



# Carbon Farming Advice Scheme value-for-money guide

## *Getting good value out of your advice*

### About the guide

Carbon farming is complex, so it's important to be well-informed about the risks, benefits and opportunities a carbon farming project can offer your business before you start.

The Queensland Government is helping landholders access carbon farming advice worth up to \$10,000 through the Carbon Farming Advice Scheme (CFAS).

This guide contains tools and tips on how to make sure you get the most out of your advice.

### Section 1: Readiness self-assessment

The self-assessment consists of three questions to help you clarify how you see carbon farming working within your business:

1. Why do I want to start a carbon farming project?
2. How much time and effort am I willing to put into a carbon project?
3. What do I know about the carbon market?

Answering these three questions will give you a clear idea of what you want to achieve with a carbon farming project and help you to get advice that's relevant to your property and business.

### Section 2: Questions to ask Approved Advisers

A handy checklist of questions to ensure you have all the relevant information when choosing an adviser or seeking more information about a carbon farming decision.



## Section 1: Readiness self-assessment

### Question 1: Why do I want to start a carbon farming project?

There are many possible reasons to start a carbon farming project, all with their own risks, benefits and opportunities.

To help you clarify which benefits are most important to your business, and which options you are most interested in pursuing, consider the following scenarios and how they may apply to your circumstances.



Reason to start carbon farming	Carbon farming benefit	Carbon farming risk
<b>Improve productivity by introducing regenerative agriculture practices.</b>	Some carbon farming methods, such as soil carbon sequestration and herd management, improve land condition over time. Farmers can generate Australian Carbon Credit Units (ACCUs) while improving their regenerative agricultural practices at the same time.	Soil carbon and herd management methods do not yield as many ACCUs per hectare as other methods, however the increased fertility of the soil may lead to an increase in yield and business revenue overall.
<b>Become a carbon neutral farm to achieve certification or market advantage.</b>	By sequestering carbon on your property, you can choose to keep the ACCUs generated to offset your own farm activities. By reducing your carbon output to zero, you may be eligible to be certified as carbon neutral, which can make your products more valuable.	By keeping ACCUs to certify your carbon neutral status, you cannot sell those ACCUs for a profit.
<b>Create a new revenue stream.</b>	Farmers can sell ACCUs, creating an income stream in addition to their farm's core business.	Like any other crop, carbon farming projects are not immune to price fluctuations or natural disasters, which impacts the revenue carbon projects can generate.
<b>Regenerate native landscapes to increase biodiversity and improve the health of the environment.</b>	Some buyers will pay more for carbon projects that produce extra environmental benefits. These are called co-benefits and can significantly increase the amount of money available to the landholder to conduct the project.	Not all land is created equal, and some parts of the country will have more conservation value than others.  The conservation value of the land influences how much the market will pay for co-benefits that conserve habitat.
<b>Reduce greenhouse gases in the atmosphere to reduce global heating.</b>	All carbon farming methods are designed to either avoid the release of greenhouse gases or sequester existing atmospheric carbon in the soil or in trees.	The permanence period* is crucial to maintaining the carbon captured for the long term. Ensure you understand how this may impact any future farm plans, including the sale of the property.

\* A permanence period is the amount of time trees must be left in the ground after carbon credits have been collected for them.



## Question 2: How much time and effort am I willing to put into a carbon project?

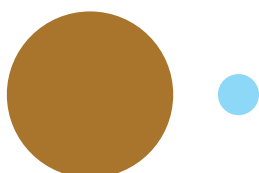
As a land manager, you need to weigh up how much of the work required to set up and maintain a carbon project you are prepared to do yourself, and how much you are willing to contract out. The balance of this will determine how much money you can make from a project.

The following scenarios show the impacts of different approaches and their varying outcomes.

● Landholder

● Contractor

### Scenario 1 DIY



Landholder takes on almost all responsibility for the development of the carbon project, with the exception of employing a third party auditor.

Requires significant investment of time and capital, but landholder retains control and the largest share of any profit made.

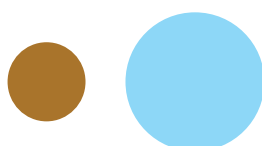
### Scenario 2 Assisted DIY



Landholder manages the project with specialist expertise as required.

Requires less time and knowledge than scenario 1. This option still allows for landholders to control the project but the profit margin is reduced as a result of paying for more assistance.

### Scenario 3 Outsource



Landholder agrees to a carbon service provider developing and managing the project on their land with little to no involvement beyond the legal agreement.

Requires a small amount of time and effort on the landholder's behalf compared to the other scenarios but there is less control and a smaller financial return as a result.



### Question 3: What do I know about the carbon market?

Like any market where a farmer sells goods, the carbon market has its own terms, important players and rules.

A basic understanding of how the carbon market works, how prices are set and what factors influence market change is critical to making fully informed decisions.

It is recommended that you visit these websites to learn more:

- **Key carbon market terms**  
<https://www.cleanenergyregulator.gov.au>
- **Carbon farming case studies**  
<https://www.cleanenergyregulator.gov.au/Infohub/case-studies/Pages/erf-case-studies/Emission-Reduction-Fund-case-studies.aspx>
- **Emissions Reduction Fund**  
<https://www.cleanenergyregulator.gov.au/ERF>
- **Clean Energy Regulator**  
<https://www.cleanenergyregulator.gov.au/About>
- **Land Restoration Fund**  
<https://www.qld.gov.au/LandRestorationFund>







## Section 2: Questions to ask Approved Advisers

### 1. Which methods are most suitable for my property?

Not all carbon farming methods are suitable for all properties. In fact, some properties will not be able to support a project unless specific conditions and carbon prices align.

Be sure to ask what factors could affect the value of any ACCUs generated or increase their value, noting that adding co-benefits to the ACCU can command higher prices.

### 2. Can you assess my property for co-benefits?

Co-benefits can add a significant margin to the value of your ACCUs. The Land Restoration Fund (LRF) and other buyers will pay extra for carbon credits that also support biodiversity, First Nation's participation and other additional benefits. Not all properties are able to add co-benefits to their ACCUs, but without an assessment you may miss an opportunity to increase your return.

### 3. Have you ever worked on a project that included co-benefits before?

Co-benefits add value, but they also require more effort when it comes to reporting and claiming the additional benefits. By working with an adviser who has experience in this process, you can gauge whether the effort to sell your co-benefits stacks up financially.

### 4. Do your reports comply with the new CFAS standards guide?

The new CFAS claims process requires advisers to comply with reporting standards in order to be paid for their work. The standards are in place to ensure landholders receive a minimum level of support. You can check what the minimum requirements are by reading the CFAS standards guide.

#### Did you know you can mix and match advisers?

Sharon used the CFAS to obtain legal advice regarding her pastoral lease and how it affects carbon farming, valued at \$4000. She then spent \$5,800 on an environmental assessment of co-benefits. As a result, Sharon understands how much more her land may be worth to the market and what legal processes will need to be navigated should she pursue a project.





## 5. How many landholders in this region has your company worked with?

Although most advisers can give general advice regardless of your property's location, some advisers will have greater knowledge of certain regions than others. Finding an adviser who has a detailed knowledge of your specific bioregion can help you obtain tailored advice.

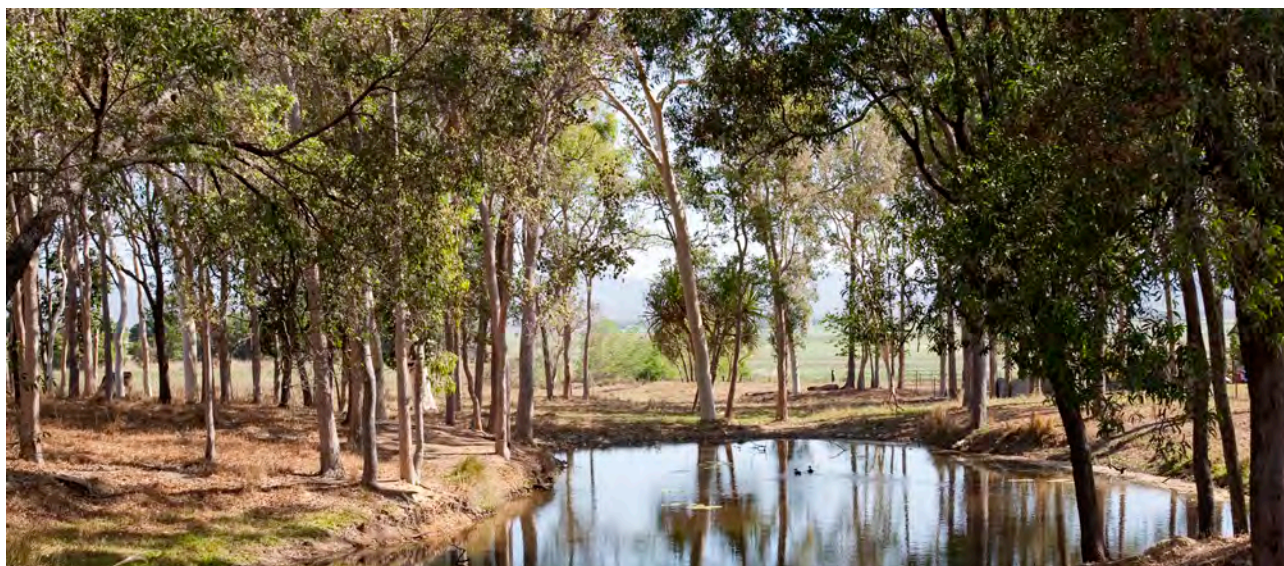
## 6. What is your rate for a desktop assessment versus an on-ground assessment?

The potential for a given area to host a carbon farming project is assessed in multiple ways, one of which is via Geographic Information System (GIS) mapping with software that estimates certain values like soil moisture, soil type, vegetation cover and land category. This type of analysis is called a 'desktop assessment' as the adviser does not need to leave their office.

This is a less expensive option for the adviser than incurring the costs of visiting the property and making a visual inspection. It may not be necessary to do both to gather the information you require, however it is important to ask the difference in price to ensure you receive value for money.

## 7. Does seeking advice from your company come with any future obligations?

Some Approved Advisers ask landholders to sign contracts committing to future carbon farming projects before they provide advice. This is not standard practice. If you are not willing to be locked in to any future projects, visit the [Approved Adviser directory](#) and find an adviser who'll work with you on an obligation-free basis.



Any questions regarding report and invoice standards should be directed to:  
[carbonfarming@des.qld.gov.au](mailto:carbonfarming@des.qld.gov.au)

For more information visit: [www.qld.gov.au/LandRestorationFund](http://www.qld.gov.au/LandRestorationFund)