

NSW Department of Climate Change,
Energy, the Environment and Water

Living Carbon grant guidelines



Primary Industries Productivity and
Abatement Program

March 2025



Acknowledgment of Country



Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water acknowledges the traditional custodians of the land and pays respect to Elders past, present and future.

We recognise Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' unique cultural and spiritual relationships to place and their rich contribution to society.

Artist and designer Nikita Ridgeway from Aboriginal design agency – Boss Lady Creative Designs, created the People and Community symbol.

Published by NSW Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water

<https://www.energy.nsw.gov.au>

Living Carbon grant guidelines

First published March 2024

ISBN/ISSN 978-1-76058-772-7

Copyright and disclaimer © State of New South Wales through Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water 2024. Information contained in this publication is based on knowledge and understanding at the time of writing, January 2024, and is subject to change. For more information, please visit the following websites:

For ECCS documents: <https://www.energy.nsw.gov.au/copyright>

For Water and Environment: <https://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/about-us/copyright-and-disclaimer>

For General NSW Government: <https://www.nsw.gov.au/nsw-government/copyright>

Contents

Contents

1. Introduction	6
1.1. The Primary Industries Productivity and Abatement Program	6
1.2. Purpose of these guidelines	6
2. Living Carbon	7
2.1. Grant objectives	7
2.2. Expected deliverables by the end of the project	7
2.3. Grant priorities	8
2.4. Target regions	9
2.5. NSW DCCEE's on-ground support partners	10
2.6. Application timeframe	11
2.7. Summary of the application process	11
2.8. Funding and budget	11
2.9. Requirement to share data	13
3. Eligibility criteria	14
3.1. Eligibility criterion 1: Insurances and financial viability	14
3.2. Eligibility criterion 2: Eligible applicant	14
3.3. Eligibility criterion 3: Location and delivery method	15

4. Merit assessment	16
4.1. Merit criterion 1: Planting plan	16
4.2. Merit criterion 2: Registration of project with the Clean Energy Regulator	16
4.3. Merit criterion 3: Commitment to register an environmental account	17
4.4. Merit criterion 4: Value for money	17
4.5. Merit criterion 5: Communication and capacity building	17
5. Budgets	19
6. Guidance on developing your application	20
6.1. The applicant must submit a planting plan that is endorsed by an approved on-ground support partner (Merit criterion 1)	20
6.2. The applicant must have registered their carbon projects under the required ACCU Scheme method (Merit criterion 2)	21
6.3. The applicant must commit to registering their project with Accounting for Nature (Merit criterion 3)	23
6.4. Communication and capacity building (Merit criterion 5)	25
6.5. Opt-in capacity building in collaboration with NSW DCCEEW and partners	26
7. Application and assessment process	29
7.1. Application model	29
7.2. Due diligence	31
7.3. Final decision	31
7.4. Additional information	31

8. Funding deeds	33
8.1. Funding deed and commercial principles	33
8.2. Funding offers	33
9. Further information	34
9.1. Commencement and authority for Living Carbon grant guidelines	34
9.2. Limitations	34
9.3. Confidentiality and disclosure of information	35
9.4. Complaints	36
9.5. Conflict of interest	36
9.6. Evaluation	37
9.7. Grant acknowledgement	38
9.8. Discretion of the NSW Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water	38
9.9. No contract or liability	38
9.10. Privacy	39
Appendix	40
Appendix A: Terms and definitions	40
Appendix B: Reference list	46

1. Introduction

1.1. The Primary Industries Productivity and Abatement Program

The NSW Government is committed to achieving a 70% cut in emissions by 2035 and net zero emissions by 2050¹. Initiatives under the [Net Zero Plan Stage 1: 2020-2030](#) will fast-track emissions reduction over the next decade.

The [Primary Industries Productivity and Abatement Program](#) (PIPAP) forms part of the Net Zero Plan and focuses on supporting landholders, to reduce their emissions, improve their carbon management, and enhance biodiversity on their land alongside production.

Under the program, the NSW Government is investing \$105 million to 2030 in the decarbonisation of the State's primary industries and land sector.

This program will support regional communities by providing land managers with enhanced opportunities to generate income, improve their financial resilience, and deliver environmental outcomes while reducing their emissions.

1.2. Purpose of these guidelines

These guidelines provide information to applicants seeking to apply for Living Carbon grants funding under PIPAP, including:

- eligibility and merit criteria
- eligibility and merit assessments
- how funding will be awarded and managed by the NSW Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water (DCCEEW).

These guidelines should be read alongside the frequently asked questions published on our [website](#).

NOTE: Definitions of key terms used in these guidelines are provided in [Appendix A: Terms and definitions](#). NSW DCCEEW plans to deliver various grant rounds, with the potential to focus the funding criteria differently in each round according to NSW Government priorities and market context. Additional guidelines will be developed for future rounds.

¹ www.energy.nsw.gov.au/nsw-plans-and-progress/government-strategies-and-frameworks/reaching-net-zero-emissions/net-zero

2. Living Carbon

2.1. Grant objectives

Living Carbon grants focus on lowering barriers for landholders that prevent them from entering the carbon market. Living Carbon projects will focus on cleared land in NSW eligible for the [Environmental Plantings 2024 method](#)² under the Australian Carbon Credit Unit Scheme (ACCU Scheme), spotlighting revegetation of habitat for iconic and threatened species, including koalas.

Living Carbon grants are for landholders willing to directly participate in the ACCU Scheme and work with on-ground support partners in each eligible region to design and implement planting projects up to 200 hectares in size. Government funds will be used to de-risk abatement projects, reduce transaction costs, and provide access to advice and training through the on-ground support partners.

In return for funding, grantees will commit to sharing information and experiences about their project. Grantees will document each stage of their project, including co-benefits, and help communicate their learnings to others who might be thinking about doing a similar project.

2.2. Expected deliverables by the end of the project

Successful grantees are expected to deliver the following by the end of the funding period:

- A completed planting project as per the endorsed planting plan (see section [6.1 The applicant must submit a planting plan endorsed by an approved on-ground support partner \(Merit criterion 1\)](#) for details), targeting iconic or threatened Australian species endemic to the area
- A registered and certified Environmental Account with Accounting for Nature (AfN), for the AfN method(s) and accuracy level(s) outlined in the application
- Evidence of Clean Energy Regulator (CER) approval of a year 1 report through the ACCU Scheme
- Evidence of biodiversity assessment to provide data against planned project outcomes
- Mandatory communication requirements (see section [6.4 Communication and capacity building \(Merit criterion 5\)](#) for details)

² Projects previously registered under the now-closed Environmental Planting Pilot 2014 method are also eligible, and other methods may become eligible in the future.

- A budget outlining planned spend vs. actual spend, including co-funding and in-kind funding, over the lifetime of the grant



Image 1. Commercial nursery southwest NSW. Credit: Joy M Lai

2.3. Grant priorities

The goal of the Living Carbon grants is to build a mass of carbon projects in NSW, in line with government priorities. Investing in abatement projects will allow NSW DCCEEW to:

- fund projects that result in carbon abatement while also assisting in habitat restoration that benefits threatened and iconic species
- where possible, demonstrate the potential impact of biodiversity co-benefits on ACCU sale price
- provide basic carbon management training to on-ground support partners and landowners across eligible regions in NSW that can be utilised to assist landholders beyond the lifetime of the grant project
- provide funding to landholders who may not have the ability or resources to take part in carbon projects with large co-funding requirements, such as [High Impact Partnerships](#)
- create demonstration sites across NSW that showcase successful implementation methods by landholders using the ACCU Scheme.

2.4. Target regions

Two Local Land Service (LLS) regions and one Local Government Area (LGA) in NSW are currently eligible for grants under this funding round: the North Coast LLS region, the Riverina LLS region, and the MidCoast LGA.

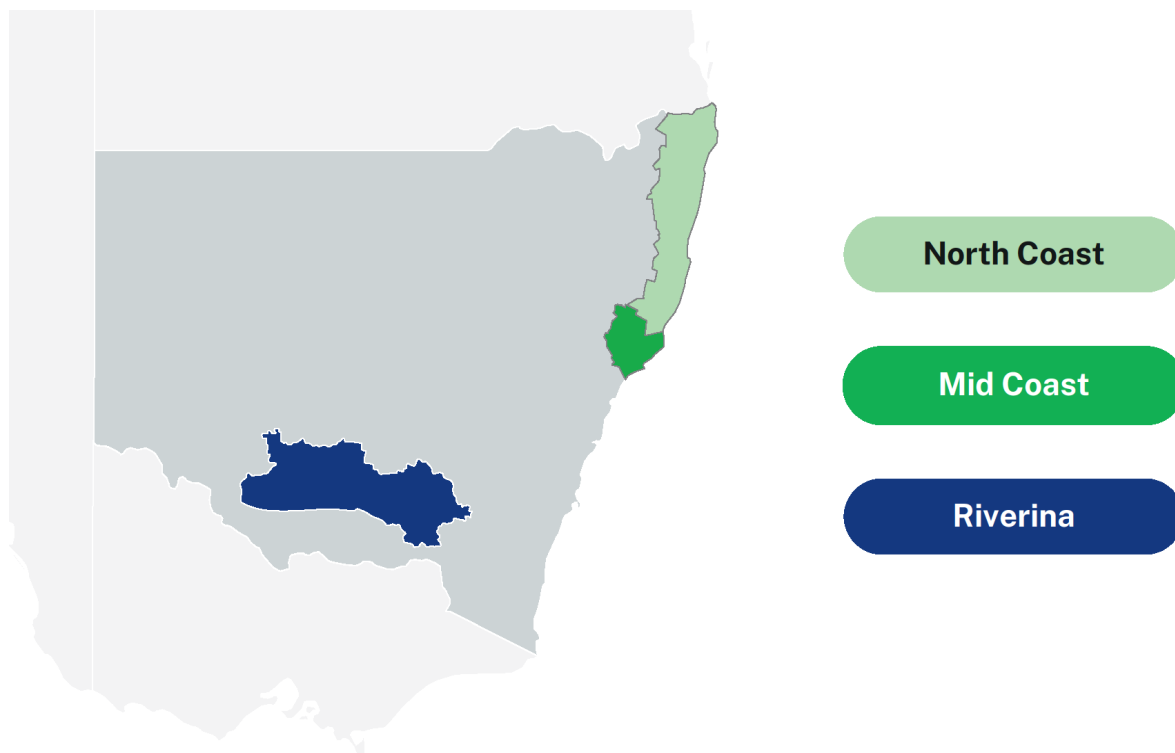


Figure 1: Living Carbon target regions

Grant applications will open in each region once on-ground resources are in place to assist applicants in developing their planting plans (see section [6.1 The applicant must submit a planting plan endorsed by an approved on-ground support partner \(Merit criterion 1\)](#)).

You can check whether your property is within one of those two LLS regions by using the [Look up your Local Land Services region website](#). To check whether your property is within the MidCoast LGA, contact [MidCoast Council](#) or confirm that your rates notice comes from them.

The application period for each region will end either once the total allocated funding for that particular region is spent, or when applications close on Tuesday 30 September 2025, whichever comes first. The allocation of grant funds is \$2 million for the North Coast and \$2 million for Riverina (funded by PIPAP) and \$1 million for MidCoast (funded by the NSW Koala Strategy).

All grant applications should be submitted by Tuesday 30 September 2025 at 5pm AEST. No late submissions or extensions of deadline will be accepted (unless the deadline has already been extended for all applicants, as outlined at section 2.6).

2.5. NSW DCCEEW's on-ground support partners

NSW DCCEEW is working with two key partners to deliver the Living Carbon grants: NSW Local Land Services (focusing on carbon projects in the North Coast and Riverina regions) and the NSW Koala Strategy (focusing on the MidCoast region through their delivery partner MidCoast Council). DCCEEW will work with these partners to help build the awareness, capability and expertise of landholders around carbon management and emissions abatement opportunities.

NSW DCCEEW's partners will play a key role in assisting applicants in eligible regions with their pre-application requirements and will be involved during project implementation to ensure planting work is undertaken in-line with endorsed planting plans.

The figure below outlines the key tasks that NSW DCCEEW's partners will play:

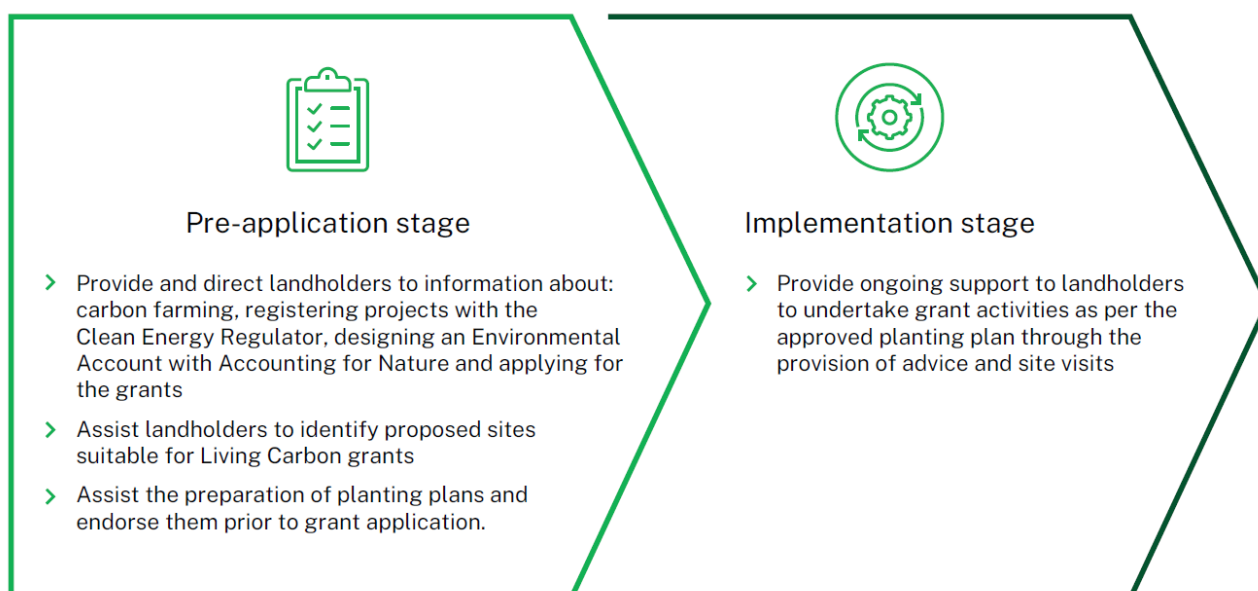


Figure 2: NSW DCCEEW on-ground support key tasks

To reach out to the approved on-ground support partner in your region, please visit our [website](#) and look for your region's specific contact details.

The designated on-ground partner supporting you with the pre-application requirements does not in any way guarantee a successful outcome at the assessment stage. Nor do they prevent or replace any need you may have to seek additional advice regarding your application. You acknowledge that you take full responsibility for the outcome of your application.

2.6. Application timeframe

Applications for the Living Carbon grants will open in April 2024 and will close in September 2025. We may vary or extend this timeframe at our full discretion in consultation with our on-ground support partners.

The grant round will be targeting 3 focus regions. Opening dates for applications for each region can be found on our [website](#). An application link will be provided for each, so please ensure you access the link relevant to your region.

The application links will remain open until allocated funds are exhausted, or until Tuesday 30 September 2025, **whichever comes first**.

2.7. Summary of the application process

2.7.1. Application process

Stage	Activity
1	Applicant develops and submits application
2	Assessor* checks application against eligibility criteria
3	Assessor informs applicant if their application is ineligible
4	Assessor reviews eligible application against the merit criteria
5	Assessor informs applicant that their application is either a) accepted, or b) declined
6	Program team provides successful applicant with a funding deed

*The assessors will be personnel from the Net Zero Land team.

2.8. Funding and budget

You must complete a budget table as part of your application and provide quotes for materials and services to justify your funding request. Your budget request must align with your project's deliverables. See section [2.8.2 Funding inclusions and exclusions](#) for what is eligible for payment under this grant.

Grant funding will be paid in stages against set milestones. Please refer to **Schedule B** of the funding deed on our [website](#) for the expected milestone breakdown for your project.

2.8.1. Funding availability

For the Living Carbon grants, a total of \$5 million in funding is available, \$1 million of which is contributed by the NSW Koala Strategy team for koala-specific projects in the MidCoast LGA.

You are required to declare all other funding you have received or will be receiving for your project in addition to a Living Carbon grant in your application.

We expect you to commit to co-contribution, through direct funding and/or in-kind contributions, when you submit your application. Third party contributions will not be considered as replacement for your required co-contribution. There is no minimum amount of co-contribution mandated, but you must ensure that your project can be successfully delivered over the lifetime of your grant.

In-kind contributions are non-monetary resources where no cash has been transferred to your account(s) for your project. In your application, you will be required to detail the assumptions or estimates of the dollar value equivalent of in-kind contributions, such as hourly costs associated with ground preparation or maintenance.

Please note, if you receive third party funding alongside our grants, we may reduce the Living Carbon grant funding we are willing to award for your project.

2.8.2. Funding inclusions and exclusions

This section guides what we consider eligible and ineligible project expenses from your grant funding. Ineligible expenses cannot be claimed against the grant funding and will have to be funded by you or from other sources.

We may impose limitations or include additional ineligible expenditures beyond those listed in these guidelines and your funding deed or otherwise by notice to you.

Eligible Expenditure:

- Soil preparation (such as through ripping or augering)
- Fencing materials and labour for standard stock fences, funded up to 50% of the total fencing costs, not exceeding 50% of your total grant request
- Direct seeding costs, seeds and direct seeding
- Tube stock
- Tree protection material such as tree guards
- Planting of tube stock, including the installation of tree protection
- ACCU Scheme and Accounting for Nature (AfN) costs, set funding amount of \$5000

Non-eligible Expenditure:

- Weed control at any stage of your project, including material or labour

- Any site maintenance, as outlined in your planting plan and as required for both the ACCU Scheme and AfN methods to be appropriately met
- Mandated communication activities as per [6.4 Communication and capacity building](#) (this does not relate to opt-in capacity building activities outlined in section [6.5 Opt-in capacity building in collaboration with DCCEEW and partners](#) of this guidelines)
- Equipment of any kind (e.g. infrastructure, site preparation equipment, fencing equipment, weed spraying equipment, wildlife cameras, etc.)
- Any initial maintenance requirements as outlined in your planting plan
- Project management tools or time
- Project monitoring or reporting tools or time
- Debt financing or investing of money in exchange for equity into start-ups
- Expenditure on the acquisition of land for a project
- Items that can reasonably be considered as business-as-usual operational costs, including but not limited to:
 - rent, maintenance costs and utilities
 - marketing, communications, promotional costs and website design – for anything not part of the opt-in capacity building work outlined in section [6.5 Opt-in capacity building in collaboration with DCCEEW and partners](#) of this guidelines
- Business-as-usual staff costs such as salaries, redundancy or retirement benefits, workers compensation payments, professional fees or memberships
- Activities carried out or committed to before your grant is offered and accepted
- Legal costs associated with a consortium, disputes or funding arrangements not agreed to as part of your funding deed
- Research projects into ACCU Scheme method viability or development
- Maintenance of equipment and materials associated with your grant project
- Administration or mandatory communication costs (*opt-in communication activities will be funded through a separate arrangement)

2.9. Requirement to share data

Projects funded through Living Carbon will be required to provide project outcomes and data, e.g., overall tree survival rates, target species detected, number of contractors engaged in the project, to NSW DCCEEW and agree to data being shared publicly. The specific requirements for data management will form part of the funding deed for each project.

3. Eligibility criteria

To be eligible for funding, you must meet all the eligibility criteria outlined below.

3.1. Eligibility criterion 1: Insurances and financial viability

You must demonstrate that you comply with all relevant insurance and financial requirements, including:

- Public liability insurance (\$10 million per claim for private landholder, \$20 million for charity, business, or government entity)
- Worker's compensation insurance as required by all relevant laws of Australia relating to worker's compensation
- If a business, is not subject to any insolvency event, including the subject of an order or resolution for winding up or dissolution (other than for the purposes of reconstruction or amalgamation) or the appointment of a receiver, liquidator, administrator or similar.
- Has requested funding from the NSW Government to a value up to \$200,000 to be used only on permissible tasks as outlined in the grant guidelines
- Whether or not you have received any other funding, whether from a private or public source, for the same project.

3.2. Eligibility criterion 2: Eligible applicant

You must be:

- A private landholder who is the proponent of the registered carbon project; or
- An Aboriginal organisation or Traditional Owner group that owns or has legal right to the land and who are the proponent of the registered carbon project.

Public land managers may be considered for inclusion following discussion with NSW DCCEE and pre-approval to apply. NSW National Parks are not eligible for these grants.



Image 2. Koala and her baby. Credit: Pixabay

3.3. Eligibility criterion 3: Location and delivery method

You must:

- Confirm that your project delivered through this grant will occur only in an eligible region of NSW
- Confirm that the total planned planting area is between 10 and 200 hectares
- Confirm that all funded project activities will not commence until after a funding deed has been signed by all parties and will be completed within 18 months of signing
- Confirm that you will apply the principles of Free, Prior and Informed Consent and acknowledge Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property where applicable
- Commit to starting your project within 1 month of grant award.

4. Merit assessment

This section sets out the non-competitive merit criteria that your application will be assessed against and how you will be expected to respond to them.

4.1. Merit criterion 1: Planting plan

To pass this criterion the response must fully meet all the requirements listed below with no deficiencies.

You must:

- Provide a completed planting plan (using the template provided), which meets all requirements outlined in this grant guidelines and is endorsed by an approved on-ground support partner.

See section [6.1 The applicant must submit a planting plan that is endorsed by an approved on-ground support partner](#) for information on the planting plan.

See section [2.5 NSW DCCEEW's on-ground support partners](#) for information on approved on-ground support.

4.2. Merit criterion 2: Registration³ of project with the Clean Energy Regulator

To pass this criterion the response must fully meet all the requirements listed below with no deficiencies.

You must:

- Provide evidence that your carbon project has been registered with the Clean Energy Regulator (CER) under the ACCU Scheme's [Environmental Plantings 2024 method, or approved equivalent](#).

See section [6.2. The applicant must have registered their carbon projects under the required ACCU Scheme method \(Merit criterion 2\)](#) for further guidance.

³ By 'registered', we are referring to the declaration of the Carbon Project(s) under section 27 of Carbon Act and the subsequent registration of the Carbon Project(s) under the ACCU Scheme administered by the CER with no conditions.

4.3. Merit criterion 3: Commitment to register an environmental account

To pass this criterion the response must fully meet all the requirements listed below with no deficiencies.

You must:

- Commit to register and certify an Environmental Account with Accounting for Nature (AfN). You are responsible for choosing an AfN method and percentage accuracy level that is suitable to you and your project.
- State the method(s) and accuracy level that you intend to use under your Environmental Account.
- Provide justification for the chosen method(s) demonstrating appropriateness for your project.

See section [6.3 The applicant must commit to register their project with Accounting for Nature \(Merit criterion 3\)](#) for further guidance.

4.4. Merit criterion 4: Value for money

To pass this criterion the response must fully meet all the requirements listed below with no deficiencies.

You must demonstrate:

- That the total project funding you are seeking from the Living Carbon Grant is no more than \$200,000
- A commitment to co-invest in your project through co-funding and/or in-kind contributions
- That the requested funding amount is appropriate for your proposed project by including quotes for items eligible for funding
- Outline any additional funding contributions from all sources, including government entities, and how these funds will be allocated

4.5. Merit criterion 5: Communication and capacity building

To pass this criterion the response must fully meet all the requirements listed below with no deficiencies.

You must:

- Commit to the minimum expected engagement strategy through the submission of a completed communication table in your application.

See section [6.4 Communication and capacity building \(Merit criterion 5\)](#)

5. Budgets

You must complete a budget table as part of your application. You must demonstrate your contribution to the project either through direct funding, or in-kind contributions, against various activities expected for the successful delivery of your project. No minimum co-contribution amount has been mandated, but grant funding limits have been set on the following activities:

- Grant funds for fencing costs, including materials and labour, are capped at 50% of the total cost for a standard stock fence (not exceeding 50% of the total grant request). The remaining cost, plus any additional costs associated with fencing to a higher standard, must be funded as a co-contribution
- Costs associated with the ACCU Scheme and Accounting for Nature are fixed at \$5000 per applicant, and no additional grant funds can be requested for these activities.

The grant funding will be paid against set milestones, as set out in **Schedule B** in your funding deed.

See section [2.8.2 Funding inclusions and exclusions](#) for further information on what is eligible for grant funding under Living Carbon.



Image 3. Wedge-tailed eagle Credit: David Croft/DPE

6. Guidance on developing your application

6.1. The applicant must submit a planting plan that is endorsed by an approved on-ground support partner (Merit criterion 1)

The purpose of the planting plan is to provide details of your proposed planting project and the target species your project aims to benefit. The planting plan will ensure that your planting project meets the requirements of both the ACCU Scheme's Environmental Plantings 2024 method (or equivalent), as well as the Living Carbon grant outcomes.

The main components of the planting plan include:

- A site map outlining proposed carbon estimation areas (planting areas) and key physical features
- Images of the site
- Details of the proposed planting area, i.e., the number of trees to be planted, target canopy density, preliminary plant species list, and the percentage of each strata (trees, shrubs) to be planted
- Details of the equipment and materials that will be required (seeds or tube stock, tree guards, metal tree guards/protectors, fencing type and extent, etc.)
- The intended co-benefits of the planting project that will be monitored. In particular:
 - a list of the target flora species, fauna species and/or ecological communities, noting their conservation status
 - the provision of evidence to justify the selection of target flora and fauna species
 - an explanation of how the planting project will benefit the target species or ecological community(s)
 - a list of any other benefits beyond those listed above
- A project timeline for planting, including site preparation and maintenance, in-line with the Living Carbon grant's project maximum duration limit of 18 months
- A clear statement of who prepared the plan and their expertise in this area

- Additional information, determined by and specific to each region, deemed important by the on-ground support partner
- Endorsement of the planting plan in its entirety by an on-ground support partner

We have provided a planting plan guide and a planting plan template for each region on our [website](#). The planting plan guide provides information, instructions, and additional resources to assist you with completing your planting plan. Using the planting plan guide and template created for your region is crucial as it may include essential regional-specific information. Please note that alternative templates will not be accepted in your application.

While individuals with adequate experience can complete the planting plan, it must receive endorsement from DCCEE's designated on-ground support partner (refer to section [2.5 DCCEE's on-ground support partners](#) for additional details). If you require clarification about what constitutes sufficient experience, we recommend you reach out to the on-ground support partner assigned to your area. Contact information is readily available on our [website](#).

6.2. The applicant must have registered their carbon projects under the required ACCU Scheme method (Merit criterion 2)

Australia's largest carbon abatement incentive program is the [Australian Carbon Credit Units Scheme](#) (ACCU Scheme, formerly the Emissions Reduction Fund), administered by the Australian Government's Clean Energy Regulator (CER). Under the ACCU Scheme, carbon abatement projects across Australia can generate ACCUs, which are tradable units. Each ACCU represents one tonne of carbon dioxide equivalent net abatement.

All applicants are required to register their project under the required ACCU Scheme method with the CER before submitting a Living Carbon grant application.

You will deal directly with the CER to earn ACCUs. The NSW Government will not be involved in any aspect of the registration or ongoing management of carbon projects under the scheme. Reporting requirements for the ACCU Scheme registered project and the Living Carbon project are not connected. If you require assistance or have questions relating to the ACCU Scheme or the eligible method, the CER provides support through [online resources](#) and a [helpline](#).

To be eligible for a Living Carbon grant, your carbon project must be registered under either of the following two methods:

- [Environmental Plantings Pilot 2014 method](#) which closed in 2024. Your project must have been registered with this method before 30 September 2024.

- [Environmental Plantings 2024 method](#) which became available in December 2024. This method does not currently have an alternative assurance option like the 2014 method.

The Environmental Plantings Pilot 2014 and Environmental Plantings 2024 methods involve planting a mixture of locally suitable native trees, shrubs, and understorey species to establish new forest cover. The potential benefits of a revegetation carbon project, beyond carbon abatement, include:

- diversification of revenue through the sale of ACCUs
- provision of shelter for livestock and pastures
- restoration of degraded land through the protection of soil from wind erosion
- protection of crops and other assets by providing shade and windbreaks
- improvement of water quality through the reduction of pesticide and fertiliser runoff, resulting in overall improvement to ecosystem health
- habitat restoration and connectivity
- additional benefits from increased biodiversity, for example pollination.

Visit the [ACCU Scheme's Environmental Plantings 2024 method page](#) for further information on how to participate and register your project.

Under the Living Carbon grants, carbon projects must be planned to meet the requirements of the ACCU Scheme while also delivering specific co-benefits to native iconic/threatened species. This information is to be included in your planting plan (see section [6.1 The applicant must submit a planting plan endorsed by an approved on-ground support partner \(Merit criterion 1\)](#)). Please refer to the planting plan guide designed for your region to understand what co-benefits your project should deliver. Guides and the planting plan template can be found on our [website](#).

Auditing requirements under the ACCU Scheme

Currently (March 2025), the only option available for projects is to register under the Environmental Plantings 2024 method. However, it is expected that an alternative assurance option will be available from 1 April 2025, when the replacement [Audit Thresholds Instrument 2025](#) takes effect. The draft Audit Thresholds Instrument 2025 proposes similar rules for low-risk plantings to the existing [Audit Thresholds Instrument 2015](#). Whether the Environmental Pilot will be continued is uncertain.

The Living Carbon grant eligibility criteria aligns with low-risk planting requirements under the draft Audit Threshold Instrument 2025. Under the draft, a project is considered low risk if the project proponent is the landowner or had legal right to the land, the planting area is less than 200 ha, and the project uses the mixed species block planting model in FullCAM.

Therefore, when the alternative assurance option becomes available for the Environmental Plantings 2024 method, eligible projects will be required to opt-in to this option. The Department will support Living Carbon grantees who have registered under the 2024 method to opt-in to the alternative assurance audit regime for their projects.

6.3. The applicant must commit to registering their project with Accounting for Nature (Merit criterion 3)

What is Accounting for Nature (AfN) and why is it required as part of this grant?

You must demonstrate that you commit to using [Accounting for Nature \(AfN\)](#) to monitor one or more of the biodiversity co-benefit(s) that your project will achieve.

Living Carbon aims to demonstrate that carbon projects can deliver biodiversity co-benefits, which in turn can add value to the price of ACCUs and/or a landholder's business. To pay a premium price for biodiversity credits, the market will need to be confident in the product they are buying - in this case, biodiversity co-benefits - and preferably be able to compare like-for-like products, e.g. improvements in fauna biodiversity between projects.

This is achieved by monitoring and quantifying biodiversity co-benefits using a trusted standard and certifying that co-benefits have been achieved in accordance with that standard. Accounting for Nature is a trusted and tested standard that achieves this.

Choose an AfN method and an accuracy level

Your planting plan endorsed by our on-ground support partner should provide a clear list of the targeted iconic and/or threatened species ("Environmental Asset or Sub-Asset") that will benefit from your planting project. You should use this information to design your Environmental Account and choose an appropriate AfN method to monitor your Environmental Asset. It is expected that you provide justification for your chosen method and outline why it is appropriate for the planting project you are undertaking as part of your application. You may choose more than one method, as long as the methods are not measuring the same Environmental Asset (fauna, vegetation, etc).

AfN's methods are developed at a particular 'accuracy level' which '*reflects the robustness of a method's approach to measuring the condition of the Environmental Asset*'⁴. Certain methods

⁴ <https://www.accountingfornature.org/methods>

offer only one accuracy level, while others offer a choice between 2 or 3 accuracy levels. You are responsible for choosing a method and accuracy level that is suitable to your project and aims. You will be able to do this in your application by choosing the appropriate method from a drop-down menu. More information about accuracy levels can be found on the AfN website under 'Methods'.

Note: You can use multiple approved methods to measure different aspects of the environment ("asset classes" which are soil, water, vegetation and fauna). This requires additional Asset Accounts to be added to an Environmental Account (defined by site/project boundary such as property boundary).

AfN Environmental Account Certification steps and when they occur

There are five (5) steps to [Certification of an Environmental Account with AfN](#).

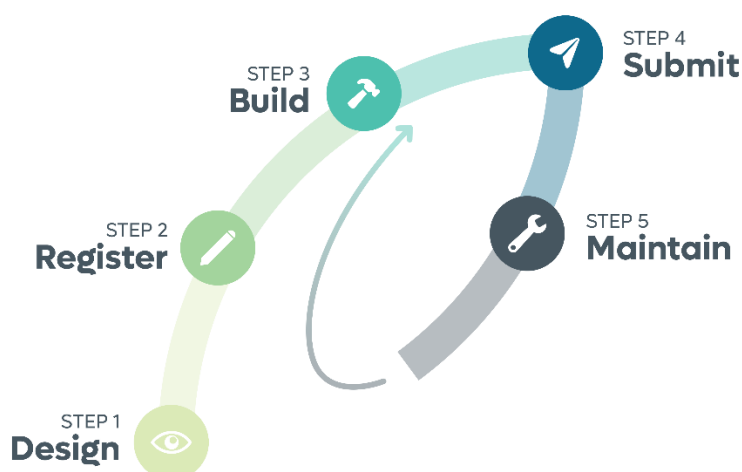


Figure 3: The 5 steps to certification of an environmental account with AfN⁵

As part of your application, you will be collecting data, which constitutes *Step 1 – Design* of the AfN certification process. This includes:

- choosing what Asset(s) you would like to measure
- the appropriate AfN method(s) and accuracy level you would like to use to measure the asset, and
- the Environmental Account and Asset boundaries (these are your property boundary and carbon estimation area(s) respectively, which outlines the planting location and target species information in your planting plan).

⁵ Graphic used with permission from Accounting for Nature

You can find the specific information required to complete this step on the AfN's website and in the guidelines of the method(s) you choose (specifically the "Overview of Process" section within each method's guideline). Information collected in Step 1 will prepare you for Step 2 – *Registration*, which must be completed within one month of your grant application being approved.

Steps 3 – 5 are expected to be completed within six months of your grant application being approved. Please visit the AfN [website](#) and review the guidelines of your chosen method to familiarise yourself with the requirements.

6.4. Communication and capacity building (Merit criterion 5)

The NSW Government is looking to help build the capacity of farmers and other landholders to implement carbon management projects.

You must undertake mandatory communication and capacity building activities during the delivery of your Living Carbon project. These vary according to applicant type, as per the table below:

Table 2: Mandatory communication and capacity building activities

Community activity	Quantity (minimum)	Applicants to provide
Mandatory for all applicants		
Written case studies including images – near completion of your project	1	Information provided to NSW DCCEEW in a requested format such as a case study, question guide, or phone interview. NSW DCCEEW will create the case study using this information. Permission for NSW DCCEEW to use the case studies publicly
Online surveys at the start and end of your project	2	Answers to survey questions about experiences of preparation and delivery of your project
Mandatory for government entities, businesses and charities		
Social media posts – e.g. announcement of grant,	2	Written content for NSW DCCEEW to approve before posting

Community activity	Quantity (minimum)	Applicants to provide
sharing one progress update		
News article	1	Written content for NSW DCCEEW to approve before publishing
Excluded activities		
Any activities not listed above or not discussed with NSW DCCEEW for consideration and approval		

6.5. Opt-in capacity building in collaboration with NSW DCCEEW and partners

Living Carbon projects will showcase local, real-time examples of existing carbon projects to enable landholders to better understand the context, process, and implications of developing a carbon project on their land.

NSW DCCEEW and on-ground support partners will work with interested applicants to share their stories through a range of capacity-building activities as shown in the table below.

You can opt-in to undertake one or a combination of these activities in collaboration with NSW DCCEEW and/or the on-ground support partners in your region. The activities that you may choose to take part in include:

- enabling storytelling through an online video case study, signage at project locations, or by becoming a demonstration site
- hosting an on-site field day or short event
- sharing your learnings and experiences through video, podcast, or online content, about costs, revenue, and data monitoring requirements when specifically undertaking a low-risk environmental planting carbon project using the Environmental Planting method
- ensuring your site is physically accessible and/or has capacity to safely act as a host site for field days or events [^]

[^] Relevant site safety, insurance and accessibility issues needs to be considered when opting to become a demonstration site or to host an on-site field day or event

Depending on the agreed-upon activity between you, NSW DCCEEW and the on-ground support partners, NSW DCCEEW and the on-ground support partners will contribute to the planning and/or funding of your activity.

See the table below for details:

Table 3: Opt-in capacity building activities with DCCEEW and/or on-ground support partners

Communication activity	Applicant responsibility	NSW DCCEEW and/or partner responsibility*
Field day / Community activity (1 hour – full day)	• Provide access to property • Collaborate with NSW DCCEEW/partner	• Attendance at event • Collaborate with applicant to organise and conduct the event
Video (interviews / project video or e- tour of site)	• Provide access to property • Collaborate with NSW DCCEEW/partner	• Attendance on site • Collaborate with applicant to complete filming • Work with producer to complete a video
Podcast episode	• Provide access to property • Collaborate with NSW DCCEEW/partner	• Attendance on site • Contribute to organisation and costs • Collaborate with applicant
Establish demonstration site	• Collaborate with NSW DCCEEW/partner to identify costs and maintenance beyond the grant	• Regular attendance on site • Assist with set up costs • Collaborate with applicant
Other story telling options can be considered	• Discuss with NSW DCCEEW for consideration and approval	• TBD for each approved option
Excluded activities: Any activities not listed above or not discussed with NSW DCCEEW for consideration and approval		

* The contributions for each capacity building project, by either NSW DCCEEW or the partner, will be determined following discussion with the grantee.

Note: Expressing an interest in a capacity building project does not guarantee that capacity building activities will proceed unless it is deemed by NSW DCCEEW to benefit the grant's outcomes.

If you are interested, you can express your interest by choosing to opt-in for capacity building activities in your application. NSW DCCEEW or the on-ground support partner will reach out to discuss the possibilities directly with you if you are awarded a Living Carbon grant. The contributions for each capacity building project by either NSW DCCEEW or our partner, will be determined through these discussions.

Opt-in activities are not managed under the Living Carbon grant, but through direct engagement with the Net Zero Land team in NSW DCCEE and on-ground support partners.

7. Application and assessment process

7.1. Application model

Application and assessment processes for Living Carbon grants are non-competitive, and consists of the following stages:

1. Eligibility assessment
2. Merit assessment

Further details on each application step have been provided below.

7.1.1. Living Carbon application process

Step 1. Confirm that you meet all eligibility requirements prior to applying

The application includes three eligibility criteria you must meet:

- Eligibility criterion 1: Demonstrate that you have the appropriate insurances and financial viability to complete the proposed project.
- Eligibility criterion 2: Demonstrate that you are the proponent of the registered carbon project and the owner of the property on which it is being delivered.
- Eligibility criterion 3: Demonstrate that your project will be delivered in an eligible region of NSW.

If any of the components of the three eligibility criteria are not met, your application is deemed ineligible, and you should not apply.

Step 2. Review the Living Carbon information in this guide and on our website to guide your application

This document explains the objectives and priority areas for this grant, which will help you to align your project idea with the intent of the funding program. The guidelines also explain the merit criteria that will need to be adequately addressed for your application to be successful.

A briefing will be recorded and uploaded to our [website](#), which will explain the Living Carbon grants in more detail. An FAQ list will also be maintained and updated to ensure all potential applicants are provided the same information. Check our [website](#) for further information, or email your inquiry to the program team: netzero.land@environment.nsw.gov.au.

Step 3. Fill out the application form in SmartyGrants, which is our chosen online grants administration and management system, and submit it for assessment along with all the required documentation

Complete and submit your application through the SmartyGrants online application form prior to the grant closing date. The SmartyGrants link for each eligible region can be found on our [website](#).

Once you log on to SmartyGrants to complete and submit your application, you will receive an email notification with an application number to confirm it has been received.

Note: If you do not receive an email notification, please contact netzero.land@environment.nsw.gov.au

Step 4. Receive the outcome of your application

The assessor will review eligibility against a yes/no criteria. Projects that meet all eligibility requirements will proceed to merit assessment. If your application is deemed ineligible during the eligibility review, you will receive an email notification.

The assessor, potentially with the assistance of an on-ground partner, will review applications against the merit criteria and recommend successful applicants for approval of a grant. We expect this step to take between one to three weeks, depending on whether additional expertise is required to assess a component of your application.

During either the eligibility or merit assessments, we may ask you for more information. You will have five business days from the date of our written request to provide a response.

If your application is successful, we will send you a written offer and the Living Carbon funding deed.

If your application was not successful, we will notify you and include reasons why it was not approved for funding.

Note: If your application was unsuccessful, you may apply again if you ensure that you meet all eligibility and merit criteria.

Step 5. If you are successful, execute the funding deed and commence your project

If you are successful for a Living Carbon grant, we will execute the funding deed with you.

Following the signing of your Living Carbon funding deed, your project can then commence.

Note: No departures of funding deed clauses will be accepted. Please ensure you review the draft funding deed provided on our website prior to applying to ensure you accept it in its entirety.

7.2. Due diligence

At any time during the assessment process, we may undertake due diligence on your application. Due diligence may include, but is not limited to:

- Confirmation with the noted endorser of your planting plan that all information is up-to-date and accurate.
- Request for further information from you of any material reasonably required by NSW DCCEE in respect to the eligibility and merit criteria.

You must comply with any request for information as part of these due diligence checks.

7.3. Final decision

We have the discretion to decline, refuse or cease to assess an application at any time if we are of the view that an application is unlikely to be successful.

Our decision is final in all matters, including the:

- approval of applications for funding
- amount of Living Carbon funding awarded
- terms and conditions of funding.

You may submit only one application for a Living Carbon grant. However, if your application is unsuccessful, you are able to submit another application that addresses the failed component of the first application, as long as the round is still open for submissions. Requests for re-review of applications will not be accepted unless specifically determined by NSW DCCEE. Notifications about your assessment outcome will be communicated in writing.

Without limitation, the submission of your application is not, and does not represent, an agreement to negotiate an offer or guarantee funding by us. You acknowledge that we are free to cease assessment of an application at any time prior to the finalisation of the funding deed without any liability or obligation to you or any third party (including without limitation any consortium, related bodies corporate or group member). Any actions undertaken by you or any third party arising out of or in connection with an application is at your or the third party's own risk and expense. There is no binding agreement between the parties until the funding deed has been fully executed.

7.4. Additional information

For up-to-date information on this Living Carbon funding opportunity, please visit our [website](#).

If you have any questions about this funding opportunity, please email us at netzero.land@environment.nsw.gov.au



Image 4. A pair of Glossy black cockatoos Credit: John Spencer/DPE

8. Funding deeds

8.1. Funding deed and commercial principles

You must enter into a funding deed with NSW DCCEEW to receive Living Carbon funding. This deed will detail your and any other relevant parties' obligations in relation to your project.

A funding deed template, detailing terms we consider appropriate, and outlining the milestone delivery schedule, is available on our [website](#).

We will not accept departures from the funding deed template. Please review the funding deed template prior to submitting your application to ensure that you accept it in its entirety.

By submitting your application, you accept the terms of the funding deed template.

You should be aware that we expect the terms of an executed funding deed to reflect your careful and thorough understanding of your project's development. For example, you should ensure that you conduct a rigorous review of the project milestone timing, associated payment schedule and outcomes for your project as set out in the funding deed before submitting your application.

8.2. Funding offers

Any payment of funds is subject to NSW DCCEEW making a funding offer and the execution of a funding deed. If you receive an offer to sign a funding deed with NSW DCCEEW you must keep the offer confidential until the execution of the deed. If you are successful in obtaining a funding offer, you must seek prior consent from NSW DCCEEW before making any public communications as to the outcome of the funding round.

9. Further information

9.1. Commencement and authority for Living Carbon grant guidelines

These grant guidelines have been approved by us, the NSW Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water. NSW DCCEEW has the authority to award funding, execute and amend the deeds that allow the NSW Government to provide this funding.

9.2. Limitations

9.2.1 No representation, warranty or guarantee

The NSW Government, its Ministers, the NSW Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water, and each of their officers, employees and agents (NSW DCCEEW's parties) do not give any representation, warranty or guarantee, whether express or implied, in relation to the information contained in any materials released by NSW DCCEEW associated with the PIPAP funding, including their completeness, accuracy, currency, reliability or the process by which they were prepared. NSW DCCEEW's parties will not give opinions regarding legal, accounting, regulatory, taxation or any other matters. Without limiting the foregoing, in relation to those matters:

- nothing in the funding materials (including without limitation, these guidelines, or the funding deed) is or should be regarded as advice
- you must satisfy yourself by undertaking your own investigations or seeking advice at your own cost.

Note: nothing contained in the funding material is, or may be relied upon, as a promise, guarantee, representation, or warranty.

9.2.2. Guideline updates

Where significant changes have been made in relation to a grant opportunity, such as changes affecting the assessment of applications or changes to the grant amount, DCCEEW will revise grant guidelines accordingly and publish the revised guidelines.

9.2.3. No liability

Each NSW DCCEEW party expressly disclaims all liability for any loss or damage incurred by any person arising from, or because of, any person's use of or reliance on any information,

statement, opinion or matter (express or implied) contained in, derived from, or omitted from the materials, except for any liability which cannot be excluded as a matter of law.

9.2.4. Other limitations

The funding materials are not an offer, recommendation or invitation by any NSW DCCEEW party in respect of any contract or commitment and (subject to a funding deed being fully executed) nothing in the materials will form the basis of any contract or commitment. You must rely entirely upon your own investigations, review and analysis in relation to your assessment of whether to apply to and participate in the Living Carbon funding.

9.3. Confidentiality and disclosure of information

Information provided by You in an Application, including information regarding any auspice, partner organisations or consortium (“partners”) will be collected and utilised by NSW DCCEEW and NSW DCCEEW Representatives to:

- determine the Applicant’s eligibility for funding and the merit of the Applicant’s Application;
- consider the Applicant’s suitability to receive funding by conducting fraud, corruption, and risk prevention checks;
- provide the relevant grant and any related services to the Applicant following a successful Application;
- contact the Applicant or the Applicant’s nominated representatives in relation to other relevant programs or opportunities from the NSW Government (unless the Applicant opts out at any time);
- administer any incidental functions of the Group; and
- comply with any statutory obligations.

Unless otherwise stated, any commercial-in-confidence information provided by you as part of, or in connection with, a registration, application or negotiation process will be treated confidentially by NSW DCCEEW. However, such documents will remain subject to the Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009 (NSW) (GIPA Act); and in some circumstances NSW DCCEEW may release information contained in an Application and other relevant information in relation to the Application in response to a request lodged under the GIPA Act or otherwise as required or permitted by law.

We may disclose commercial-in-confidence information provided by you to the following parties:

- NSW DCCEEW’s subcontractors and consultants;
- members of the Technical Review Panel and/or Assessment Panel;

- the Net Zero Emissions and Clean Economy Board;
- the Minister or Minister's Office;
- the NSW Department Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water;
- the NSW Ombudsman and Audit Office of NSW;
- the NSW Department of Premier and Cabinet;
- the NSW Department of Customer Service;
- other NSW Government agencies for the purpose of considering the User's suitability; and
- external advisors including probity, technical, financial, or legal advisors any agency or body of the NSW Government, or any other organisation or individual considered by the Group to have a need or an entitlement to know that information (including any federal, state or territory agency or body), where that need or entitlement to know that information or required by law to be disclosed, to those parties.

If we disclose commercial-in-confidence information to any of the above parties, we will inform the party that the information is strictly confidential. We will otherwise only disclose commercial-in-confidence information provided by you with your consent.

9.4. Complaints

Complaints concerning the Living Carbon funding should be emailed to netzero.land@environment.nsw.gov.au. Complaints will, in the first instance, be reviewed by us. If we cannot resolve your complaint within 30 business days of receipt, we will provide details of a nominated complaints and review officer from our Complaints Team who will advise the next steps. If your complaint is still not resolved satisfactorily, the [NSW Ombudsman](#) can be reached for external review of the administrative actions of NSW DCCEEW.

9.5. Conflict of interest

You must disclose any actual, potential or perceived conflicts of interest as part of your application or, if successful, as they arise during project implementation. Conflicts of interest are any factors that could compromise the judgement, decisions, or actions of a person or group of people. Such conflicts may relate to:

- engaging consultants to assist you with the application who have advised or are currently advising NSW DCCEEW
- procurement or employment
- direct negotiations
- sponsorships

- partnerships
- any other situations which could lead to unfavourable advantage.

You are not automatically precluded from engaging a consultant or service provider already undertaking work for NSW DCCEEW. Factors which will be considered when determining whether a consultant or service provider can be engaged by you as a grant recipient include:

- the size of the organisation, i.e., a large consultancy is more likely to be able to use separate teams on a project)
- the nature of the work being undertaken by the consultancy, i.e., similar work increases the potential for probity risks to arise
- the extent to which individuals involved had access to confidential information about the project and whether this information is to be released to the market as part of the PIPAP.

Such determination will be made in accordance with NSW DCCEEW's delegations for expenditure.

If the engagement with you is permitted, NSW DCCEEW's project team will consider seeking assurance from the consultant or service provider that they will put appropriate processes in place to manage probity risks, e.g., appropriate information barriers and separation of roles.

As part of ongoing reporting requirements (e.g., project milestone report), you are required to update any conflict of interests, where applicable. You will be asked whether any conflicts of interest have arisen during the reporting period or if any are likely to arise. Updated declarations and confirmations are required from you when new personnel join the project or at the commencement of a new project or phase within a project.

NOTE: You are advised to contact us if you are unsure whether something constitutes an actual, potential or perceived conflict of interest.

All program staff and assessors will undergo a conflict-of-interest process as part of any application assessment.

9.6. Evaluation

We will evaluate the Living Carbon grants to determine how funded projects have contributed to the program's objectives. We may also interview you or ask you for more information to help us understand how the grant impacted you and to evaluate how effective the funding was in achieving its objectives. Without limiting any specific reporting or evaluation requirements (or similar) set out in any funding deed you execute with NSW DCCEEW, we may contact you up to two years after completion of your project for more information to assist with this evaluation. You consent to the use of your information for this purpose by:

- the Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water

- the Minister or Minister's office
- the NSW Ombudsman and Audit Office of NSW
- NSW DCCEEW staff, consultants, and advisors
- any agency or body of the NSW Government, or any other organisation or individual considered by NSW DCCEEW to have a need or an entitlement to know what information (including any federal, state, or territory agency or body), where that need or entitlement to know that information arises out of or in connection with the purpose above.

9.7. Grant acknowledgement

If you make a public statement about your funded project, you are required to acknowledge the support provided by NSW DCCEEW.

9.8. Discretion of the NSW Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water

Notwithstanding anything else in these guidelines, by applying, you acknowledge and agree NSW DCCEEW has the right (at its absolute discretion) to decline, refuse to consider or cease to assess an application at any time if it is of the view (at its absolute discretion) that an application is unlikely to be successful.

9.9. No contract or liability

Despite any part of these guidelines, or any other documentation that forms part of this process (in part or together), by applying, you must:

- acknowledge that neither you nor NSW DCCEEW intend to create any contract or other relationship under which NSW DCCEEW is obliged to conduct the process in relation to the funding in any manner or at all, and that there is in fact no such contract or other relationship in existence
- accordingly, acknowledge that neither this document, nor any submission will create any legal or other obligation upon NSW DCCEEW to conduct the process in any manner or at all
- release NSW DCCEEW from any claim it may otherwise have been able to make or bring against NSW DCCEEW, arising out of or in connection with NSW DCCEEW's conduct.

Potential applicants and interested parties should refer to our [website](#) for up-to-date information.

Any questions or clarifications can be sent in writing to netzero.land@environment.nsw.gov.au

9.10. Privacy

We value your privacy and are committed to protecting your personal details securely, in accordance with the [Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998](#) (NSW), (PPIP Act), which regulates the collection, storage, quality, use and disclosure of personal information.

Personal information includes any information about an individual from which that person can reasonably be identified. It does not include information if the identity has been removed (anonymous data) or if it:

- can be found in a publicly available publication (such as a newspaper or book)
- is in a public register
- relates to someone's suitability for public sector employment
- is about people who have been dead for more than 30 years
- relates to some types of law enforcement and investigation activities.

This Privacy Notice should be read together with our [Privacy Management Plan](#).

By providing information to us, you acknowledge that you are providing your own information, or you've been authorised to provide information by the person you're providing information about.

Persons nominated within the Application have the right to access their personal information held by the Group, or have it corrected in certain circumstances (e.g., if it is incorrect). Should you wish to access or correct your personal information contact the designated privacy team at:

Information Access & Privacy Unit
Department of Planning, Housing, and Infrastructure
Locked Bag 5022, Parramatta NSW 2124
Phone: 02 9860 1440
Email: privacy@dpie.nsw.gov.au

Appendix

Appendix A: Terms and definitions

The following terms are used throughout these guidelines.

Term	Definition
Abatement	See Carbon abatement
ABN	Australian Business Number
Accounting for Nature Ltd (AfN) ⁱ	An independent not-for-profit organisation that administers the Accounting for Nature® Framework (‘the Framework’). The Framework provides a system for measuring, verifying, certifying, and publicly reporting Environmental Condition Accounts (‘Environmental Accounts’)
Accredited AfN method	Refers to any method listed on AfN’s website Method Catalogue . Accredited Methods provide detailed instructions on how to measure the Condition of a specific Environmental Asset, at a particular Accuracy Level, at a particular Scale, and to support a specific Purpose and/or Claim
ACCU	Australian Carbon Credit Unit
ACCU Scheme	ACCU Scheme (formerly known as the Emissions Reduction Fund) is a voluntary scheme that provides incentives for organisations and individuals to adopt new practices and technologies to reduce or remove carbon emissions from the atmosphere. It is administered by the Clean Energy Regulator (CER)
Audit Thresholds Instrument 2015	Sets the audit schedule for Australian Carbon Credit Unit (ACCU) Scheme projects that were registered between 2015 and when the Instrument is due to be repealed on 1 April 2025. It prescribes thresholds for different types of audits, including scheduled audits and triggered audits. It also sets requirements for alternative assurance projects that may be eligible for a reduced number of audits. This can be found on the CER website

Term	Definition
Draft Audit Thresholds Instrument 2025	Outlines the proposed audit schedule for Australian Carbon Credit Unit (ACCU) Scheme projects after the Audit Thresholds Instrument 2015 is repealed on 1 April 2025. It proposes thresholds for different types of audits, including scheduled audits and triggered audits. It also proposes requirements for alternative assurance projects that may be eligible for a reduced number of audits. This Instrument is currently in draft form only, scheduled to commence 1 April 2025. It can be found on the CER website
Alternative assurance option	An option that reduces auditing requirements for carbon projects that meet the alternative assurance criteria (outlined in the Audit Threshold Instruments), on the condition that project proponents consent to the CER using geospatial tool monitoring of the project. Environmental plantings that meet the criteria are considered “low-risk plantings”
Applicant	An entity referred to in these guidelines who applies for Living Carbon funding
Application	Submission of an application form and other required documentation for Living Carbon funding
Application form	Document or documents issued under Living Carbon for applicants applying for funding
Asset Account	An AfN asset account individually reflects the condition of one Environmental Asset as specified by a single Accredited method
Business days	A day that is not a Saturday, Sunday, public holiday or bank holiday in Sydney, New South Wales
Carbon abatement	Either (a) the removal of one or more greenhouse gases from the atmosphere; or (b) the avoidance of emissions of one or more greenhouse gases
Carbon project	Means verified carbon sequestration activities, registered with the ACCU Scheme, which reduce, avoid, or remove greenhouse gas emissions from the atmosphere and contribute to the mitigation of climate change
Carbon sequestration	The removal of carbon dioxide from the atmosphere by storing it in plants, dead organic matter or soil

Term	Definition
Clean Energy Regulator (CER)	A Government body responsible for administering legislation that will reduce carbon emissions and increase the use of clean energy
Co-benefits	The additional benefits associated with carbon projects, for example this may include environmental benefits, such as enhanced biodiversity, economic gains from increased productivity, increased community resilience, and Aboriginal cultural co-benefits
Co-funding	Financial support of a successful project provided by NSW DCCEEW and a private sector entity or entities
Commercial principles	A set of principles made available by NSW DCCEEW which broadly represent how NSW DCCEEW expects funding deeds to be provided and the outcomes this will achieve
Commercial-in-confidence information	Any information that discloses your financing arrangements, cost structure, profit margins or full base case financial model; intellectual property for which you have an interest; any matter the disclosure of which would place you at a substantial commercial disadvantage
Conflict of interest	A situation where a person decides or exercises a power in a way that may be, or may be perceived to be, influenced by either material personal interests (financial or nonfinancial) or material personal associations
Corporations Act	Corporations Act 2001 (Commonwealth)
Eligibility criteria	Eligibility criteria that a grant application has to comply with, set out in the section on eligibility and merit criteria in these guidelines
Eligible applications	An application for Living Carbon grant funding that DCCEEW has determined is eligible for assessment in accordance with these guidelines
Eligible interest holder	A person or organisation that has a legal interest in the land on which a carbon project is being, or will be, conducted. Project proponents must seek consent from eligible interest holders to run a project with the CER
Environmental Account	As in an Environmental Account registered with Accounting for Nature. An Environmental Account is a single registered environmental accounting project that reports on the condition of one or more Environmental Assets within a defined boundary (Environmental Account boundary). Environmental Accounts are

Term	Definition
	comprised of one or more individual Environmental Asset Accounts (contained within an Asset Account Boundary). An Environmental Account includes all Environmental Account data and the Information Statement ⁱⁱ
Environmental Asset “Asset”	Any biophysical features in nature that can be measured. Environmental Assets can be specific, such as an individual fauna species, or broad such as a group of fauna species or an ecosystem. Environmental assets generally fall into one of the following Asset Classes: fauna, vegetation, soil, water, and ecosystems
Fencing equipment	Equipment used for the construction of a fence, but not part of the material used in the fence itself
Forward abatement estimate (FAE)	The FAE is the total estimated number of ACCUs that your project will generate over its lifetime. The purpose of the FAE is to allow the CER to assign an audit schedule for your project
Free, prior and informed consent (FPIC)	A principle used in development projects worldwide and advocates for the right to self-determination for Indigenous people. It involves consent for projects to go ahead before they commence, being free from coercion, informed through accessible communication and collective consent from the Indigenous community
Funding deed	An agreement between NSW DCCEE and a recipient under which Living Carbon grant funding is provided to the recipient
Guidelines	Approved framework for the operation and administration of Living Carbon funding NOTE: This document will be amended and updated as needed to be current and accurate
Ineligible expenditure	Expenditure of the kind defined as ineligible in section 2.8.2 Funding inclusions and exclusions of these guidelines
Living Carbon	Means the grant program being developed by NSW DCCEE to support landholders to implement and demonstrate carbon projects with biodiversity benefits
Merit criteria	The merit criteria that a grant application has to comply with, set out in the section on eligibility and merit criteria

Term	Definition
Minister	The Minister with responsibility for Living Carbon funding, which at the time of publishing for these guidelines is the NSW Minister for Climate Change, Minister for Energy, Minister for the Environment, Minister for Heritage
Net Zero Plan	NSW Government Net Zero Plan Stage 1: 2020-2030, to reduce carbon emissions in NSW by 2030
NSW	The State of New South Wales
NSW DCCEEW	The NSW Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water (Note: The Australian Government has a department with the same title, however in these guidelines DCCEEW refers to the NSW Government department unless otherwise stated)
On-ground support partner	NSW DCCEEW is working with two key partners: NSW Local Land Services (North Coast and Riverina regions), and the NSW Koala Strategy (MidCoast region). These partners will play a key role in assisting applicants in eligible regions with their pre-application requirements and will be involved during project implementation to ensure planting work is undertaken in-line with endorsed planting plans
PIPAP	The Primary Industries Productivity and Abatement Program. PIPAP is an integral element of the Net Zero Plan focused on major opportunities to reduce emissions across the NSW primary industries and land sector
Project	A project described in an application for funding under Living Carbon
Recipient	An applicant that has been offered Living Carbon funding and has entered into a funding deed with NSW DCCEEW to receive funding
SmartyGrants	NSW DCCEEW's online grant administration system provided by Our Community Pty Ltd
Standard stock fence	A minimum fence standard to protect the planting from livestock, as specified in the regional planting plan guide on our website

Term	Definition
Threatened Ecological Community (TEC)	An ecological community becomes listed as threatened when it becomes at risk of extinction. There are three categories of TEC: critically endangered, endangered or vulnerable
Threatened species	A species listed as threatened locally or regionally (under a Regional Natural Resources Management Plan), state-wide (under the NSW <i>Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016</i>), nationally (under the <i>Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999</i>) or internationally (under the IUCN). This includes threatened populations of species

Appendix B: Reference list

1. Clean Energy Regulator
<https://www.cleanenergyregulator.gov.au/>
2. Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water (Australian Government)
<https://www.dcceew.gov.au/>
3. Australian Carbon Credit Unit (ACCU) Scheme
<https://www.dcceew.gov.au/climate-change/emissions-reduction/emissions-reduction-fund>
4. Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property (ICIP)
<https://arp.nsw.gov.au/assets/ars/attachments/IP-Management-Framework-2.0.pdf>
5. Net Zero Plan Stage 1: 2020-2030
<https://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/topics/climate-change/net-zero-plan>
6. Primary Industries Productivity and Abatement Program
<https://www.energysaver.nsw.gov.au/reducing-emissions-nsw/primary-industries-productivity-and-abatement>
7. SmartyGrants Help Guide for Applicants
<https://applicanthelp.smartygrants.com.au/help-guide-for-applicants/>
8. NSW Climate and Energy Action
www.energy.nsw.gov.au
9. The principle of Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC)
<https://www.icin.org.au/resources>

ⁱ Accounting for Nature, 2023, Glossary of Key Terms, Available at:

<https://www.accountingfornature.org/key-documents>

ⁱⁱ *ibid*