# Grower Group Research & Development Grants

# Round 2 - Guidelines for Applicants

## At a glance

Expressions of Interest for funding from Round 2 of the Western Australian Grower Group Research & Development Grants program will open Monday 5 December 2016.

Expressions of Interest close at exactly 12 noon (WST) Friday 10 February 2017.

GGRD2 will invest up to $10.5 million, with individual grants of between $20 000 and $500 000 available through a merit based competitive selection process.

Funded projects must be completed by 31 March 2019.

## GGRD2 program overview

The GGRD2 program is a component of the $22.1 million Agricultural Sciences R&D Fund made possible by Royalties for Regions, and managed by the Department of Agriculture and Food, Western Australia (DAFWA).

The Fund seeks to generate profitability and growth in the agrifood sector through:

* targeted, industry-driven R&D on key drivers of productivity and competitiveness.
* strategic development of industry’s capability through supply chains.
* access to new markets, particularly high value Asian markets.

The goal of the Grower Group R&D Grants Program is to better equip WA’s agrifood businesses to:

* improve productivity.
* intensify and expand operations.
* access capital.
* pursue new market opportunities.
* make more informed investment decisions.
* increase jobs in regional Western Australia.

Intending GGRD2 applicants may care to review the *Pathways to Competitiveness* Report. The Report is available at: [www.agric.wa.gov.au/agricultural-exports/pathways-competitiveness-report](http://www.agric.wa.gov.au/agricultural-exports/pathways-competitiveness-report)

The Report documents key drivers, practices and mechanisms that characterise international competitiveness, and draws lessons from peer regions that have transformed relevant industry sectors over a short time period. It describes a framework for international competitiveness and provides case studies of five Western Australian agrifood sectors with the potential to grow rapidly.

Examples are given to help identify solutions and activities that businesses, industry bodies including Grower Groups and governments can take to improve competitiveness based on the described framework.

**Eligibility criteria**

A proposal must comply with the following conditions to be eligible to be considered:

* The applicant for GGRD2 funding (who will become the grantee if successful) must be a WA-based Grower Group or other WA-based not-for profit, farmer-driven organisation, incorporated, with an Australian Business Number and registered for GST; and capable of entering into a legally binding agreement with the Western Australian Agriculture Authority.
* Applicants and collaborators will make a contribution (cash and/or in-kind), equivalent to at least 25% of the value of any grant requested from the Grower Group R&D Grants Program.
* Commercial companies, non-agricultural not-for-profits and public sector research institutions are not eligible to apply; but their participation in collaborative projects led by eligible organisations is strongly encouraged.
* Eligible applicants who do not have the necessary skills in-house should collaborate with suitable organisations (eg. public sector research institutions or professional service providers) to ensure they meet these requirements.
* It is essential that proposed projects align with the focus and scope of the Program; are based on sound evidence and information; are well designed and technically feasible; and applicants and their collaborators have the capacity and capability to undertake the project successfully.

## Desirable criteria

A proposal will be viewed more favourably if the applicant can demonstrate:

* How the project will assist Grower Groups and their membership to contribute towards achieving the State Government’s goal of doubling the value of the agriculture sector in Western Australia by 2025.
* The extent to which the project includes relationships with businesses that can assist Western Australian Grower Groups and their members to adopt proven world-class practices and knowledge of international markets.
* The extent to which project participants towards the consumer-end of a value chain are integrated into the project.
* The budget represents value for the investment of State Government funds.
* Co-investment from the applicant and other project participants is commensurate with the benefits likely to be received if the outcomes are achieved.
* A high percentage of cash, as a proportion of total co-contribution from the applicant and collaborators, is committed to the project.

## Focus and Scope of the Program

The GGRD2 program will support organisations working together along supply/value chains that see their futures as part of an internationally competitive export oriented industry sector. Applied market, product, industry, business model and investment R&D relevant to broad acre cropping and livestock, irrigated agriculture, horticulture, pastoral production, aquaculture and food manufacturing sectors are within the scope.

Achieving international competitiveness by agribusinesses and industry stakeholders (see *Pathways to Competitiveness* Report pages 38-45) relies upon:

*World class production systems, characterised by:*

* High yields.
* Large operations.
* Proven/scalable systems.
* Skills and experience.

*Efficient primary/wholesale processing, characterised by:*

* Efficiency and productivity.
* At scale.
* Close to production areas.

*Efficient value added-processing, characterised by:*

* Efficiency and productivity.
* At scale.
* Linked to markets.

Projects and activities that are targeted at improving international competitiveness by addressing these broad areas will be considered to be aligned with the focus and scope of the GGRD2 program.

Applicants from sectors that have the potential to grow rapidly, and are actively seeking to become internationally competitive are encouraged to focus on developing world class production systems.

Applicants from sectors whose production systems are already at or near international competitiveness are encouraged to focus on efficient primary/wholesale processing and increased value-added processing.

## Out of Scope Activities

Funding through the GGRD2 program will not be supplied for:

* Purchase of capital equipment, major infrastructure and land assets.
* Proposals for projects in non-agriculture and food related industries and wild capture fishing.
* Activities at a scale unlikely to make a substantial contribution to the State Government’s goal of doubling the value of the agrifood sector by 2025.
* Incremental production orientated RD&E activities that would normally be supported through Rural R&D Corporations (or similar) funding mechanisms.

## Preparing an application

An *Expression of Interest* in a GGRD2 grant does not require a detailed budget, letters of support or lengthy technical explanations. These items will be required for proposals that are invited to prepare a full submission in Stage 2 of the process.

However, the Expression of Interest must contain sufficient information to demonstrate the proposed project:

* Aligns with the focus and scope of the GGRD2 program.
* Is based on sound evidence and information.
* Is well designed and technically feasible.
* Has proponents with the capacity, capability and commitment to undertake the project successfully.
* Will contribute to economic development and growth in regional WA.

Applications from eligible organisations must be submitted online using the SmartyGrants application form available at: [www.agric.smartygrants.com.au](http://www.agric.smartygrants.com.au)

All applicants will be notified by email that their application has been received.

To be considered for funding, completed Expressions of Interest must be submitted before exactly 12 noon (WST) on Friday 10 February 2017.

## Assessment and selection

Successful projects will be selected through a competitive merit-based process.

Based on previous grant-awarding rounds conducted by DAFWA’s Royalties for Regions projects, it is expected that the GGRD2 program call will be three to four times over-subscribed and progress to the full submission stage will be highly competitive.

A two-stage assessment and selection process will be used:

* **Stage 1 Expression of Interest** – an expert selection panel will assess the applications and recommend a shortlist of projects to progress to Stage 2**.**
* **Stage 2 Full Project Proposal** – shortlisted applicants will be invited to submit a detailed proposal for assessment by the expert selection panel.

DAFWA will appoint expert selection panel(s) to provide independent industry, technical and scientific expertise in the assessment of applications and make recommendations to the Agricultural Sciences R&D Fund Steering Committee.

Conflict of interest issues will be assessed and managed for each project and each panel member. The information provided by applicants will be treated confidentially.

Projects may be funded wholly or partially, and may have conditions or recommendations attached that may need to be addressed before funding is released.

The DAFWA Project Sponsor of the Agricultural Sciences R&D Fund project is the final decision maker. All decisions on funding are final. All applicants will be notified in writing of the outcome of their application, and provided with feedback on request.

## Further information

Additional information can be found on the Department of Agriculture and Food Western Australia website at [agric.wa.gov.au/royalties-regions](https://agric.wa.gov.au/n/3620)

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