have industry experience (e.g., member of the Environmental Consultants Association (WA) or the Revegetation Industry Association of WA).
 - Solicitors and accountants with valid and current qualifications (must hold a practising certificate, be a member of the Australian Bar Association, or hold an AFSL and /or the Financial Services Licensee) if required.
- Professional Service Provider(s) may partner with other Professional Service Provider(s) to deliver the quoted scope of work; however, such arrangements must be fully disclosed within the quotation provided to the Recipient and in the invoice provided to DPIRD.
- This program is funded by the Western Australian Government and the preference is for applicants to use locally based Professional Service Provider(s) where possible.

4 Eligible Advice

- Advice must support the development of a carbon farming land management strategy.
- A carbon farming land management strategy will enable farmers to apply for the CF–LRP or to register a carbon project or to access other carbon sequestration opportunities.
- Advice to support the development of a carbon farming land management strategy and to assess carbon opportunities may include:
 - Project feasibility including carbon estimation, costs and risk assessment;
 - CER requirements and obligations (including but not limited to permanence plans, reporting and auditing, soil sample plans);
 - Agronomic advice to ascertain suitability of new activities that sequester soil carbon;
 - Project planning for vegetation projects including site selection, species lists, establishment and ongoing management costs (e.g., weed control, fire management, ongoing maintenance, approval requirements);
 - Financial advice (such as indicative cost benefit analysis; including tax advice) or legal advice (contracts, succession and progression planning; regulatory framework of carbon farming).

5 Application and Assessment Process

- Applications must be submitted before **5:00pm Western Standard Time (WST) on Friday 1 April 2022**. Late applications will not be accepted.
- Applications are to be made using DPIRD’s online grants administration system SmartyGrants. Paper based applications will not be accepted.
- Applications will be assessed against eligibility and the scope of the services sought.
- Applications that do not meet the minimum requirements stated above may be considered ineligible.

5.1 Assessment Process

- DPIRD will manage the application process and administer the program.

- The application is for professional services directly related to the development of a detailed carbon farming land management strategy.
- Applications will be assessed against eligibility requirements and on the merits of the application.
- DPIRD will make recommendations to the Minister for Regional Development; Agriculture and Food; and Hydrogen Industry.
- Work must commence within one month of the approval unless otherwise approved by DPIRD in writing.
- Application assessment and notification times are dependent on the number of applications received and are subject to change. Applicants will be advised of any changes to the scheduled dates (see Table 1).

Table 1. Proposed Schedule for Carbon for Farmers Voucher Program

Activity	Date
Open for applications	25 February 2022 at 12.00pm
Close for applications	1 April 2022 at 5.00pm
DPIRD review and evaluate applications	Continuous
Vouchers issued to successful applicants (<i>Professional services must commence within one month of issue of voucher</i>)	Continuous To be finalised within one month of closing date.
Professional services must be completed and confirmed in writing to DPIRD.	Within six months of date of notification that voucher has been awarded, or three months if applying for Round 2 of the Carbon Farming and Land Restoration Program.

6 Conditions of Use of Vouchers

- The Voucher is issued to the Recipient for the sole purpose of purchasing services from approved Professional Service Provider(s) to develop a carbon farming land management strategy that supports the landowner's investment decision regarding carbon farming and the farm business.
- DPIRD will reimburse the Recipient for the amounts paid against invoices from service providers nominated by the Recipient.
- The Professional Service Provider will be selected and retained by the Recipient in its discretion and at its own risk.

- DPIRD makes no representations as to the Professional Service Provider chosen by the Recipient nor the quality or appropriateness of the services delivered by that service provider. If DPIRD provides any guidance to the Recipient with respect to prospective Professional Service Provider or any comments on the services delivered, this is solely for the convenience of the Recipient, and is not to be taken as an endorsement by DPIRD of those service providers or their services.
- The Recipient will not be entitled to make any claim against DPIRD (which includes its employees, contractors, and agents) nor hold DPIRD liable, for any loss or damage suffered or incurred by the Recipient in relation to the Carbon for Farmers Voucher Program.
- Vouchers will be issued in the name of the property owner (the Recipient).
- Vouchers are not to be used for 'business as usual' activities or activities not related to a carbon farming project or the decision to develop one. The vouchers have no cash value and are non-transferable.
- Farmers can apply for one (1) voucher capped to a maximum of \$10,000 (excl GST). One voucher may cover several quotations for services for multiple Professional Service Provider(s) to the total value of \$10,000 (excl GST). A co-contribution of \$1,000 (excl GST) is required (10:1).
- Vouchers will be provided on a cash co-contribution basis (the Recipient contributes \$1 for every \$10 of value awarded through the voucher). The Recipient will need to pay a minimum of 10 per cent of the total cost of the services provided as a cash payment to the agreed Professional Service Provider. A copy of the tax invoice/tax and receipt(s) must be provided before DPIRD makes payment to the Recipient as reimbursement.
- Funds from other State and Australian Government funding programs or in-kind contributions cannot form part of the Recipient's co-contribution.
- Successful Recipients of the Carbon for Farmers Voucher Program can include the value of their cash co-contribution if applying to the Carbon Farming and Land Restoration Program. This would be additional to the 30 percent cash co-contribution requirement of the Carbon Farming and Land Restoration Program.
- The Recipient undertakes to:
 - provide evidence to DPIRD on how the advice sought contributes to the provision of a carbon farming land management strategy; and

- advise DPIRD on whether it intends to progress with either the CF–LRP or an alternative funding stream (including self-funded, carbon developer, national or other scheme).

7 Validity Period of Vouchers

- Approved voucher activities are to commence within one month of notification of the voucher being awarded and must be completed within:
 - three months if applying for Round 2 of the Carbon Farming and Land Restoration Program, or
 - six months if not applying for Round 2 of the Carbon Farming and Land Restoration Program unless approved by DPIRD.
- DPIRD reserves the right to cancel the voucher by providing written notice to the Recipient.

8 Payment Conditions

- The Recipient will use the value of the voucher to meet the costs of approved Professional Services as identified in the application.
- All upfront payments must be covered by the Recipient.
- DPIRD will not be liable to pay the Recipient until:
 - DPIRD has received evidence of a valid tax invoice and receipt from the approved Professional Service Provider addressed to the Recipient for services.
 - The Recipient provides proof that they have paid the invoices of Professional Service Provider(s).
 - The Recipient provides evidence of completion of the carbon farming land management strategy. For example: the executive summary signed off by an independent approver (not involved in the development of the strategy). Provision of the land management strategy is not required.
- GST will be paid in addition to the voucher value where applicable.

8.1 Evaluation or Audit

- DPIRD may, in its absolute discretion, carry out an Evaluation or Audit out either in relation to the Recipient or the Carbon for Farmers Voucher Program activities

by either DPIRD and/or an external service provider within two years of the completion of the Carbon for Farmers Voucher Program.

- It should be noted that nothing in this guideline or application in any way alters, limits or affects the operation of the *Auditor General Act 2006*, the *Financial Management Act 2006* or the Recipient's obligations (if any) in relation to these Acts. To the extent permitted by law, the Recipient must allow the Auditor General, or an authorised representative, to have access to and audit (or otherwise review, examine or evaluate) the Recipient's records and information concerning either or both of this Agreement or the Project.

8.2 Freedom of Information

Material relating to the Carbon for Farmers Voucher Program (including applications, agreements and assessments) is subject to the *Freedom of Information Act 1992*. DPIRD may publicly disclose information in relation to this Program, including its terms and the details of the Recipient.

9 Eligible Expenditure

- All eligible expenditure should be directed towards the development of the carbon farming land management strategy.
- All eligible expenditure is to be incurred after the voucher has been issued. Vouchers will not be provided for retrospective activities.
- Recipients will need to meet the cost of any ineligible expenditure associated with the approved activity.

9.1 Eligible Expenditure

Eligible expenditure for voucher funded activities includes project-related non-capital expenditure required to deliver the costs of the Professional Service Provider.

9.2 Ineligible Expenditure

- Vouchers may not be used to cover 'business as usual' expenses.
- Ineligible expenditure includes the following:
 - Capital expenditure;
 - Non-strategic or non-planning activities;
 - Internal costs, salaries or resources of the Recipient;

- Basic professional services such as ongoing, routine accounting, tax and legal business;
- Routine maintenance requirements, licensing, costs associated with legal/intellectual property costs and financing fees;
- Intellectual property fees and charges associated with registering domestic or international patents or other intellectual property enforcement expenses;
- Any administrative fees or surcharges for administering the expenditures listed above; and
- Any other expenditure as determined by DPIRD that does not meet program conditions.

10 Further Information

For further information on the Program please visit the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development website <https://www.agric.wa.gov.au/CF-VP>