Environmental Citizen Science Large Grants Program:
Grant Guidelines for applicants

Stage One (Expressions of Interest) Applications close:

Friday, 22/09/2023 at 2:00pm (Australian Central Standard Time)

https://environmentsa.smartygrants.com.au/

1   Introduction

The Environmental Citizen Science Strategy is part of the South Australian Government's broader plan for biodiversity protection in the state.

The Government has committed to supporting the development of citizen science projects which answer priority environmental questions and provide South Australians with opportunities to connect with nature.

The creation of a $2 million Citizen Science Fund is a key part of the Government's strategy. The Fund will create and administer new South Australian Citizen Science Grants, including the Large Grants Program.

These guidelines contain information for the **Large Grants Program**. These grants are competitive grants that support community participation in environmental research projects where they can learn new skills, strengthen networks and receive feedback on how their efforts have contributed to environmental outcomes.

The Department for Environment and Water (DEW) is responsible for administering this program.

2   Objectives

The objectives of the grants program are to:

- Engage and involve the community in environmental citizen science
- Focus research on environmental citizen science with biodiversity conservation outcomes
- Generate useful project data to contribute to environmental knowledge and outcomes.

3   Priority Projects

The grants will support projects that seek to:

1. Improve understanding of South Australia's biodiversity, including:
   a. Projects researching the impacts of climate change on species or habitats
   b. Projects researching native species or habitats and the impacts of (or recovery from) natural disasters, for example bushfires, floods, storms, droughts, heatwaves
   c. Projects that improve our understanding of threatened species or ecological communities
   d. Projects that contribute to environmental monitoring and reporting on a state-wide scale, for example, projects that address knowledge gaps in assessing environmental or habitat conditions, including marine habitats and pollution, or

e. Projects that address knowledge gaps in assessing human impacts on the environment, including management of protected areas (including marine parks), tourism, planning, and restoration and conservation activities; or

2. Support or enhance the capability of citizen science participants or project leaders to deliver biodiversity focused projects, for example, through the delivery of development activities or scientific training.

DEW reserves the right to consider other proposals.

4   Grant Amount and Term

The State Government has allocated up to $1.45 million in funding over three years for the Large Grants program.

The minimum grant amount is $25,000 (excluding GST).

Partner contributions, cash and in-kind, are encouraged for all projects. Priority will be given to projects with higher levels of matched funding.

5   Grant Program Parameters

Citizen Science

Only citizen science research projects are eligible for funding. Citizen science involves public participation and collaboration in scientific research with the aim to increase scientific knowledge. For more information about citizen science, visit the Australian Citizen Science Association.

Funding principles

Funding will be prioritised for applicants who have considered the following principles in the design of their projects.

First Nations	Projects that include First Nations people in the project design.
Diversity of volunteers	Projects that actively promote diversity and inclusion in their volunteers, through thoughtful project design, recruitment, resources, and communications.
Clear communications	Projects that include communications and engagement plans to ensure that participants are appropriately trained and capable of conducting the research, informed of progress and outcomes, and thanked and acknowledged for their contributions. Projects where stories and outcomes are shared with the wider community.
Collaboration	Projects that actively engage and collaborate with other groups or organisations in order to maximise efficiency and reach, and prevent duplication.
Data sharing	Projects where data are shared with open-access platforms.

Eligible applicants

Organisations such research institutions, universities, schools, TAFE SA, Local Government, and Landscape Boards are eligible for to apply for these grants.

Individuals and 'for profit' organisations are not eligible to apply for these grants.

Applicant organisations must:

- have an ABN and be registered for GST
- be an incorporated entity, and
- hold Public Liability Insurance for not less than $1 million.

Collaboration between organisations is encouraged, but not a requirement. Each application must have a lead organisation nominated as the applicant, with letters of support from all other partner organisations.

Lead organisations may lodge more than one application. Collaborating organisations may also participate in more than one application. Both must consider their capacity to deliver if multiple applications are successful.

Collaborations can be new or existing partnerships between organisations.

State or Federal Government agencies (not including Landscape Boards) are ineligible to be the primary applicant but may be a collaborating partner.

Eligible projects

To be eligible, projects must be:

- New environmental citizen science projects, or existing projects that may require additional funding to extend the lifespan, broaden the research or engage a greater number of participants, and
- Primarily located within South Australia, on any tenure (public or private land). Note: evidence of landholders' permission is required to be included in the application.

Eligible expenditure

Not all project activities may be eligible for grant funding. Eligible expenditure items include:

- Purchase of minor plant, equipment, materials, or services directly related to core project activities, including:
  - technical or scientific equipment or services
  - training costs
  - consumable materials
  - Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), safety training or equipment
  - hire fees
  - venue catering, where catered events are directly related to core project activities
  - permit fees
  - software
  - reasonable marketing, media, promotions and communications.
- Labour costs (up to a maximum rate of $43 per hour) for time spent on:
  - project coordination and management
  - communications and engagement
  - data entry, management or analysis.
- On-ground works where it is part of a research project.
- Contractors or specialist skills, fees for external guest speakers and specialist contractors engaged to deliver part of a project.
- Reasonable travel costs directly relating to the project (while aiming to minimise use of non-renewable resources).
- Re-skinning, re-purposing or updating existing mobile applications or portals for data collection (that is, smartphone apps), or the creation of new applications. On-going maintenance and upkeep of applications after the conclusion of the grant is the responsibility of the applicant. Sustainability of applications should be considered and described in the application.
- Reasonable data management and analysis costs.
- Publication costs for scientific journal publications.

Ineligible expenditure

Funding will not be provided for the following.

- Costs for preparation of the project plan, expression of interest, grant application, the signing of the Grant Agreement, and grant reporting etc. will be the applicant's responsibility and not paid from grant funding.
- Costs for routine administration and office expenses that are not a direct part of the project, including insurance, utilities, office accommodation, office computing facilities, printing and stationery, legal and accounting fees and bank charges.
- Cost of food or catering, except where catered events are directly related to core project activities.

DEW will make the final decision on what is considered eligible expenditure and projects may be considered for part funding. Costs may be ineligible if it is determined that they do not directly support the achievement of the project outcomes or where they are contrary to the objective of the program.

6   Application Process

Proposals for funding will be considered via a two-stage application process:

- Stage One: Expression of Interest (EOI)
- Stage Two: Full application, for short listed applicants.

Applications for both Stage One and Stage Two will be accepted by the DEW SmartyGrants online portal only. Late or incomplete applications will not be accepted.

Applicants will need to hold an account via the online portal in order to lodge their application; this can be created prior to the application being lodged.

Information contained in your application will form the basis for the Grant Agreement document, should your project be successful.

DEW will notify you via email that your application has been received.

Stage One – Expression of Interest

Using the online portal, applicants will submit an EOI that:

- briefly describes the scope of the project, methodology and type of activities to be undertaken
- identifies project partners and provides an overview of how these partners will contribute to the project and priorities, including estimated financial and in-kind contributions, and
- demonstrates how the project will address:
    o priority research areas or knowledge gaps, OR supporting or enhancing the capability of citizen science participants or project leaders
    o genuine community engagement, and
    o quality project data and scientific information.

Evidence of support of identified partners will be required.

Stage One applications will be checked for eligibility by DEW. Eligible applications will be assessed and considered for progression to Stage Two. Assessment criteria are provided below.

Applicants may be asked for further information or clarification during the assessment of Stage One.

In considering Stage One applications, DEW may discuss with applicants:

- combining multiple individual projects into one project, and/or
- amending the scope of research, the proposed methodology, or the proposed community engagement techniques.

The outcomes of these discussions with DEW should be reflected in the proposals that prospective applicants submit for Stage Two applications.

DEW will invite successful applicants to apply for Stage Two.

Stage Two – Full Application

The Stage Two Full Application will include:

- comprehensive detail of project activities
- timelines and milestones
- describe how community members will be engaged and involved in the project
- details of project partners
- comprehensive budgeting, project partner contributions, and budget justification

- evidence of support of landholders and partners (as applicable), and
- a Risk Assessment and a Risk Management Plan.

Smaller value projects will have a reduced application process for Stage Two applications, commensurate with the amount of funding being sought.

Applicants may be asked for further information or clarification during the assessment of Stage Two.

DEW will manage the assessment of Stage Two applications. Stage Two applications will be reviewed by an assessment panel which will consider each application and how it compares to other applications. Assessment criteria are provided below.

Advice will be provided by DEW to the Minister for Climate, Environment and Water on the Stage Two applications received. The Minister will approve successful Stage Two projects for funding.

All applicants will be notified in writing regarding the outcome of their application.

Successful applicants will be invited to enter into a formal written agreement. A template for the Grant Agreement document will be provided on the DEW website for applicants to review prior to submitting their application.

Milestone payments and reporting details will be negotiated between the parties depending on the value of grant funding and the term of the project.

7   Assessment Criteria

Stage One and Stage Two applications will be assessed against the following criteria.

Criteria	Weighting	Stage One	Stage Two
Environmental priority and scientific outcomes OR Building capability of participants or project leaders	30%	Application clearly identifies how the anticipated outcomes of the project will advance scientific knowledge in the field of biodiversity conservation OR Application clearly identifies how the anticipated outcomes of the project will support or enhance capability of citizen science participants or project leaders to deliver biodiversity focused projects	
Level of community engagement / citizen involvement	20%	Application identifies how the project will create opportunities for community participation	
Scientific rigour and data management	20%	A workplan overview is provided which briefly describes the research topic, conceptual and methodological frameworks for research and data collection	A clear and viable workplan is provided which describes the research topic, conceptual and methodological frameworks for research and data collection
Value for money	20%	Matching funding or partner contributions are described where relevant	
Collaboration / partnerships	10%	Project partnerships or collaborations are identified	

8   Audit and Reporting

Projects will be required to provide progress reports with a financial acquittal. Smaller value and short-term projects may only require a final report and financial acquittal at the completion of the project.

Larger value and/or multi-year projects may require additional progress reports with updated expenditure reports which will be negotiated at the time of preparing the agreement.

9   Grant Timelines

An indicative timeline for the two-stage grant application and approval process is presented below.

Key steps	Indicative timing
Call for Stage One applications commence	14 August 2023
Stage One applications close	22 September 2023
Successful applicants invited to develop Stage Two Application	Late October 2023
Stage Two applications close	Early December 2023
Assessment of Stage Two Applications complete and applicants notified	February 2024
Grant Agreement finalised and projects commence	March 2024

Once formal written agreement is finalised, it is expected that successful applicants will be able to commence projects in the 2023/24 financial year.

10   Grant Agreement

Grant recipients will be required to enter into a Grant Agreement to receive the funding.

The Grant Agreement will outline key dates for the grant and any conditions, these may include:

- reporting
- financial acquittal
- timing for grant milestones and payments
- return of any unspent funds, and
- requirements to acknowledge funding by the South Australian Government's Citizen Science Fund in all media releases and promotional material associated with the project.

A template for the Grant Agreement document will be provided for applicants to review prior to submitting their Stage One and Stage Two applications. Two different templates are shown, one is for not-for-profit organisations, the other is for all other types of organisations.

11   Terms and Conditions

The Minister and DEW retains the right to:

- vary the Fund process and guidelines at any time
- elect not to accept any application which does not meet the Fund criteria, and/or
- not proceed with, or negotiate, in respect to any application.

More information

We welcome the opportunity to discuss your ideas for potential citizen science projects. Please send us an email:

DEW.citizenscience@sa.gov.au

https://www.environment.sa.gov.au/topics/science/citizen-science/grants-and-awards