



Frequently Asked Questions Digital Farm grants program

Overview

The Digital Farm grant program is a \$5 million State Government initiative under the \$22 million State Agricultural Telecommunications Infrastructure Improvement Fund, administered by the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development (the Department).

The objective of the fund is to improve connectivity for agricultural businesses in regional Western Australia (WA) to support the widespread adoption of digital farm technologies.

Eligibility

1. Location

As a program supported by Royalties for Regions, all proposals must be located in a regional area of WA ([Regions Map](#)) as defined in the [Regional Development Commissions Act 1993 Schedule 1](#).

In addition to location eligibility as defined above, proposals must improve connectivity for farming businesses that is not currently serviced, or planned to be serviced by 2020, by National Broadband Network fixed line or fixed wireless internet.

In other words, it must improve digital connectivity services to farming businesses that are currently indicated by the National Broadband Network to receive Sky Muster™ satellite services.

2. Carrier Licence

The Lead Applicant must hold a valid carrier licence under the [Telecommunications Act 1997 \(Commonwealth\)](#).

This is to ensure the telecommunication network's ongoing operability and serviceability as a public carriage service.

How to apply

You can lodge your application via the [Digital Farm](#) SmartyGrants portal.

What is the closing time and date for applications?

Applications must be submitted by Close of Business **5:00pm WST on Friday 13 April 2018**. It is recommended that you submit your application/s **well before the closing time and date to avoid disappointment**.

Can an applicant make changes to the application after it has been submitted?

If you find a mistake in your application after it has been submitted, you should contact the Department by phone on (08)6552-2105 or by email at digital.farm@dpiird.wa.gov.au straight away. The Department may ask you for more information, as long as it does not change the substance of your application. The Department will not accept any additional information, nor requests from applicants to correct applications after the closing time.

How do I know that my application has been received?

When you submit your application you will receive an acknowledgement email, so that you know that your submission has been received. This may take a few moments.

Maximum Fund Amount per application

Grants of up to \$500,000 are available on a matching dollar for dollar basis for approved projects that seek to provide fast, reliable, affordable and scalable internet access to farm businesses in regional WA.

What attachments do I need to include in my application?

Proponents must provide evidence that it holds a carrier licence. You may attach other supporting documents such as, but not limited to, feasibility studies, signed letters of support, market analysis, Gantt Charts and design documents.

Is there a limit to the number of applications that applicants can submit?

No. There is no limit to the number of applications that an applicant can submit before the closing date for applications. Applicants are asked to complete a new application form for each project that they submit.

Can I get any assistance from the Department regarding my application?

The Department may be able to provide information and referrals that could assist your project development activities during the application period. This could include information on farms and farming groups of a local area, to potential access to telecommunication infrastructures and/or its supporting infrastructures in your chosen project area.

Please get in touch with us early on during the application period if you require assistance. Please be advised that the Department may conduct its own due diligence prior to provisioning any commercially sensitive information to ascertain the applicant's standing.

What are the contract conditions for this grant?

A copy of the Financial Assistance Agreement Template outlining the Terms and Conditions is available on the Department's website.

If I hold a Nominated Carrier Declaration, can I still apply for a Digital Farm grant as a lead applicant?

Applications from Nominated Carrier Declaration (NCD) licensees will be accepted, provided that they hold a valid Carrier Declaration, become compliant with the requirements for the fund through confirmation of a binding partnership with a carrier licensee, and confirm this in writing.

When will I know the outcome of my application?

You will be notified of the outcome of your application in writing, at the end of the selection process. For probity reasons, to treat all applicants fairly and equally, it is not possible to give you information about the status of individual applications during the assessment process.

What feedback will be available for this funding round?

General feedback summaries for open funding rounds will be published on the Department's website to provide all organisations with easy to access information about the assessment process overall and the main strengths and areas for improving future applications. Individual feedback will be available upon written request.

How long will it take for applications to be assessed?

Applications assessments should be completed end of May 2018. All applicants will be informed of the outcome of their applications.

What are the tax implications of receiving a grant?

If you receive a grant, you should consider speaking to a tax advisor about the effect of receiving a grant before you enter into a grant agreement.

When can I start my project?

A recipient must not commence work on the Project before a funding agreement is executed with the Department. Construction to commence within 12 weeks from the date of funding agreement execution. Payment will not be backdated for activities that commenced before the execution of the funding agreement, and no payments will be made unless a funding agreement has been executed.

Key dates

Estimated grants timeline

Activity	Date
Submission period opens. Grants announced by Minister, advertised on website and externally	Friday 19 January 2018
Submission period closes. Internal eligibility pre-assessment undertaken	Friday 13 April 2018

Contact for inquiries

If you have any further questions regarding the program, please contact Sue Cairns on (08) 6552-2032. All enquiries may be emailed to: digital.farm@dpird.wa.gov.au.