

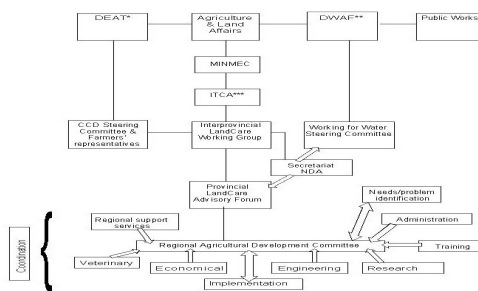
Guide

for

National LandCare Programme

Small Community Grants Component

2001/2002



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Introduction

This guide describes the activities and types of projects that can be funded by the Small Community Grants Component of the National LandCare Programme. It also provides details on the criteria that groups must meet to receive funding and provides instructions for preparing and submitting a project proposal.

Please read the entire guide carefully before completing the application form.

Government Policy

Agriculture plays a key role in the development of South Africa as a nation. The Government believes that a profitable and internationally competitive agricultural sector will continue to play a key part in South Africa's economic and social wellbeing.

The vision of the National Department of Agriculture is to increase the long-term productivity and ecological sustainability of our land resources, thereby ensuring a future for our land resources within the agricultural sector. To achieve such sustainable land use the Government will work towards:

- All land users being able to make well-informed decisions based on an understanding of the full economic, ecological and social costs and benefits of their land-use practices;

- Institutional arrangements which clearly put the responsibility for addressing land degradation with those who cause it;
- A research, development and demonstration effort that promotes a sustainable, internationally competitive and efficient agricultural sector in the long term;
- All levels of government, community and land users understanding the nature and value of our land resources and working in partnership towards their sustainable use; and
- Reconciling economic, social and ecological concerns in the management of South Africa's land to best sustain a full range of uses for the benefit of the nation in the future.

The National LandCare Programme

The vision for the National LandCare Programme (NLP) is to have communities and individuals adopt an ecologically sustainable approach to the management of South Africa's environment and natural resources, while improving the quality of life of the population. This means that people use the soil, water and vegetation resources in such a manner that their own quality of life is improved and that future generations will also be able to use them to satisfy their needs. This implies that cultivation, livestock grazing and harvesting of natural resources should be managed in such a manner that degradation (such as soil erosion, nutrient loss, loss of components of the vegetation, increased runoff of water etc) is curtailed.

In order to achieve this, the National Department of Agriculture gives support for natural resource management through the National LandCare Programme. Through this programme community groups are encouraged to responsibly manage and conserve the land, vegetation, water and biological diversity in their local area.

Furthermore, the National Department of Agriculture seeks to promote its National policy on Agricultural Land and Resource Management among all spheres of government and other stakeholders by implementing this Programme.

Goal and Objectives

The goal of the National LandCare Programme (NLP) is to develop and implement integrated approaches to natural resource management in South Africa which are efficient, sustainable, equitable, and consistent with the principles of ecologically sustainable development.

The NLP objectives are to:

- Promote partnerships among the communities, private sector and the Government in the management of natural resources;
- Establish institutional arrangements to develop and implement policies, programmes and practices that will encourage the sustainable use of natural resources;
- Encourage skill development for sustainable livelihoods;
- Open up opportunities for the development of business enterprises with a sustainable resource management focus;
- Enhance the long-term productivity of natural resources.

The Small Community Grants Component of the National LandCare Programme

These grants to a maximum of R100,000 are intended to provide resources that facilitate the achievement of the NLP's objectives. The grants are available for projects that place particular emphasis on:

- Improving the ability of land users to manage land, water and related vegetation in a sustainable and self-reliant manner;
- Addressing the causes of environmental and resource degradation, rather than the symptoms;
- Promoting integrated approaches to local catchment areas and regional planning;
- Demonstrating innovative approaches to natural resource management;
- Encouraging the use of land, water and related vegetation resources within their capabilities;
- Stimulating the formation of landcare/ catchment groups;
- Addressing the needs of former disadvantaged groups.

The primary focus is to encourage the best practices in land management.

To obtain access to this programme community groups are expected to carry out management and conservation projects with one or more of the following features:

- The local community can share the benefits;
- The project fosters partnership among the different sectors of the rural community;
- There is strong community support and contribution;
- The project will help develop relevant experience, knowledge and skills in the community through, for example a small-sized demonstration project;
- Carry out management planning of local catchment area resources;
- The project is part of a long-term strategy for natural resource management, for example a local or catchment plan;
- The results of the project contribute to the national objectives of sustainable resource management (*please refer to the National policy on Agricultural Land and Resource Management, chapter 4 of the national policy on agriculture for further information*);
- As far as possible link with other Government initiatives;

- The project should encourage socio-economic or business enterprise development that must link to sustainable resource use and environmental rehabilitation;
- The results will be communicated to other interested individuals and organisations.

These grants are not intended as a substitute for the resource management responsibilities, including research activities, of other levels of government or individuals, but they are intended to **catalyse** action and on-going commitment to natural resource management.

Long-term support for resource management activities is not available through the Small Grants Component of the National LandCare Programme. Project funding is normally provided for a maximum of three years (36 months). This allows funds to be directed to new priorities as these arise.

Funding will not be recommended where projects unnecessarily duplicate work which is being undertaken elsewhere, or which would be more appropriately funded through other programmes.

Links with other initiatives

Projects should be consistent with the objectives of national strategies. These include the National Agricultural Policy, the Water and Forestry Management Strategy (Catchment Management Agencies, Water Users' Association), Land Reform Programme, and National Environmental Strategy.

Applicants should seek funding offered by other sources as appropriate, for example, Government initiatives such as those relating to Working for Water, Farmers Support Initiative and programmes run through the NGO sector. Such funding would have to complement project activities and achieve better outcomes.

Scope of project activities

The Small Community Grants programme will focus on small, catalytic projects that bring community expertise together. It will fund project activities within the following areas.

1. On-ground works

The grants programme will provide funding for works which are cost-effective and an integral part of a widely based resource management strategy addressing underlying causes.

Works proposals must target Provincial/Regional priorities, be in accord with national priorities, and provide clear public benefits. Proposals must also incorporate complementary institutional, educational and economic measures. Works proposals would require contributions from beneficiaries in terms of labour and commitments for meeting future operating and maintenance costs.

Many on-ground works projects will have to include staff to assist with short-term training and awareness raising activities. Grants will be made available for these positions. However, they must link strongly to any works programme outlined in the project.

2. Planning and implementation of plans for sustainable natural resource management

The overall aim is to encourage the development of plans and guidelines for agricultural natural resource management and sustainable agriculture, particularly at a local catchment and regional level.

Project activities may include:

- The development and implementation of plans at the local, regional/catchment, provincial level for conservation and sustainable use purposes (including the formation of catchment groups comprising all commercial and emerging farmers/land users and the cross-fertilisation of ideas between them). These

plans and their implementation should be catalytic, achieve strategic change, provide significant public benefit, and be able to demonstrate community ownership.

- The assessment of resource use and capability which would be strongly linked to the development of regional/catchment and provincial plans.
- The development and implementation of strategic control plans for weeds and invasive plants of national significance.
- The development of farm business plans based on enterprises, that will assist participating land users to identify personal goals, sustainable agricultural production issues, ecological considerations, business, financial and risk management as well as drought strategies.
- Assistance with projects which focus on management and efficient water use for agricultural activities (e.g. pilot stormwater projects). The focus would be on projects outside urban areas.

Proposed activities should set out how any institutional impediments to sustainable natural resource management should be addressed.

3. Investigations, trials and demonstrations

Funding may be provided for investigation and demonstration activities that encompass approaches to the sustainable management, rehabilitation and conservation of natural resources. The involvement of extension officers in these projects should be explained and ensured. Any proposal with this focus must include land users and how they will adopt these new techniques.

Some examples are:

- demonstration of new approaches and production systems and their impact, to achieve sustainable agricultural production;
- on-ground activities which demonstrate practical and innovative resource management techniques that prevent the degradation of land and water resources,
- demonstrations could include:
 - sustainable land, water and vegetation management techniques such as pasture management to control veld degradation;
 - methods to control external or side-effects of a specific land management practice;
 - on-ground works such as establishing perennial pastures to treat a degradation problem, the treatment of soil acidity, and systems to use water more efficiently;
 - identification of key sites/regions for revegetation to address major land degradation issues such as soil erosion or poor water quality.

4. Sustainable agriculture

Funding will be provided to encourage the development and adoption of enhanced sustainable practices, which address the causes, rather than the symptoms of resource degradation.

Projects for sustainable agriculture should promote the concept of ecologically sustainable resource management as an integral part of land-use enterprises and the development of resource management practices and land-use systems that are economic in their own right.

The types of projects that may be funded under this activity include:

- The sustainable management of agricultural production systems, e.g. through diversification, or management of inputs and/or outputs resulting in, for example, reduced pollution and the adoption of minimum tillage;
- The integration of biodiversity conservation into land management in agricultural landscapes.

The participation of communities (Non-government Organisations (NGOs), Community-Based Organisations (CBOs), Local Governments, farmer groups), public agencies and interest groups is encouraged in developing, assessing and implementing projects.

Government agency applicants should ensure that all projects are developed with appropriate community consultation.

Application process

A call will be made annually by the National Department of Agriculture to enable interested parties to apply for funds under the Small Community Grants Component of the National LandCare Programme.

You apply by completing the Application form. Applicants should be fully aware of the requirements for submitting project applications.

Application forms and other information on application procedures can be obtained from the Regional, Provincial and National contact officers listed in this guide.

If you are applying for a new project, complete the New Project Application form, and if it is an ongoing project entering its second or third year of funding, complete a Continuing Project Application form.

Applicants should:

- provide details on a communication strategy for supplying information from the project to other users;

- **provide details on how the success of the project against the stated objectives and milestones will be assessed;**

- demonstrate cost effectiveness of the proposed activities;

- **specify links between the proposed activities;**

- **demonstrate how they will improve agricultural natural resource management;**

- identify opportunities for the development of business enterprises focusing on sustainable resource management.

Who can apply?

- A local community group or combination of groups which may want to manage or conserve specific areas of land, water, vegetation, or biological diversity. Community groups should preferably be registered.
- A local government working with one or more community groups. In this case the project should show high community involvement and community leadership of the project.

Two or more community groups working on a shared project can make a joint application.

People who sign the application must be authorised to enter into an agreement with the funding organisation on behalf of their group.

How to apply

Whatever activity you wish to undertake, you will have to show how it will include one or more of the following features:

- the local community sharing the benefits;
- fostering partnership among the different sectors of the rural community;
- strong community support and contribution;
- assistance in developing relevant experience, knowledge and skills in the community through, for example a small-size demonstration project;
- carrying out of resource management planning of local catchment areas;
- forming part of a long-term natural resource management strategy, for example a local or catchment plan;
- the results of the project contributing to national objectives of sustainable resource management (*please refer to the National policy on Agricultural Land and Resource Management for further information*);
- link with other Government initiatives (as far as possible);
- encouraging socio-economic or business enterprise development that must link to sustainable resource use and rehabilitation of the environment;
- communication of the results to other interested individuals and organisations.

Type your application if possible. The form is typed in standard one-and-a-half line spacing. Handwritten forms are acceptable if completed neatly in black ink. These forms must be clear and legible because assessors photocopy them. Other colours, including blue, have poor reproduction qualities. Maps should also be drawn in black ink.

Do not attach other documents to the form, such as a large map, because it will be removed before being copied for assessment purposes. Do not glue papers larger than A4 to the pages. Also, do not glue pages that have to be folded to A4 size as it will have to be removed.

Please staple your completed application in the top left-hand corner before lodging.

Application forms can be obtained at the address further on or from your Provincial contact person whose details are included in the following table.

Please keep a copy of your application.

Send your application to:

THE PROVINCIAL LANDCARE COORDINATOR

See the contact address at the back of this document

Deadline

The closing date is 30 September 1999.

No faxed copies will be accepted.

Assistance with applications

Before you apply, please contact your local Facilitator, Provincial Coordinator or Agricultural Extension Officer.

Assessment process

Selection criteria

Projects have to meet the objectives and priorities outlined in this guide. Preference will be given to projects:

- Which deal with the causes and prevention of a problem not just the symptoms;
- Which are assessed to be of greatest benefit to the community in implementing natural resource management;
- Which involve local people taking responsibility for sound ongoing management of natural resources;

- Where the group is considered competent to undertake the work and there is a skills development component;
- Where there is community participation involved or a cooperative approach by group members and the degree of their commitment to the project;
- Where the benefits are to be shared by the local community (that is, the project provides a community benefit rather than a private benefit);
- Where the stated aims are specific and achievable;
- Where the results are measurable;
- Where the most suitable and cost effective methods are being used;
- Where the results will be communicated to others who could benefit from them;
- Where the project contributes to the encouragement of business enterprise development.

If the project is linked to other local, catchment or regional initiatives, a commitment must be made for meeting future operating and maintenance costs.

Assessment of projects

Assessment panels with a majority of community members will be formed in regions or catchments. These panels will assess whether your application contributes to catchment or regional strategies and whether it meets the eligibility criteria of the guidelines. During the assessment process, a representative of the panel may contact you to suggest ways to improve the project or to clarify aspects of the proposal.

These Assessment Panels will then submit their project recommendations to the Provincial Endorsement Panel (PEP) which comprises the Provincial Forum members. The PEP will review how your project meets Provincial priorities. The PEP will also consider the potential environmental and socio-economic impact of the projects from a technical and business perspective.

By the end of February the PEP will complete its review of all the recommended projects from the regions and provide endorsement of these projects to the National Department of Agriculture.

The National Department of Agriculture will convene a national panel to fully assess all projects, based on national priorities and merit.

If your project is successful you can expect to receive written notification early in the first month of the financial year (April). The Minister of Agriculture will also publicly announce the successful projects. You will be asked to sign a project management agreement. This agreement sets out the conditions for funding, including your responsibility to keep proper accounting records for the spending of grant funds, and reporting requirements on the progress and results of your project.

Ineligible activities

The Small Community Grants component of the NLP will not provide funding for activities that are inconsistent with national policies and strategies. The funds will also not duplicate funding from other sources.

Funding for treating symptoms of inappropriate past management (such as reclamation of degraded land or eradication of weeds and invasive plants) will be eligible only as part of a comprehensive and strategic approach to improving management systems. Proposed activities must form part of an accepted management plan, or be regarded as essential before a management plan can be developed.

Funds will not be provided for:

- purchasing of motor vehicles and computers, however, leasing of motor vehicles is eligible;
- projects not appropriately coordinated or integrated with other stakeholders;
- projects which replace an organisation's existing responsibility and activity for the sustainable management of resources under its control, or which are of a purely private nature;

- projects with a focusing on production not linked to a more sustainable management of the agricultural, natural resource base;
- conferences will not generally be sponsored, because these are expected to be self-funded. Partial support may be provided for community workshops that will assist with action planning and related activities under the National LandCare Programme;
- insurance, legal costs, travel and general Provincial and local government administration costs in foreign countries;
- activities more appropriately funded by other government agencies or the community;
- research projects - funding for such activities may be available through Government Departments. Some projects may, however, include an investigative component, which contributes directly to achieving the project outputs.
- amenity planting, for example landscaping school grounds or local government streets;
- individual farm activities of private benefit;
- activities in national parks or equivalent reserves.

Administrative, financial and reporting arrangements

Administrative arrangements

If successful, you will be asked to sign a project management agreement. This agreement sets out the conditions for funding, including your responsibility to keep proper accounting records for the spending of funds from grants, and reporting requirements on the progress and results of your project.

Acknowledgment of funding

Funding from grants is conditional upon appropriate acknowledgment of support by the National Department of Agriculture. This could include reference to grants support in project reports and publications, in material used or displayed at project field days and workshops, and on signs at project sites. The National Department of Agriculture expects to be involved in the launch of projects where appropriate.

Financial arrangements

Funding

Funding for projects will be allocated on an annual basis, with ongoing projects being subject to progress review and report, including financial information. Project funding will normally be available for a maximum of three years (36 months) and to a maximum amount of R100 000 per year.

Once a project is approved changes that result in significant variations in future budget estimates will require detailed motivation. Where increases in estimated budget costs for a project exceed the original budget, the project will be considered as a new rather than a continuing project.

When applying for funding, it is important that you carefully develop your budget and provide realistic cost estimates.

Ownership of assets

Unless agreed otherwise, the National Department of Agriculture will retain ownership of assets acquired by the proponent with assistance from grants. The National Department of Agriculture may agree to release these assets to the community group if they will be used to advance the objectives of the NLP. This will be determined on an individual case basis.

A register of assets will be maintained for the National Department of Agriculture for monitoring purposes.

Reporting, audit and evaluation requirements

Project performance information is required as part of the annual review of projects and to meet audit requirements. Funding for ongoing projects will not be available until this information is provided. In addition the National Department of Agriculture requires quarterly progress and financial reports.

In their applications, proponents should identify proposed completion dates against which the progress of the project can be assessed.

Information from continuing and final project evaluations and assessments is important for reviewing the progress of each project and for the continuing development of the grants programme.

Continuing projects

Project managers will be asked to provide progress reports when applying for continuing funding. Proponents should therefore consider in advance how to measure the impact of the project compared to its stated aims and outcomes, benefits to the environment and possible social, economic and educational benefits to the community. It is suggested that proponents allocate between 2 to 4 % of the total budget for the project to monitoring and evaluation activities. These could include the writing of reports, physical monitoring such as photographs taken before and after the implementation of the project and keeping track of costs.

Provincial and/or Regional Assessment Panels will systematically review project performance, taking into consideration the progress of the project compared to planned activities.

Final reports

Project managers should provide a final report when the project is completed, clearly evaluating the success or failure of the project in meeting its objectives.

Evaluation and audit

To ensure that programme objectives and financial accountability requirements are being met satisfactorily, the National Department of Agriculture may undertake the inspection of a project at any time.

Contacts for further information about the National LandCare Programme

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PROVINCIAL				
Mr B Strauss	Free State	(051) 448 1224	(051) 448 8799	
Mr PV de Bruyn	Northern Cape	(049) 842 1113	(049) 842 2769	pdeb@karoo1.agric.za
Mr JC Venter	Western Cape	(021) 808 5010	(021) 808 5000	
Mr ND Nthakheni	Northern Province	(015) 295 3980	(015) 295 7028	
Mr BH Koch	Mpumalanga	(017) 819 2076	(017) 819 2072	
Mr HPJ Scholtz	North West	(05392) 7 1809	(05392) 7 0436	
Ms VB Titi	Gauteng	(011) 355 1900	(011) 333 0667	
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