

+ Land Restoration Fund

Carbon Farming Advice Scheme Guidelines

Applications will open on the July 17 2023

1. About the program

In November 2017, the Queensland Government announced the \$500 million Land Restoration Fund (LRF) to support Queensland-based land sector carbon farming projects and create new jobs and opportunities in this growing industry.

The LRF builds on the Australian Government's regulatory framework for generating Australian Carbon Credit Units (ACCUs). ACCUs are tradeable financial products regulated by the Commonwealth Clean Energy Regulator. The LRF has, as its primary objective, to facilitate a pipeline of *carbon farming projects* that generate ACCUs with environmental, social, economic and First Nations co-benefits.

The LRF has engaged the Queensland Rural and Industry Development Authority (QRIDA) to deliver the Carbon Farming Advice Scheme. The aim of the scheme is to assist *landholders* with accessing relevant advice from *Approved Advisers* (listed on the QRIDA website) about undertaking *carbon farming project/s* on their land. \$700,000 has been allocated to this round of the Carbon Farming Advice Scheme.

This document provides information for landholders on how to apply for to the scheme and the requirements when seeking advice from *Approved Advisers*.

2. Objective

The objective of the scheme is to assist *eligible landholders* with the cost of accessing *eligible advice* from *Approved Advisers* about undertaking *carbon farming project/s* on their land.

3. Available funding

3.1 The maximum financial assistance available per applicant under this scheme is \$10,000 (inclusive of GST) towards the cost of *eligible advice*.

3.2 The amount of financial assistance provided cannot exceed the cost of *eligible advice* received.

4. Eligible costs

4.1 Eligible costs for financial assistance under the program are:

- a) costs for provision of *eligible advice* by *Approved Advisers* at a cost of up to \$200 per hour excluding GST; and
- b) reasonable travel and accommodation expenses associated with providing *eligible advice*.

4.2 Financial assistance can cover more than one invoice from one *Approved Adviser* but cannot exceed the maximum amount available.

4.3 The level of advice provided should be proportionate with the advice required by an applicant. (For example, if it is apparent an applicant would not be eligible to complete a *carbon farming project* the advice should be limited to this extent).

5. Eligible landholders

5.1 *Eligible landholders* able to receive assistance include:

- a) individuals;
- b) *small to medium sized businesses*;
- c) *non-profit organisations*;
- d) local governments under the *Local Government Act 2009* (Qld).

5.2 To be eligible for assistance you must also:

- a) be a *landholder* in Queensland;
- b) be seeking *eligible advice*; and
- c) ensure the *eligible advice* is provided by an *Approved Adviser* who:
 - i. is not employed by an entity owned or partially owned by you; and
 - ii. produces a report covering areas within their professional expertise related to the topics outlined in Appendix II.

Note: A directory of **Approved Advisers** is on QRIDA's website at: www.qrida.qld.gov.au.

6. Eligibility for conditional approval

6.1 To apply for conditional approval, you must:

- a) be an *eligible landholder*;
- b) have not received or paid for *eligible advice* before applying and receiving written advice of conditional approval from QRIDA;
- c) have not previously received assistance under the scheme or the previous Carbon Farming Advice Rebate Scheme for substantially similar *eligible advice*;
- d) provide a minimum of one quote from *Approved Advisers* from the categories 'Solicitor' and 'Accountant', or a minimum of two quotes from all other adviser categories, to receive *eligible advice*; and
- e) complete the online application form for conditional approval on QRIDA's website at www.qrida.qld.gov.au and provide all supporting documents by the *closing day*.

7. Applications for conditional approval

7.1 Applications for the Carbon Farming Advice Scheme will occur in two phases – conditional approval and claiming financial assistance.

7.2 QRIDA will assess applications for conditional approval in order of receipt.

7.3 QRIDA will give all applicants written notice of the decision.

7.4 Upon receipt of a notice of conditional approval from QRIDA, you will receive an Authority to Pay notice, allowing you to procure *eligible advice* without upfront payment.

8. Eligibility for financial assistance

8.1 To be eligible for financial assistance, you must:

- a) have received conditional approval from QRIDA;

- b) have received *eligible advice* from an *Approved Adviser*; and
- c) have completed the online claim form on QRIDA's website at www.qrida.qld.gov.au

9. Applications for financial assistance

- 9.1** Upon receiving a copy of the *eligible advice* from your *Approved Adviser*, you are required to review the written report and complete the online claim form for financial assistance.
- 9.2** You must provide the following supporting documents with your application for financial assistance:
- (i) a copy of the invoice from the *Approved Adviser*; and
 - (ii) a copy of the written advice received.
- 9.3** QRIDA will pay up to \$10,000 (inclusive of GST) directly to the *Approved Adviser*, dependent on the invoice and written advice meeting the criteria set out in the *Carbon Farming Advice Scheme Standards Guide*.
- 9.4** The grant of assistance is conditional on the applicant not claiming a credit from the ATO or elsewhere for GST already reimbursed.

10. Important Dates

17 July 2023	Applications for conditional approval open.
17 December 2023	Applications for conditional approval close. The scheme may close to applications sooner if funds have already been exhausted.
17 March 2024	All claims for financial assistance must be finalised.

N.B. All claims for financial assistance should be submitted within 30 days of receiving a completed report from your *Approved Adviser* unless otherwise agreed by QRIDA.

11. Conflict of interest

11.1 A conflict of interest may arise due to a business dealing with QRIDA, if your private interests' conflict with your obligations under the scheme. Conflicts of interest could affect your eligibility for conditional approval. A conflict of interest can be:

- real (or actual);
- apparent (or perceived); or
- potential.

11.2 We will ask you to declare, as part of your application, any business dealings that may be considered an actual, perceived or potential conflict of interest or that, to the best of your knowledge, there is no conflict of interest. If you later identify that there is an actual, apparent, or potential conflict of interest or that one might arise in relation to your application, you must inform us in writing immediately.

12. Fraudulent applications

12.1 QRIDA takes fraud and corruption seriously. Suspected fraud will be assessed and investigated, which may require involvement of external parties such as Queensland Police Service (QPS) or Crime and Corruption Commission (CCC).

13. Privacy

13.1 QRIDA's Privacy Policy, available at: <http://www.qrida.qld.gov.au/privacy>, sets out general information on how QRIDA collects uses, and discloses individuals' personal information.

13.2 The application portal for this Scheme contains specific information on how personal information will be collected, used and disclosed.

14. More information

For more information on the Carbon Farming Advice Scheme, contact QRIDA on Freecall 1800 623 946 or email CarbonFarmingAdviceScheme@qrida.qld.gov.au

15. Definitions

Approved Adviser means a person who is listed on QRIDA's website as an *Approved Adviser*.

Carbon farming project means projects following methods accredited by the Commonwealth Clean Energy Regulator with the prospect of generating Australian Carbon Credit Units.

To find out which carbon farming methods qualify under the LRF visit the LRF website at: <https://www.qld.gov.au/environment/climate/climate-change/land-restoration-fund>

Carbon Farming Advice Scheme Standards Guide sets out the minimum standards *Approved Advisers* must meet to receive payment through the CFAS scheme and is published on the Department of Environment and Science's website. https://www.qld.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0032/394088/cfas-standards-guide-approved-advisers.pdf

Closing day is the day defined in section 8 in which applications must be received by QRIDA.

Eligible advice means written advice completed by an *Approved Adviser* covering areas within their professional expertise related to the topics set out in Appendix II, that complies with the standard set out in the *CFAS standards guide*.

Eligible landholder means any of the entities listed in section 4.1.

Landholder means the following—

- a) if the land is freehold land—the registered owner of the land;
- b) if the land is the subject of a lease registered under the *Land Title Act 1994* (Qld) — the lessee of the land;
- c) if the land is the subject of a lease registered under the *Land Act 1994* (Qld) — the lessee of the land;
- d) if the land is a reserve—the trustee of the reserve;
- e) if a person has occupation rights in relation to the land under a licence or permit—the licensee or permittee.

Non-profit organisation means a charity or other not-for-profit entity that is incorporated under a law of the Commonwealth or a state and holds an Australian Business Number.

Small to medium sized business means a sole trader, partnership, proprietary company or trust which holds an Australian Business Number and is not operated by a public company.

Appendix I

Appendix I details further information about *Approved Advisers*. This is for information only – *Approved Advisers* should be aware of requirements.

Approved Advisers

To be listed as an *Approved Adviser* on the QRIDA website, advisers must have completed an LRF Knowledge Centre training course and satisfied eligibility criteria including relevant qualifications and industry experience.

Advisers may be:

- Solicitors
- Accountants
- Carbon Project Developers
- Environmental Consultants
- Agribusiness Advisers

Advice provided under this scheme is to be specific and tailored to the property in question and the landholder's specific circumstances. *Approved advisers* should only provide advice in their area of expertise.

More information about advice requirements can be found on the QRIDA website and in the Information to Apply as an *Approved Adviser*

APPENDIX II:

Appendix II details the advice requirements and what should be contained within the report. This is for information only - *Approved Advisers* should be aware of requirements.

Advice requirements

Eligible advice from an *Approved Adviser* must be related to at least one of the following:

1. Details about carbon farming including the regulatory framework and approved methods.
2. Details about the Land Restoration Fund including its investment approach and co-benefits framework.
3. Details related to the specific location of the proposed *carbon farming project* including:
 - a. land tenure restrictions and requirements including eligible interest holder consent;
 - b. likely establishment and ongoing management requirements;
 - c. potential carbon farming methods that might apply and related co-benefits;
 - d. indicative cost benefit analysis; or
 - e. climate change or other environmental considerations impacting the viability of the project.
4. Details that could influence the decision to participate in a *carbon farming project* including:
 - a. legal issues and considerations; or
 - b. financial impacts and considerations.

Approved Adviser report information requirements

Eligible advice from an *Approved Adviser* must include the following:

1. Reports and invoices should have a property information section that clearly identifies:
 - a. the land title/location details including the number of properties included in an assessment and the name of each property assessed
 - b. the landholder details (name, ABN etc) which should be the same person who submitted the invoice for payment
 - c. trust fund or business name linked to the properties/invoices
 - d. type of business/property (cattle, cropping, mixed, etc)
2. Itemised invoices that identify:
 - a. report type
 - b. hours worked
 - c. travel / material costs
3. Reports should be compiled with appropriate headings related to the advice criteria and outline key elements relevant to the advice, this may include:
 - a. desktop assessment
 - b. analysis of methods used in determining advice
 - c. carbon farming and co-benefit considerations
 - d. site surveys
 - e. project costings
 - f. risk considerations, including legal or tax implications of taking on a carbon farming project