



Designing and planning your project – 2023–24 guide

NSW Environmental Trust

Department of Planning and Environment



Acknowledgement of Country

The Department of Planning and Environment acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the lands where we work and live.

We pay our respects to Elders past, present and emerging.

This resource may contain images or names of deceased persons in photographs or historical content.

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Part 1: How to use this guide

Before proceeding with this guide, please read the **Environmental Education program guidelines** for further information on eligibility and program priorities.

Links to key resources are provided on the **Environmental Education grants program webpage**.

These include:

- 2023–24 Environmental education program guidelines
- Grants Management System link to register and submit an application
- Creating change through your environmental education project practical guide
- previously funded projects
- workplan sample.

This guide complements supporting text within the online Grants Management System (GMS) by providing additional guidance to help you submit an application to the Environmental Education grants program (the program).

Important dates

Opening date for applications	Closing date for applications
Monday 13 November 2023	5 pm, Monday 5 February 2024

Application structure

Information
Eligibility
Project Summary
Applicant Details
Collaborators
Project Location
Project Rationale
Workplan - Outcomes and Schedule
Workplan - Project Measures
Workplan - Project Budget
Risk Management
Supporting Information
Feedback
Declaration

Figure 1 Application form structure in Grants Management System

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Part 2: Application sections

Sidebar category: Project rationale

The environmental problem

- Provide a clear definition and clear description of the problem, supported by evidence, explaining what the problem is and why education is part of the solution.
- It is recommended that you review program logic pages in 8 to 10 of *Creating change through your environmental education project* before answering the next questions (see **part 3 – More information**).

The environmental outcome

Describe the environmental improvement your project will lead to before you attempt to answer the following questions. Applying the program logic, this is the **ultimate outcome**.

Things to consider

Think about how well your project aligns with the following priorities of the *Environmental Trust Strategic plan*:

- addressing **climate change impacts on the natural environment** – both mitigation and adaptation
- supporting threatened species recovery.

How will you measure the environmental outcomes your project is achieving? How will the natural environment/threatened species benefit from your work?

See **Part 2: Application section, Sidebar category: Workplan – outcomes and schedule** for examples of climate change and threatened species outcomes that could be funded.

Identifying audience and education focus

Describe your target audience – who are they, what do they do, how do their actions impact the environment? How will their involvement in project activities lead to the environmental outcomes being sought? What expert advice has been sourced to ensure that the project is correctly targeted?

Systemic and behavioural changes

Describe the changes in day-to-day practices, management or organisational practices, systems or infrastructure that are necessary to achieve the environmental outcome. Practices can be behaviours, actions, activities, or processes. Applying the program logic, these are the **intermediate outcomes** of your project.

Provide an overview of the specific changes you want to promote, and how you will measure them so that by the end of your project you can demonstrate that it is on track to be effective. Think about who you are targeting to achieve these outcomes. Table 1 provides examples of systemic and behavioural changes and how they might be entered in an application.

Table 1 Systemic and behavioural change examples

Systemic and behavioural changes	Baseline (what is your starting point? Think about who your activities target)	Target (measures) – where do you want to get to	Data you will collect to measure targets (the change) (Tier 2 only)	Evaluation methods you will use to collect data (Tier 2 only)
<p>Systemic change: Councils in partnership with businesses implement programs that provide pathways for youth to influence decision-making in their local government area to improve resilience of the local environment to impacts of climate change</p>	<p>3 councils have successfully implemented programs that educate and support young people to develop their own solutions to reduce human impacts on the local environment, and present their solutions to a council meeting</p>	<p>6 new councils implement programs that allow youth to lead climate action in their local government areas Train 12 youth (2 for each group) as climate advisers Increase participation in bushcare groups by 25%</p>	<p>Number of council staff attending information sessions on how to implement youth climate engagement programs Number of young people engaging in workshops and participating in training programs Number of projects implemented that are influenced by the input of young people</p>	<p>Survey project participants, youth workers, property managers and practitioners; feedback from local residents; changes in policies and procedures at local councils Data collected from monitoring of the projects implemented</p>
<p>Behaviour change: Landholders planting and maintaining paddock trees to provide habitat and connectivity for swift parrots</p>	<p>10 local property managers have already planted paddock trees</p>	<p>Increase the number of people planting and maintaining paddock trees on their property to 30</p>	<p>Number of individual landholders seeking to participate in the project as a result of education program Number of landholders implementing the practices</p>	<p>Workshop and focus group evaluation sheets, follow up phone calls and emails with focus group participants, Local Land Services data</p>

Explain how these proposed changes will achieve your project's environmental outcome

How do you know that the systemic and behavioural changes you have defined will deliver the environmental outcome you have identified?

Link the systemic and behavioural changes you are promoting with the environmental outcomes you want to achieve.

How do you know your target audience can achieve the outcomes?

If your project will not be able to demonstrate an environmental outcome before it concludes, why are you confident that these changes will eventually lead to it?

Immediate participation outcomes

What immediate changes do you expect, as a result of your education and engagement activities, which will lead to the changes you proposed above?

Applying the program logic outlined in *Creating change through your environmental education project practical guide* (see **Part 3: More information**), these are the **immediate outcomes** you expect to observe as a result of your education and engagement activities within the lifetime of your project.

Table 2 provides examples of immediate participation outcomes and how they might be entered in an application.

Table 2 Immediate participation outcomes example

Immediate changes	Target group (audience)	Targets (measures)	Data you will collect to measure targets (Tier 2 only)	Evaluation methods you will use to collect data (Tier 2 only)
Increased participation in local decision-making forums, application of climate change mitigation/adaptation strategies in local environmental volunteer groups (bushcare, community garden, etc.)	12 youth, 12 seniors and 6 community groups	100% of youth climate advisers advocating for climate change and local environmental actions 80% of participants reporting behaviour changes that reduce the impacts of climate change and improve the local environment	Number of expressions of interest received to participate in the program. Number of new volunteers in community groups Number of people adopting behaviour changes (planting climate resilient native species, composting, reducing energy consumption, etc.) as a result of the youth presentations	Survey participants, participating community groups, council staff, youth workers, feedback from local residents, changes in policies and procures at local councils
Landholders planting and maintaining paddock trees to provide habitat and connectivity for swift parrot	Landholders in the Riverina region	Project aims to increase number of paddock trees over 5,000 ha by a total of 1,000	Number of trees planted, number of individual landholders adopting improved land management practices as a result of education project. Data from monitoring of tree hollows	Workshop and focus group evaluation sheets, follow-up phone calls and emails with focus group participants. Site mapping, photo monitoring

Project resources

Do you need to create any resources to engage with your target group/audience?

What are the right resources for this target audience?

What type of resource is your target audience most likely to engage with?

How do you know your target audience will respond to the resources you are developing?

What resources will provide a platform that you and your project partners will use for delivering outcomes beyond the life of the project?

Legacy for sustained impact

What changes to organisations, systems, infrastructure, networks or places will form a long-term legacy of your project?

How will your project provide a springboard for outcomes beyond the life of the project?

What will you put in place so that resources will continue to be used and maintained?

How will you ensure your environmental outcome is maintained?

Research and testing your project concept

The Trust recommends that you start your project with research to improve your understanding and test your assumptions about what will shift target audience thinking and behaviour. Follow this research with a field test in milestone 1 to **pilot** your educational framework and build an evidence base that demonstrates you are on the right path. You can then incorporate any changes needed based on participant feedback and scale up education for the remainder of the project.

Sidebar category: Workplan – outcomes and schedule

Overview

The workplan is split over 3 sections (outcomes and schedule, project measures, project budget) and is designed to help map out the work you will carry out by identifying:

- the outcomes your project will deliver
- the activities you will implement to achieve the outcomes
- your project measures
- the budget you need for each milestone (stage of works)
- the expected timeframes for each milestone and activity.

Step 1: Defining your project outcomes

It is recommended that you identify a **maximum of 3** outcomes:

- What environmental outcome will you achieve?
- What educational outcomes will you achieve that will deliver your environmental outcome?

Clearly define your outcomes using the SMART principle:

SMART outcomes are:

- **S**pecific
- **M**easurable
- **A**chievable
- **R**ealistic
- **T**ime-bound

Your outcomes should describe what success will look like by the end of the project.

We encourage you to incorporate a similar level of detail as provided in these SMART examples:

- The condition of Box Gum Grassy Woodland species on 45 properties in the Riverina will be improved by educating at least 60 landholders over 3 years about best practice land management practices for conservation of Box Gum Grassy Woodland.
- Establish 3 knowledge clusters/hubs across New South Wales to deliver a 12-month program engaging 60 farmers to transition to regenerative agricultural principles and practices through a regenerative agriculture mentoring program.
- Increase community participation in koala preservation programs by 20% by educating landholders about the significance of fauna corridors in maintaining the breeding and feeding patterns essential to their survival.
- To equip project planners with an understanding of climate change adaptations in native grass species and sourcing of appropriate genetic material for restoration projects, we will deliver 6 workshops over 3 years around New South Wales with a minimum of 20 participants each. We will invite participants to submit an expression of interest and select 3 candidates to work with us on project plans for their sites.

Tips

- Do your outcomes contain measures quantifying what success will look like by the end of the project?
- Do your outcomes align with the information you entered under Project Rationale?

Step 2: Project schedule – establish milestone/activities/timeframes

Applications proposing works of less than 24 months (Tier 1) or 36 months (Tier 2) will not be funded.

Start your project with a research and testing phase that can be 6 to 12 months in duration. Each subsequent milestone should be 12 months.

You will submit a milestone report at the end of each milestone.

- Describe the activities that will achieve the outcomes you have described.

- A brief description for each activity should be provided, with sufficient detail to guide implementation of your project. Adding detail to your activity description demonstrates to the Technical Review Committee how you propose to deliver your project, and how the activities will contribute towards achieving project outcomes.
- Design your project activities with the principles of **transformative learning for sustainability** and the **theory of change** in mind – see *Creating change through your environmental education project guide* for more information. You must demonstrate how your project activities will improve the environment, individual learning, and change systems in ways that support sustainable practices.

Things to consider

- Refer to the systemic and behaviour changes, and the immediate and intermediate outcomes you described in the **Project rationale** tab. Have you clearly described activities that will achieve those changes?
- Are your project activities clearly appropriate for your target audience? Are the activities and resources developed culturally appropriate? Will they contribute towards achieving project outcomes?
- How will you measure and demonstrate the effectiveness of your work? What evidence will you gather to show that your project is achieving its outcomes? Build monitoring mechanisms into your project activities (e.g. surveys, population counts.)
- What resourcing is required to carry out your activities? They will need to be budgeted for in the next section of the workplan. Refer to the workplan sample for more examples.

Sidebar category: Workplan – Project measures

Each activity you enter in the previous section will carry forward to the **Project measures** tab where you will be able to select an **Activity type** from a drop-down menu. Each activity type will generate a different list of measures so you can define the scope of your project and show how you will measure your success.

- Select an activity type that best describes the activity.
- Enter the target measure and unit (if applicable) for the measure. Complete this process for all activities under each milestone (you can enter a **0** if the measure is not applicable).

Education grants have some mandatory measures:

- measuring reach
- identifying audience and education focus.

The following measures are strongly recommended:

- capturing behaviour change actions
- promoting your project

Reflect on the behaviour changes you identified under the **Project rationale section** in your workplan using the **Capturing behaviour change** activity type.

Sidebar category: Workplan – Project budget

You will need to provide a detailed breakdown of your anticipated project costs and identify how they will be funded (either from grant funds or other sources).

All costing in your budget needs to be **detailed, reasonable and justifiable**, especially where individual items comprise a large proportion of the overall budget. Detailed costing ensures your budget is well-planned and linked to your project's outcomes and outputs.

If your application is successful, there will be an opportunity to modify your budget during the project planning phase when developing your detailed workplan.

Tips

- Round each dollar amount off to the nearest whole number.
- No more than 70% of total grant funds sought should be allocated to milestone 1. Refer to the example in Table 2 below.
- Refer to the workplan sample on the Trust's Environmental Education program webpage for more examples.
- Consider whether your proposed budget includes costs that would be considered reasonable expenditure of public funds. Will it withstand public scrutiny?
- Allow for estimated cost increases for each year of the project.
- Use headings to identify expenses that will be funded by the grant, and what is being delivered as a cash or in-kind contribution.

Information you enter in your workplan milestone budgets will be used to determine the payment and reporting schedule in your funding agreement if your application is successful. Table 3 provides an example of a payment and reporting schedule for a Tier 2 grant.

Table 3 Example of a project schedule for a Tier 2 application

Milestone	Start	Finish	Grant funds requested for each milestone
Milestone 1	1 January 2025	30 September 2025	\$56,495
Milestone 2	1 October 2025	30 May 2026	\$37,177
Milestone 3	1 June 2026	30 May 2027	\$15,378
Total grant			\$109,050

Note: funding for milestone 1 must not exceed 70% of the total grant amount.

Budget considerations

Cash contributions

Provide details for all funding contributions pledged by project partner organisations (including your own) towards the cost of your project activities.

If partnership funding has been secured at the time of applying for the grant, provide written evidence of partnership funding with your application.

If you have pending applications for funding at the time of applying to the Trust, you can provide that information under the risk management section of your application.

Written evidence of partnership funding needs to be provided once it has been secured.

In-kind contributions

All in-kind contributions are to be included in your budget against the relevant project activities.

Include details in the budget description for all in-kind contributions, including goods, use of services, equipment and facilities, volunteer time, professional services or expertise in the form of staff time, special materials or material contributions pledged by project partner organisations (including your own) towards the project.

Values for each item should be calculated using current market rates for goods or materials, accurate hourly rates of pay for professional staff services and sensible volunteer valuation (i.e. at a reduced rate proportionate to current award rates for professional contractors).

Hours estimated for volunteer contributions should also be realistic as they form part of your project measures, which you will be required to report on if successful in obtaining a grant.

Staff salaries and on-costs

Conduct your recruitment in line with merit selection principles. A position description should be developed for any new position to be employed under the project.

If you already have a specific person in mind for the position being funded by the Trust and intend to follow the appropriate recruitment options outlined above, you must include their CV (maximum 2-page summary) to allow Technical Review Committee members to determine if they have the correct skills and experience for the job.

Salaries for existing staff can be reflected in your project budget as an **in-kind contribution**. You do not need to include CVs for local/state government employees who are working on the project as part of their usual duties.

You will need to provide clear justification for the funding of any existing employees, including casual or part-time staff, and to demonstrate how the Trust-funded work is additional to any work they have already been engaged to undertake.

For example, a part-time staff member (who has been recruited through a merit selection process) who usually works 2 days a week could work an extra day each week on the project, and that day could be attributed to the Trust funding.

You must demonstrate how you will separately track their project-related work from their regular duties.

Salaries are expected to be in line with industry standards, and you need to show that you have calculated amounts based on reasonable pay rates. It is also expected that staff working conditions will be in accordance with all applicable laws. This includes meeting standard Work, Health and Safety requirements.

You may include up to 26.5% of salary on-costs (including leave loading, workers compensation, payroll tax, superannuation, etc.) in your application.

Contractors

All contractors (including consultants) should be chosen on their merits and ability to effectively deliver the work in line with the *Grantee guide to procurement for Environmental Trust projects* (see **Part 3: More information**).

Your budget should include hourly rates rather than lump sums to demonstrate that costs are in line with industry standards.

Project administration, accounting, and audit

The Trust recognises that there is a cost for managing and administering projects. In most cases grant recipients absorb these costs as an in-kind contribution to the project. However, Trust funds may be used to pay these costs when detailed and justified.

Administration and accounting costs must be project-specific and cannot exceed 10% of the grant. Examples of administration costs you may include in your budget are itemised phone call charges, recruitment and contractor advertising costs, office supplies purchased specifically for the project, financial auditing.

You must quantify these costs in your budget, and not include any ongoing or regular administration costs of your organisation (e.g. office rent).

Your administration costs must not include the cost of compiling Trust reports or conducting Monitoring and Evaluation activities.

The Trust periodically audits projects. You must be able to demonstrate that all administration costs directly relate to the project.

Please note that there are different final financial auditing requirements for different grantees:

For community groups/non-government organisations:

If your project grant is greater than \$20,000, upon completion of the project, you will need to have your final financial report independently certified by a suitably qualified accountant (this will be outlined in your funding agreement).

If your project grant is less than \$20,000, you must provide a statutory declaration only.

For government agencies:

You will need to have your final financial report certified by your chief financial officer, regardless of the budget amount.

Transport

Transport costs can include reasonable costs for freight, transport and other travel expenses.

Insurance

The Trust will not provide funding for association liability insurance.

GST

If you are registered for goods and services tax (GST), the dollar amounts in your application budget should **not** include GST.

GST will be paid in addition to your grant for organisations registered for GST with the exception of government bodies.

If you are not registered for GST and are administering your own grant, the amount requested from the Trust should include any GST that may be payable.

Table 4 Example of a well-presented budget versus a poorly presented budget

Good quality budget		Poor quality budget	
Ecologist to provide advice on nest box installation and monitoring, 4 days at \$1,000 per day	\$4,000	Ecologist	\$4,000
Environmental Education consultant \$80 per hour x 7hrs/week x 40 weeks	\$22,400	Staff time	\$25,000
Tubestock \$3.00 each x 5000	\$17,500	Plants	\$15,000
Guest speaker from Gem University for 5 field days demonstrating regenerative agriculture practices, \$1,500 per day, plus \$500 per day travel & accommodation	\$10,000	Speaker	\$10,000

Sidebar category: Risk management

Risk management plan

Consider risks to the successful delivery of your project and how options for their mitigation reduce their likelihood and/or severity.

Table 5 Risk management plan example

Risk description	Likelihood	Severity	Risk level	Risk treatment action (How can you reduce the risk?)	Likelihood (has the treatment action you identified reduced the potential likelihood?)	Severity (has the treatment action you identified reduced the potential severity?)	Revised risk level
Failure to engage the community in project activities	Remote	Moderate	6	Engage a range of stakeholder organisations and include publicity and engagement strategies such as field days, citizen science, cultural activities	Improbable	Moderate	3
Pilot program for new techniques produce poor quality outcomes	Occasional	Significant	12	Meet with adjoining property owners and discuss objectives of the project and strategies for alternative management	Occasional	Moderate	9
Catastrophic event (e.g. COVID-19 outbreak, fire, vandalism)	Probable	Catastrophic	16	Consider alternative means of delivering education, for example via online workshops	Improbable	Significant	4
Loss of project records and photographs	Remote	Significant	12	Ensure survey results are presented to the committee electronically and in hard copy and kept in 2 places	Improbable	Low	8
Change of project manager	Remote	Moderate	6	Have more than one person familiar with/responsible for the project's aims and objectives who is kept up to date on progress. Project manager provides updates as monthly committee meetings	Improbable	Low	4

Risk description	Likelihood	Severity	Risk level	Risk treatment action (How can you reduce the risk?)	Likelihood (has the treatment action you identified reduced the potential likelihood?)	Severity (has the treatment action you identified reduced the potential severity?)	Revised risk level
Climatic conditions prevent landholder participation in the project (e.g. fires, drought, flood)	Probable	Catastrophic	20	Review and adjust the project plan to accommodate changed tasks and timelines	Probable	Moderate	12

Sidebar category: Supporting information

You can include CVs, letters of support, excerpts from studies or management plans, and maps to show the location and scope of any sites you may be working on.

Table 6 provides an example of attachments that would strengthen an application.

Table 6 Examples of supporting attachments

Letters of support	Should be from project partners or key stakeholders fundamental to the delivery of your project Note: Content should specifically include the type of contribution being made, for example, labour costs, mapping, plant, volunteer hours, cash, within the project timeframe and either the committed (cash) and/or estimated value (e.g. labour hours, plants, volunteer hours) of the contribution
CVs or quotes	Demonstrates the credentials of people who you will consider inviting to submit an application to work on the project. This does not replace the merit selection process
Extract of management plan (maximum of 3 pages)	Important sections from a relevant management plan or site assessment where community education may be required to implement it

Sidebar category: Declaration

Conflicts of interest

When authorising your application in the **Declaration** section, you will be asked to declare any real, potential, or perceived conflicts of interest. You should also outline how you will manage them.

All staff and contractors are required to disclose any potential conflicts of interest.

All contracted and sub-contracted staff, or associated staff, are expected to comply with the *Department of Planning and Environment Statement of business ethics*. (See **Part 3: More information**). If you employ sub-contractors in your work, please inform them of this statement and our expectation that they will abide by it.

Examples of perceived or actual conflicts of interest might include:

- project manager employing themselves or their own business to carry out project-related work and using Trust funds to pay for it
- using project activities to promote products or businesses in which members of the applicant's organisation have an interest
- Trust funds being used to pay friends or family for project-related work without a merit selection process.

You must put systems in place to manage potential or actual conflict of interest that may occur during the delivery of the project. Refer to *Conflicts of interest* in the program guidelines for more information.

Part 3: More information

About the Trust:

- [NSW Environmental Trust homepage](#)
- [NSW Environmental Trust's Strategic Plan 2020-24](#)

Best Practice environmental education guide:

- [Creating change through your environmental education project practical guide](#)

Governance related issues:

- [NSW Government Procurement policy](#)
- [Grantee guide to procurement for Environmental Trust projects](#)
- [Department of Planning and Environment Statement of business ethics](#)
- [Government Information \(Public Access\) Act 2009](#)

Other resources:

- [NSW Government logo](#)
- [Grants Management System Online Portal user manual](#)