#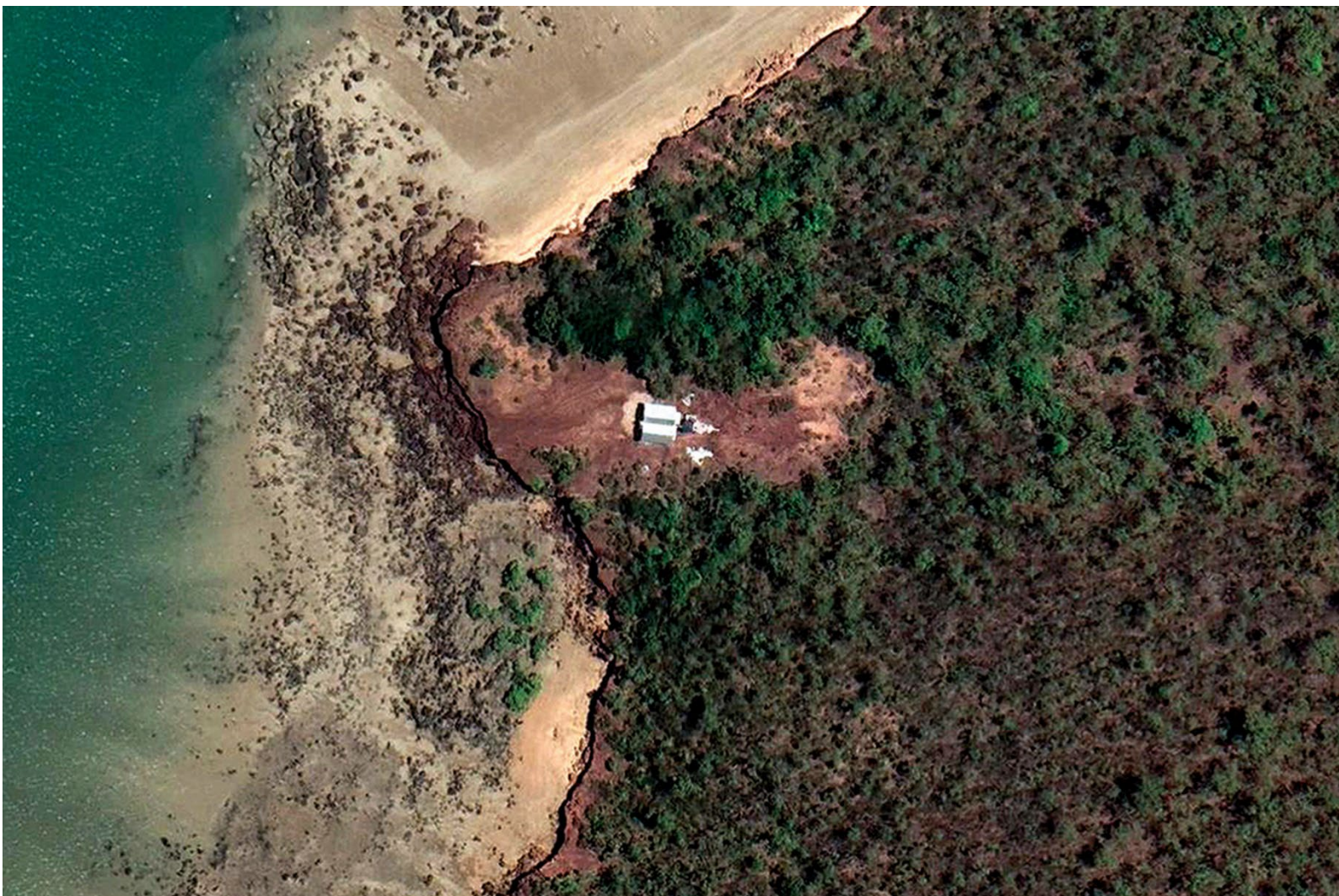 Aboriginal Ranger Grants Program Guidelines: Land and Sea Management and Ichthys LNG Conservation Management Offset 2022/2023

Guidelines

NORTHERN TERRITORY GOVERNMENT

Document Details

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1.0	12 July 2022	Director, Aboriginal Ranger Grants Program	New Grant Program Guidelines

Acronyms

The following acronyms are used in this document:

Acronyms	Full form
ABN	Australian Business Number
ALMAG	Aboriginal Land Management Advisory Group
ARGP	Aboriginal Ranger Grant Program
DEPWS	Department of Environment, Parks and Water Security
GST	Goods and Services Tax
Ichthys LNG	Refers to INPEX-operated Ichthys LNG, a joint venture between INPEX group companies, TotalEnergies, and the Australian subsidiaries of CPC Corporation Taiwan, Tokyo Gas, Osaka Gas, Kansai Electric Power, JERA and Toho Gas. INPEX Operations Australia Pty Ltd acts as the Operator of the Project.
Ichthys CMO	Ichthys LNG Conservation Management Offset
LNG	Liquefied Natural Gas
LSMF	Land and Sea Management Fund
MERI	Monitoring, Evaluation, Reporting and Improvement
MNES	Matters of national environmental significance
NIAA	National Indigenous Australians Agency
NT	Northern Territory
TNRM	Territory Natural Resource Management

Contents

1. Background

1.1. Protecting Country, Creating Jobs

Aboriginal owned and/or managed land occupies about 50 per cent of the land area of the Northern Territory (NT) and approximately 85 per cent of the coastline. Aboriginal Ranger programs emerged during the mid-1990's as Aboriginal land owners increased their capacity to manage and protect country, and develop aligned environmental enterprises. The Ranger programs deliver long-term environmental, economic and social development outcomes, and are internationally recognised as best practice natural and cultural resource management models.

In 2021 there were 47 established Ranger groups throughout the Territory, with approximately 1,000 Rangers (full time, part time and casual). These groups are implementing fire, weed and feral animal management, and protecting and promoting cultural resource knowledge. The programs are supported by a variety of resources including grant income from governments and philanthropic organisations; fee for service income for biosecurity, land and sea management and resource development; and commercial revenue from community-based enterprises and carbon abatement projects.

Many Aboriginal Ranger groups are significantly under-resourced to tackle the scale of the management tasks they are faced with. Funding uncertainty and lack of resources, combined with gaps in capability and/or inadequate strategic planning, mean that conservation and other outcomes are often not fully realised.

The NT Government Protecting Country, Creating Jobs initiative supports Aboriginal Land and Sea Rangers to protect the environment on Aboriginal lands and seas, as well as leverage economic opportunities and enhance community wellbeing. The program helps to ensure rangers have the equipment, infrastructure and operational capacity they need to 'work on country' and achieve meaningful conservation, economic and social outcomes.

Protecting Country, Creating Jobs includes a capital grants program for Aboriginal Ranger groups to help purchase essential items and infrastructure and a Land and Sea Management Fund (LSMF) to improve conservation practices on Aboriginal land. These two components of the Protecting Country, Creating Jobs initiative make up the NT Aboriginal Ranger Grants Program.

In May 2021 the Minister for Parks and Rangers announced that the Aboriginal Ranger Grants Program would be continuing for a further four years commencing in 2021-2022 with a commitment of $12 million dollars over the four years. Additionally, commencing in 2021-2022, the Aboriginal Ranger Grants Program will be used to deliver the INPEX-operated Ichthys LNG Coastal Offset Strategy program – *Conservation management of dugongs, cetaceans and threatened marine matters of national environmental significance in the Top End* referred to in this guideline as the Ichthys LNG Conservation Management Offset (Ichthys CMO) – a commitment of $24 million over 22 years.

The NT Aboriginal Ranger Grants Program is not intended to replace existing support and funding for rangers – such as the Australian Government National Indigenous Australians Agency (NIAA) Indigenous Ranger Program - rather it complements such programs to increase capacity and capability, and encourage innovation.

Advice about Aboriginal needs and aspirations for land and sea management on Aboriginal land, and the development and effective implementation of the grants program is provided by the Aboriginal Land Management Advisory Group (ALMAG).

Consultation with many Aboriginal Ranger groups on land and sea management issues, and how these might best be addressed, have also contributed to the development of these principals and guidelines.

1.2. Land and Sea Management Fund

The Land and Sea Management Fund support projects and activities achieving land and sea management and conservation outcomes on country. Funding up to $6 million dollars will be available over four financial years from 2021-2022.

A total of $1,500,000 (GST exclusive) of grant funds will be available in 2022-2023 (round six of the grants program) for new projects under the LSMF.

Projects and activities may fall under one or more of the following themes:

- on-ground activities
- investment in people
- growing the sector
- monitoring and evaluation
- planning
- innovation.

The specific types of projects or activities that may be covered by these themes are detailed at Section 3.

Funding applications can be for one to three years, noting that funding will only be guaranteed for the period specified in the funding agreement. Funding limits apply to applications: single year project maximum of $150,000 in grant funds, two year project maximum of $250,000 and three year project maximum of $350,000. Applications for multi-year projects, and in particular three year projects, will be subject to stringent merit assessment (Section 5) and only projects that will achieve important land and sea management and conservation outcomes will be considered for funding.

Applications for funding exceeding these limits will be considered, but should **only be submitted after consultation with the Aboriginal Ranger Grants Program Administration**. These applications will be considered only where this investment would overcome a major barrier to achieving important land and sea management and conservation outcomes or project has a regional or landscape scale focus.

To ensure that the funding pool for future years is not excessively depleted by multi-year projects, the assessment criteria may give consideration to weighting of single year projects.

A separate application must be submitted for each project for which funding is sought.

1.3. Ichthys LNG Conservation Management Offset

During the environmental approvals process for the Ichthys liquefied natural gas project (LNG), INPEX Operations Australia Pty Ltd and the Ichthys LNG Joint Venture participants in collaboration with the Northern Territory and Commonwealth governments negotiated an offset package to compensate for anticipated residual environmental impacts associated with the Ichthys LNG. The offset package included providing $24 million dollars over 22 years for conservation management of dugongs, cetaceans and

matters of national environmental significance (MNES) on land and sea country. More information about Ichthys LNG offsets can be found in the [Coastal Offset Strategy](https://www.inpex.com.au/media/audnn3xa/coastal-offset-strategy.pdf)[1].

A maximum of AUD $1,750,000 (GST exclusive) of funds will be made available in 2022-2023 for both projects and activities that fall under one or more themes mentioned in Section 1.2 and for capital items, equipment and infrastructure that support these projects and activities. The specific types of capital and projects that may be covered by these themes are detailed at Section 3.

Project funding applications can be for one to three years, noting that funding will only be guaranteed for the period specified in the funding agreement. Funding limits may be applied to applications similar to those listed for Section 1.2: single year project maximum of $150,000 in grant funds, two year project maximum of $250,000 and three year project maximum of $350,000. Applications for multi-year projects, and in particular three year projects, will be subject to stringent merit assessment (Section 5) and only projects that will achieve important sea management and conservation outcomes will be considered for funding.

Applications for funding exceeding these limits will be considered, but should **only be submitted after consultation with the Aboriginal Ranger Grants Program Administration**. These applications will be considered only where this investment would overcome a major barrier to achieving important sea management and conservation outcomes.

Capital items and equipment can be funded under the Ichthys LNG Conservation Management Offset. Capital funding will be available as one-off grants of up to $250,000 per application. Applications for funding will be assessed on merit, and assessment criteria are provided at Section 5.

Multiple capital items, equipment or infrastructure can be included on the same application as long as total funding sought in the application does not exceed $250,000. A minimum of $10,000 applies to individual Capital Grant capital items, equipment or infrastructure.

Multiple capital items, equipment or infrastructure can be included on the same application as long as total funding sought in the application does not exceed $250,000. A minimum of $10,000 applies to individual Capital Grant applications. Multiple items with individual values less than $10,000 can be included in an application where the combined value exceeds $10,000 and the items are essential for the function / purpose of the equipment or infrastructure they are part of.

Whilst the maximum of $250,000 for an individual application is available, **applications for funding exceeding $100,000 for individual capital items, equipment or infrastructure should only be submitted after consultation with the Aboriginal Ranger Grants Program Administration**. These applications will be considered only where this investment would overcome a major barrier to achieving important land/sea management and conservation outcomes.

Regional programs that are coordinated across multiple Ranger groups and organisations are preferred where possible.

Both capital and project (operational) funding can be applied for on the same application. Where a combined capital and project application is submitted, the specific funding limitations of each of the capital and project components applies and the application will be assessed as a single entity. Applicants should ensure that the assessment requirements (Section 5) for both capital and project grants are addressed in their application.

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[1] https://www.inpex.com.au/media/audnn3xa/coastal-offset-strategy.pdf

2. Eligibility for funding

2.1. Eligibility criteria

2.1.1. General

- Applications must be outcome-based, and clearly explain how funding will help ensure that these outcomes are achieved, e.g. through overcoming identified barriers to achieving good outcomes.

- Outcomes must be linked to clear land and sea management and conservation objectives, and the proposed outputs and outcomes should be measurable.

- Management and conservation objectives should reflect local or regional Management Plans, where these exist, includes Healthy Country and Indigenous Protected Area Management Plans. Regional management and conservation priorities are also described in the 2016-2020 NT NRM Plan[2].

- Where there is commercial or potential commercial activity associated with a project to be funded under the grants program, applicants must demonstrate they have landholder permission to access any lands or seas involved in the project, and if there has been consideration given to whether a Section 19 Land Use Agreement will be required. Applications for projects which require a S19 LUA will not be considered eligible except where formal S19 LUA consultations have commenced or a S19 LUA has been executed.

- Applications must:
    - include eligible programs as specified at Section 3
    - be received by the department by the closing time
    - be submitted using the NT Government's GrantsNT on-line system. [3]
    - be lodged by an eligible applicant.

- Applications may be for:
    - project funding of up to $150,000 for single year project per application; or
    - project funding of up to $250,00 over two years; or
    - project funding of up to $350,000 over three years for multi-year project per application; or
    - for Ichthys CMO applications, project funding as above and/or Capital funding up to $250,000.

- Applications for Capital exceeding $100,000 or projects exceeding the listed values should only be submitted after consultation with Aboriginal Ranger Grants Program Director.

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[2] https://www.territorynrm.org.au/the-nt-nrm-plan
[3] https://grantsnt.nt.gov.au/

2.1.2. Land and Sea Management Fund

- Land and sea management objectives may include cultural and social outcomes, in addition to environmental outcomes.

2.1.3. Ichthys LNG Conservation Management Offset

- Conservation management environmental outcomes and targets must be linked directly or indirectly (e.g. habitat) to dugongs, cetaceans or MNES listed in the table below:

Mammals
Dugong
Dolphins – humpback, snubfin, bottlenose, spinner, spotted, striped, rough-toothed, Fraser's/Sarawak, Risso's, common
Whales - Antarctic minke, Bryde's, blue, pygmy killer, short-finned pilot, pygmy sperm, dwarf sperm, humpback, Blainville's beaked, killer, melon-headed, sperm, false killer, Cuvier's beaked
Reptiles
Turtles – loggerhead, green, leathery, hawksbill, Pacific/olive ridley, flatback
Sharks
Freshwater and green sawfish, whale shark
Birds
Great knot, greater sand plover, lesser sand plover

2.2. Who can apply

The LSMF and Ichthys CMO is open to Aboriginal organisations, including Ranger Groups, Land Councils and Aboriginal controlled incorporated associations that are registered or incorporated within the Northern Territory and which have a clearly identified role in land and sea management and conservation on Aboriginal land and seas.

2.3. Multiple applications

Ranger groups and eligible organisations may submit multiple applications. Applicants should be mindful that the assessment process will include a principle of "fairness" that will consider geographic spread and the variation in the applicants current capacity, in distributing the total funding allocation.

Applicants should demonstrate in their application that they have the capacity to deliver any proposed activities/projects associated with their application should it be successful. This may include the identification of staff and operational resources required, work-plan time allocation and administration and financial management.

2.4. Joint applications and partnerships

Ranger groups and eligible organisations may submit joint applications that bring together a number of eligible parties, and joint applications to achieve regional outcomes are encouraged.

Applications that leverage support from other partners are also encouraged. Partnerships may involve co-funding and/or in-kind support.

Joint applicants or partners and their role in and contribution to the project should be clearly identified in the application. If an application is successful, joint applicants and partners will be required to provide written confirmation of their support, contribution and capacity to meet any requirements listed in the application.

With regard to partnerships with outside institutions and organisations, there will be scrutiny as to the level of grant funding going to those outside partners. As a guide, substantial grant funding to outside partners will need to be fully justified and generally should not exceed the co-/in-kind contribution of those partners.

3. Programs that can be funded

3.1. Land and Sea Management Fund and Ichthys LNG Conservation Management Offset

Funding through the Land and Sea Management Fund or Ichthys LNG Conservation Management Offset will provide funds for Aboriginal organisations, including Ranger groups, to carry out projects and activities on Aboriginal lands and seas that have clearly defined land and sea management and conservation outcomes.

In announcing the continuation of the grants program, the Northern Territory Government identified expanding the scope of the grants to enable funding to be used for community engagement activities to support the conservation of lands and seas, including education, training and support for disaster recovery. Applicants should be mindful of the expanded scope when considering any of the themes below.

For Ichthys CMO funded projects the outcomes must be linked, either directly or indirectly, to the eligible species listed in Section 2.1.3.

3.1.1. On-ground activities

On-ground activities must be directed toward achieving a specific outcome, rather than "business as usual". This may include:

- Weed, feral animal and fire management – ground and aerial control of weed and feral species and control burning programs to reduce or eradicate the impact of weed and feral species and fire on specific environmental and cultural values. Integrated weed, feral and fire management programs will be highly regarded during assessment.

- Other environmental and ecological management – threatened and 'iconic' species management activities, protection and management of important habitat.

- Marine specific management and monitoring activities linked either directly or indirectly to the eligible species listed in Section 2.1.3 and includes habitat management and monitoring.

- Cultural management – protection of identified 'sacred' and cultural sites from detrimental impact of fire, weeds, feral animals and people.

- Regional programs that are coordinated across multiple Ranger groups that can achieve environmental outcomes that support existing NT Government or Commonwealth policies, plans and programs (e.g. NT Offset Policy, NT Coastal and Marine Management Strategy, NT Aboriginal Land and Sea Action Plan, Recovery Plans, Threat Abatement Plans, Indigenous Protected Area Management Plans, and Species Profile and Threats Database).

On-ground operational activities will not be funded where they are covered by existing funding programs (such as Indigenous Ranger Program).

3.1.2. Investment in people

Projects to increase the capacity of Aboriginal people to undertake land and sea management and conservation. This may include both individual and organisational development. Examples include:

- Training and skill development in the use of equipment and technology for land and sea management and conservation, including the development of fee-for-service programs.

- Training and skill development in compliance and enforcement of relevant legislation to manage access and activities on Aboriginal land and sea that impact on land and sea management and conservation outcomes.

- Maintenance of Aboriginal ecological knowledge and management practices, and enhancing inter-generational transfer and development of educational resources.

- Development of governance structures and training to improve project delivery and land management outcomes.

3.1.3. Growing the sector

Projects that will ultimately lead to an increase in the scope and extent of Aboriginal land and sea management in the Territory, the number of Aboriginal people employed in the sector, and other economic and cultural benefits. This may include:

- Development of fee-for-service activities that deliver, either directly or indirectly, land/sea management and conservation outcomes.

- Development of new carbon pollution abatement projects, including "blue carbon" that provide economic return to Aboriginal communities and have positive environmental outcomes.

- Development of research and monitoring projects, or pilot projects that support the development of sustainable use programs, including the maintenance and incorporation of Aboriginal ecological knowledge.

Applications may be for site-specific projects or for the development of methodologies or scoping studies with application to the sector more generally.

3.1.4. Monitoring and evaluation

Development of monitoring and evaluation strategies, techniques and tools, in line with best practice, to better quantify the environmental and cultural benefits from Indigenous land and sea management programs, especially where these may support business cases to secure or continue funding.

Applications may be for site-specific projects or for the development of methodologies or scoping studies with application to the sector more generally.

Data management and standards should be a clearly identified component of any applications related to or incorporating monitoring and evaluation strategies. Applications with a focus on developing data management and standards for monitoring and evaluation strategies and programs should demonstrate consideration of regional or sector approaches.

3.1.5. Planning

Development of plans of management for areas of Aboriginal lands and seas, especially where this supports achieving land and sea management and conservation outcomes, improves the operational efficiency of rangers groups and land and sea managers and/or supports business cases to attract or grow funding.

Development of monitoring and evaluation strategies, data management, reporting and sharing.

Applications will not be considered if funding is specifically available through existing sources (e.g. Indigenous Protected Area program).

3.1.6. Innovation

Applicants are encouraged to submit applications for projects that involve new and innovative approaches to land and sea management and conservation activities. Examples may include programs based on Aboriginal cultural and ecological knowledge, use of new technologies or application of old technology in a new way, indirect funding models that increase the funds delivered to ranger groups and land and sea managers above amount applied for.

Applications may be for site-specific projects or for the development of methodologies or scoping studies with application to the sector more generally.

3.2. Salaries and labour expenses

Applications may include personnel expenses for rangers and/or support staff where this is essential to achieve the specified outcomes of the project and this is fully justified in the application.

Funding under the LSMF or Ichthys CMO is not intended to pay the base salary of rangers as an outcome by itself, or be used to establish new Ranger groups. This recognises the limited time frame of the grants program and seeks to avoid establishing ranger groups that would collapse once funding under this program ceases. The exception to this will be applications that demonstrate alternate future funding sources that will meet salary and labour costs beyond the Funding Agreement and this is clearly described in the application.

Funding for consultants and/or contractors to deliver specific components within a project will be considered where this is essential to delivering project outcomes and this is fully justified in the application.

Applications with a substantial salary or consultant funding component should be discussed with the Aboriginal Ranger Grants Program Director prior to submission of the application.

3.3. Third party contributions and previously funded projects

One objective of the LSMF and Ichthys CMO is to leverage additional investment in Aboriginal Ranger groups, and in land and sea management and conservation on Aboriginal land. Third party contributions are not mandatory, but will be highly regarded during assessment. Third party contributions must be additional and not associated with the normal or existing operations of an applicant. Expenditure for work already carried out or projected for work after the funding agreement cannot be counted as applicant or third party contributions.

Applications will be considered that seek to continue projects that previously received funding from another source, providing that:

- a significant land and sea management and conservation outcome from continuing the project can be demonstrated (not simply "business as usual");

- previous funding was not discontinued because the project was nor delivering, or was considered to be completed; and

- funding is not potentially available from another more appropriate source.

4. How to apply for funding

4.1. Application form and supporting documents

4.1.1. Read these principles and guidelines

The principles and guidelines for the Aboriginal Ranger Grants Program and any other relevant information are available at the [Department of Environment, Parks and Water Security (DEPWS) website](#).[4]

4.1.2. Complete the application online

Applications must be submitted using the NT Government's [GrantsNT on-line system](#).[5]

An applicant may submit more than one application for more than one project, however, each project must be on a separate application.

4.1.3. Registering for an GrantsNT account

Applicants should ensure that they read the GrantsNT [online help](#) before proceeding with the creation of either an individual profile or organisation profile. Grant applicants and organisations should ensure they have a clear understanding of the processes for registering and managing administrators for organisations in GrantsNT and the adding and management of individual users to an organisation profile and their required level of access.

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[4] https://depws.nt.gov.au/programs-and-strategies/aboriginal-ranger-grants-program
[5] https://grantsnt.nt.gov.au/

4.1.3.1. Create an individual profile

1. Go to [GrantsNT](#).[6]

2. Click on 'LOGIN'.

3. At the 'Log in screen', click on 'Register for an account'.

4. Add your email address.

5. Select 'I'm not a robot' and if required, follow the prompts. Once verification process is completed a tick will appear next to the 'I'm not a robot'.

6. Click on 'Register now'. A message "Please check your email to confirm your email and validate your account" will be displayed.

7. You will need to open the email to validate your account. Check your spam/junk folder if you cannot locate the email.

8. In the email click on 'Confirm registration' a registration page will open in your default browser, enter:

    a. your given and family name

    b. create a password that conforms with the Password Rules.

    c. repeat the password in Confirm Password

    d. click on the Human Verification 'I'm not a robot' and follow the prompts.

9. Once verification process is completed a tick will appear next to the 'I'm not a robot'.

10. Click on 'Complete registration'.

11. A message 'Registration completed' will be displayed.

12. You have now created an account for GrantsNT.

13. Individual profile set up click 'Cancel'.

4.1.3.2. Create an organisation profile

1. Go to [GrantsNT](#).[7]

2. Click on 'LOGIN'.

3. Enter:

    a. your email address

    b. your password

    c. click on 'Log In'.

4. At the top right-hand corner, click on the arrow next to your name.

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[6] https://grantsnt.nt.gov.au/
[7] https://grantsnt.nt.gov.au/

5. Click on 'Create Organisation'.

6. Enter your organisation's Australian Business Number (ABN).

   a. This will confirm if the organisation profile already exists in the system.

      Remember to discontinue your actions and speak with members of your organisation if an error message advises you that the organisation already exists.

   b. Your organisation does not have an ABN, click on 'Skip ABN'.

   c. Click on 'Validate ABN'. An incorrect ABN will result in a message 'The entered ABN failed validation'.

7. Please fill out remainder of information including:

   a. organisation information

   b. addresses

   c. primary contact details (for all contacts you are requested to use generic rather than personal email addresses to ensure that staff changes do not invalidate contact information).

8. Click on 'Create Organisation'.

9. The following menu items will become available:

   a. Documents

   b. User Access

   c. Bank Details

   d. Audit History

4.1.3.3. User access

This section allows you to add new users (after they have created an individual account) and to manage user access for the organisation.

The user that creates the organisation profile is added to this area automatically with full access. If you leave the organisation the profile can be handed over to another person.

4.1.3.4. Bank details

Please ensure your organisations bank details are added to your organisation's profile. The bank details added to GrantsNT must match your previously supplied bank details for invoicing.

To add the bank account details, follow these steps:

1. Click on "Add bank details"

2. Enter the following information:

   a. Account Name

   b. BSB

c.   Account Number

d.   Financial Institution

e.   Branch Location

3.   Click on 'Save Bank Details'.

4.1.4. Submit the application form by the closing time

If an applicant does not have access to the internet or email, the applicant should contact the department on 08 8995 5039 at least one week in advance of the closing time to make arrangements for completion and submission of an application form(s).

4.2. Late applications

If, for any reason, the applicant cannot submit their application by the closing time, it is the applicant's responsibility to contact the department on 08 8995 5073 or email RangerGrants.DEPWS@nt.gov.au to make arrangements for the application to be received prior to the closing time or to seek an extension to the closing time. Any request for an extension must be received by the department prior to the closing time.

Any decision by the department to grant or not grant an extension or to accept or not accept a late application is at the department's discretion and will be final. The department has no obligation to grant an extension or accept a late application.

Late applications will only be accepted under exceptional circumstances. Leaving the preparation and submission of your application to the last minute or staff being on leave is not an exceptional circumstance. Equipment failure that prevents online access to the GrantsNT system and will not be resolved before closing date would be an exceptional circumstance.

4.3. Budget

Applicants should provide an itemised budget by completing items in the designated area in the online application form. This includes completing the attachment templates supplied with the online application. Failure to submit completed templates may result in your application being deemed ineligible.

4.4. Risk assessment

Applicants are required to identify, rate and assess the likelihood of risks that may impact the delivery of the project. Applicants are required to identify risk mitigation measures or strategies to manage identified risks.

4.5. Conflict of Interest

Applicants are required to declare as part of their application, any actual, apparent or potential conflicts of interest that would or may impact on, or prevent the applicant proceeding with the project or any Funding Agreement it may enter into with the NT. This information should be provided in the appropriate area of the online application form.

Disclosure of an actual, apparent or potential conflict of interest will not by default prevent an application proceeding; rather the assessment process will determine if the conflict of interest should prevent the application proceeding.

5. Assessment process

5.1. Eligibility of the application

Applications will initially be checked by the department against the eligibility criteria outlined in section 2. All eligibility criteria must be met for an application to be considered further in the assessment process.

5.2. Merit of the application

Once an application is determined to meet the eligibility criteria, it is progressed to the merit assessment phase. This is a competitive assessment phase that ranks applications against the assessment criteria. Assessment will be undertaken by department staff and external assessors with appropriate technical knowledge. Assessors may seek advice from within the department, other NT Government agencies or other agencies as appropriate.

A shortlist of highly-ranked applications will be considered by the ALMAG, who may provide additional advice as to the relative merits of the applications. In considering the total portfolio of applications recommended for funding, an additional principle of fairness will be applied which will consider geographic spread and the variation in the applicants current capacity.

Application of the principle of fairness may include a weighting process for applications from applicants who were unsuccessful or did not apply for funding in previous funding rounds. This weighting will be applied after assessment of all applications and will be applied such that where applications; those from previously funded applicants and those from previously unsuccessful or new applicants; are assessed as being of equal or similar merit, the applications from the previously unsuccessful or new applicants may be preferentially selected for funding.

This weighting does not mean that only applications from previously unsuccessful or new applicants will be funded. Applications must meet an acceptable level of merit according to the assessment criteria at Section 5.3 below. Applications from previously unsuccessful or new applicants that are deemed to be of insufficient merit will not be funded in preference to applications from previously successful applicants that demonstrate a higher level of merit.

The department will provide recommendations to the Chief Executive Officer, who will make the final decision as to which applications are successful.

As a result of the assessment process, a successful applicant may not be offered the level of funding it has requested, and the department may ask that some proposed project activities are modified.

5.3. Assessment criteria

The merit of each application will be assessed against the following criteria. Note that applications do not have to meet all of these criteria to be successful.

5.3.1. Capital (applies to Ichthys LNG Coastal Management Offset applications if capital equipment being sought)

- Does the application adequately describe the capital item, equipment of infrastructure sought?

- Delivers clear land/sea management and conservation outcomes:
  - Does the application identify a clearly defined outcome and specific project(s) that the capital item is required to support/achieve?
  - Does this outcome and project(s) result in direct or indirect benefits to eligible species? (Ichthys CMO applications only, Section 2.1.3)
  - At what scale is the specified land and sea management and conservation outcomes that the capital item will contribute to, noting that regional scale outcomes rank higher than catchment or local scale?

- Delivers employment, economic, social and/or cultural benefits:
  - Does the application demonstrate or identify specific employment outcomes deriving from the capital item and project?
  - Do the capital item/equipment/infrastructure contribute to maintenance or protection or improvement of social and or cultural benefits?

- Leverages additional funds or in-kind support:
  - Does the applicant list a co-contributor to meet part of the total cost of the capital item/equipment/infrastructure?

- Increases the capacity of Aboriginal people and organisations to undertake land and sea management:
  - Is the outcome linked to a priority in a management strategy/program/plan (e.g., Regional NRM Plan, IPA Management Plan, Threatened Species Recovery Program, Park/Reserve Plan of Management, Feral/Fire/Weed Strategy/Management Plan, and Community Management Plan)?
  - Is the outcome likely to be achieved and does the proposed use of the capital item increase the chances that the outcome will be achieved?

- Increases the scope, extent and/or value of Aboriginal land management in the Territory
  - Is the outcome one that has long-term benefits and is it one that will persist beyond the life of the grants program?
  - Do the outcome and/or project have a clearly defined measure of progress/achievement?

- Demonstrated capacity to deliver
  - Does the application demonstrate whether the capital item requires maintenance, and if so how that maintenance will be provided over the life of the capital item?
  - Does the capital item/equipment/infrastructure require any training/licence/accreditation/certification?

- Cost effectiveness
  - Is the activity capital item/equipment/infrastructure budget within the budget guidelines for Capital Grants in the grant guidelines?

- o Do the capital item/equipment/infrastructure in the application demonstrate value for money?

- o Is the capital item, equipment or infrastructure sourced from a local supplier?

The Northern Territory Government endorses a policy of "Buy Local" for all NT Government funded items and programs, including capital items, equipment or infrastructure funded through NT Government grants. Suppliers from outside the Northern Territory will only be considered where there is no Territory supplier.

5.3.2. Land and Sea Management Fund and Ichthys LNG Conservation Management Offset

- Does the application provide a clear, concise picture of what the project is about, what the objectives and activities that will be undertaken are, who will be involved and whether the project is linked to other projects?

- Delivers clear land and sea management and conservation outcomes:

  - o Does the application have a clearly defined outcome which has a positive benefit to land and sea management and conservation that is outcome specific and measurable?

  - o Does this outcome result in direct or indirect benefits to eligible species? (Ichthys CMO applications only, Section 2.1.3)

  - o At what scale are the specified outcomes that the project will contribute to, noting that regional scale outcomes rank higher than catchment or local scale?

- Delivers employment, economic, social and/or cultural benefits:

  - o Does the application demonstrate or identify specific employment outcomes in addition to what would be considered normal ranger work duties deriving from the project?

  - o Is the project likely to have or contribute to the maintenance or protection or improvement of social and or cultural benefits?

- Leverages additional funds or in-kind support:

  - o Does the applicant list a co-contributor to meet part of the total cost of the project, co-contributions are real cash contributions?

  - o Does the applicant list any in-kind contributions to meet the cost of the project, in-kind contributions can be staff time and cost and operational costs not funded by the grant?

  - o Does the co-contribution and in-kind support substantially enhance the activity and project and allow outcomes to be achieved that would not be possible otherwise?

- Increases the capacity of Aboriginal people and organisations to undertake land and sea management:

  - o Is the outcome linked to a priority in a management strategy/program/plan (e.g., Regional NRM Plan, IPA Management Plan, Threatened Species Recovery Program, Park/Reserve Plan of Management, Feral/Fire/Weed Strategy/Management Plan, and Community Management Plan)?

- o Does the project increase the capacity of the applicant and/or landholders to undertake land and sea management on Aboriginal land and sea?

- Increases the scope, extent and/or value of Aboriginal land management in the Territory:
  - o Does the project increase the scope, extent and/or value of Aboriginal land and sea management in the Northern Territory?
  - o Are the project outcomes ones that have long-term benefit and is it one that will persist beyond the life of the grants program?
  - o Is the project a continuation or expansion of previous work that has clearly demonstrated outcomes (documented in application)?
  - o Does the project demonstrate a new/innovative approach to land and sea management on Aboriginal lands (or is it simply 'business as usual')?

- Demonstrated capacity to deliver:
  - o Are the activities to be undertaken under the project clearly described, with appropriate resource and staff commitment?
  - o Are the output/milestones and measures appropriate to the activities?
  - o Are the output/milestones and the measures sufficient to effectively assess progress in completing the activities?
  - o Are the commencement and completion dates for the activity/output/milestones realistic for the activities?

- Cost effectiveness:
  - o Is the budget within the budget guidelines for LSMF/Ichthys CMO grants in the grant guidelines?
  - o Is the overall budget for the activities reasonable and realistic for the activity as described and the output/milestones?
  - o Does the activity budget include an Employee component for which funding is being sought? If yes, the employee cost must be fully explained and documented by the applicant with justification that it cannot be met by existing salaries and is crucial to the success of the activity.
  - o Does the activity budget include consultant costs? If yes, the consultant cost must be fully explained and documented by the applicant with justification that it cannot be met otherwise and is crucial to the success of the activity.
  - o Is the breakup of operational cost descriptions appropriate and sufficient to identify the crucial components of the proposed activity?

The NT Government endorses a policy of "Buy Local" for all NT Government funded items and programs, including programs funded through NT Government grants. Suppliers from outside the Northern Territory will only be considered where there is no Territory supplier.

6. Conditions of funding

6.1. Funding Agreement

Successful applicants must enter into a legally binding Funding Agreement with the NT Government within the timeframe specified in the letter of offer sent to applicants.

The Funding Agreement sets out reporting and auditing requirements under which the funding is provided. Special conditions may also apply and will be outlined in the Project Schedule.

6.2. Commencement date

The commencement date is the date specified in the Funding Agreement. Once signed by the applicant and NT Government delegate the funding agreement is executed. The department will work with successful applicants with the aim of having Funding Agreements in place and executed within four weeks of the approval of applications.

A copy of the completed Funding Agreement will be returned to the applicant for their records.

6.3. Payment of funds

Funds will be paid following the execution of the Funding Agreement in accordance the commencement date and the agreed milestones and payment schedules, provided that the applicant has met conditions required before the commencement of the project, as set out in the Funding Agreement.

6.4. Reporting, record keeping and acquittal

All recipients of funds under the NT Aboriginal Ranger Grants Program will be subject to financial and performance monitoring and evaluation to ensure that they meet milestones and performance indicators specified in the Funding Agreement. Meeting reporting timeframes is mandatory to ensure the continuation of funding.

Monitoring and reporting requirements will be detailed in the Funding Agreement. This may include:

- Monitoring, Evaluation, Reporting and Improvement (MERI) Plan;
- regular progress reports during the term of the Funding Agreement;
- financial reports as specified in the Funding Agreement; and
- a final project report which will evaluate the success of the project and the extent to which project outcomes were achieved.

Recipients of funding under the NT Aboriginal Ranger Grants Program will be required to acquit their grant funding upon completion as specified in the Funding Agreement. Final acquittal and reporting is required within four weeks of the agreed completion date in the Funding Agreement. Acquittal may involve an independent qualified accountant examining the recipient's records and certifying that all funds have been expended in accordance with the Funding Agreement.

6.5. Tax implications

The Goods and Services Tax (GST) is generally applicable to funding agreements where the applicant is registered for GST (or is required to be) and the payment is considered subject to GST.

Applicants must provide an Australian Business Number (ABN). This must be for the applicant entity which would receive the funding and enter into the Funding Agreement.

6.6. Legislation and approvals

All capital/projects/programs must comply with relevant Commonwealth, State and Territory and local authority legislation, which may include environmental, heritage and planning laws. This requirement is specified in the Funding Agreement and action may be taken to cancel the project/program or terminate or retrieve funds where such laws have not been complied with.

6.7. Insurance

It is the recipient's responsibility to ensure they hold appropriate insurance for the use of any capital items/equipment/infrastructure or any activities undertaken for the project/program. The recipient may be asked to provide copies of the relevant Certificates of Currency prior to the payment of any funding. Use of capital items, equipment or infrastructure and any project/program activities must be covered by insurance covering legal liability (including liability assumed under contract) for loss or damage to property or injury or death to persons arising out of or in connection with carrying out the project/program for an insured amount of $10 million per occurrence and not less than $20 million in aggregate.

6.8. Promotion and publicity

Successful applicants must agree to acknowledge NT Government support. Any signage or publications directly related to the project must carry an appropriate NT Government logo (logo and the guidelines for their use will be supplied to applicants as required). The NT Government reserves the right to publicly disclose information about the project in any promotional material in a manner agreed and specified in the Funding Agreement.

Successful applicants under the Ichthys LNG Coastal Management Offset funding must agree to acknowledge both NT Government and Ichthys LNG support. Any signage or publications directly related to the project must carry an appropriate NT Government and Ichthys LNG logos (logos and the guidelines for their use will be supplied to applicants as required). The NT Government and Ichthys LNG reserves the right to publicly disclose information about the project in any promotional material in a manner agreed and specified in the Funding Agreement.

7. Rights and responsibilities

7.1. Applicant rights and responsibilities

It is the responsibility of the applicant to:

- fully and properly inform themselves of the requirements of the grants program, these Guidelines and the application process

- ensure their application is complete and accurate as the department is not obliged to request additional or missing information

- ensure their application is received by the department before the closing time

- identify any information contained within their application which they consider should be treated as confidential (see section 8.1)

- keep a copy of their application and any attachments

- after submitting their application, promptly inform the department of any changes to their circumstances, which may affect their application or eligibility for funding under these Guidelines.

Applicants are entirely responsible for the accuracy of all information submitted in their application. If applicants knowingly provide false or misleading information, the application will be excluded from the assessment process. Funding may be terminated if false or misleading information is provided in an application.

7.2. NT's rights and responsibilities

The NT Government is committed to ensuring the process for providing funding under the Aboriginal Ranger Grants Program is fair and in accordance with these Guidelines.

- Fairness and impartiality: all applicants will be treated equally and have the same opportunity to access information and advice.

- Consistency and transparency of process: applications will be evaluated in a systematic manner against explicit predetermined assessment criteria.

- Security and confidentiality: the process adopted for receiving and managing applicant information will ensure security and confidentiality of intellectual property and proprietary information.

- Identification and resolution of potential conflicts of interest: staff involved in the application and assessment process are required to declare and address any actual or perceived conflict of interest prior to providing any advice or assessment.

- Circumstances for waiving/amending criteria: the NT Government is committed to ensuring the process for providing funding under the grants program is transparent and in accordance with the published program guidelines. Guidelines may be varied from time to time by the NT Government as the needs of the grants program dictate. Amended guidelines will be published on the NT Government website.

The NT Government reserves the right to vary, suspend or terminate the Guidelines and/or the assessment process at any time and at its absolute discretion. The NT Government also reserves the right to invite applications outside of the timeframes outlined in these Guidelines to meet emerging priorities.

The NT Government will not accept any liability in relation to the failure by an applicant to comply with these Guidelines or arising from any discrepancies, ambiguities, inconsistencies or errors in their application.

The department may contact an applicant or applicants during the assessment process to seek clarification about their application, especially where the information provided in the application is ambiguous or where contradictory statements are made, or to request evidence in support of any declaration made in the

application. The department reserves the right to accept or disregard additional information provided by the applicant and will not allow responses which materially improve or amend an applicant's original application.

The department reserves the right at its absolute discretion to exclude from further consideration applications that do not contain sufficient information on which to make an assessment.

8. Disclosure of information and privacy

8.1. Disclosure

The NT Government is collecting the information contained in the grant application form to assess the application for funding.

Applicants must identify any information contained within their application which they consider should be treated as confidential and provide reasons for the request.

The department will only consider a request for confidentiality where:

- the information to be protected is identified in specific rather than global terms

- the information is by its nature confidential

- disclosure would cause detriment to the parties concerned.

The department is subject to legislative and administrative accountability and transparency requirements of the NT Government. Notwithstanding any obligation of confidentiality, the department may disclose, or allow at any time the disclosure of, any information contained in or relating to any application:

- to its advisors, employees or internal management for purposes related to the application and assessment process

- to the responsible Minister

- in response to a request by the Parliament of the NT

- within the department , or with another agency, where this serves the NT Government's legitimate interests

- with respect to applications under the Ichthys LNG Coastal Management Offsets funding, to Ichthys LNG, where this is required to meet reporting requirements under the Ichthys CMO and the IPVOA Program Four agreement between the NT Government and Ichthys LNG

- where information is authorised or required by law to be disclosed, noting that information submitted to the NT Government is subject to the Information Act 2002[8] and its requirements

- where information is already in the public domain.

In submitting an application, applicants consent to the department using the information submitted for the above mentioned purposes, for administering the grants program, any other relevant programs and any other incidental or related purpose.

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[8] https://legislation.nt.gov.au/en/Legislation/INFORMATION-ACT-2002

Applicants should be aware that if they are successful, the department may publish information on its website about recipients, including but not limited to:

- the name of the entity receiving the funding

- title and purpose (project/program) for which funding awarded

- amount of funding awarded

- term of the funding

- locations where funding awarded.

By submitting an application under the grants program, the applicant consents to publication of the above information by the department if they are awarded funding.

The department will store and use personal information collected by it in compliance with its obligations under the [Information Act 2002](https://legislation.nt.gov.au/en/Legislation/INFORMATION-ACT-2002).[9] Applicants may access or correct personal information by contacting the department via the contact details in section 9.

8.2. Privacy

All personal information included in an application is protected by law, including the Information Act 2002, and is collected by the department for the assessment and administration of the grants program. This information is required to process the application.

The personal information may be used by the department or given to other parties where the applicant has agreed or is required or authorised by law.

9. Enquires

All enquiries should be directed to:

Manager
Aboriginal Ranger Grants Program
Department of Environment, Parks and Water Security
PO Box 496
Palmerston NT 0831

Email: RangerGrants.DEPWS@nt.gov.au

The department is committed to consistent, fair, impartial and confidential handling of complaints, and to resolving complaints and providing feedback as quickly

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[9] https://legislation.nt.gov.au/en/Legislation/INFORMATION-ACT-2002