



ACT
Government

Environment, Planning and
Sustainable Development

ACT NRM: Regional Land Partnerships Expression of Interest Guidelines

Opening date:	13 November 2017
Closing date and time:	5:00 PM AEDT 15 December 2017
Legal Entity:	ACT NRM, Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate
Enquiries:	If you have any questions, please contact: Tim Wong Phone: 62053806 Email: actnrm@act.gov.au
Date guidelines released:	13 November 2017
Type of opportunity:	Expression of Interest, open

1. Introduction

The National Landcare program Phase 2 (NLP2) is the Australian Government's primary natural resource management (NRM) program, the next phase of which was announced in the 2017-18 budget (with \$1.08 billion of funding). The aim of the NLP is to protect, conserve and provide for the productive use of Australia's water, soil, plants and animals and the ecosystems in which they live and interact, in partnership with governments, industry and communities. The NLP includes a number of initiatives administered by the Department of Agriculture and Water Resources and the Department of Environment and Energy. For more information about NLP 2, visit [here](#).

A key initiative under NLP2 is Regional Land Partnerships which is the focus of this expression of interest (EOI) process. The Australian Government has allocated \$450 million over five years (2018-19 to 2022-23) for Regional Land Partnerships nation-wide. The Regional Land Partnerships outcomes are:

1. By 2023, the ecological character of Ramsar sites is maintained or improved
2. By 2023, the trajectory of Threatened Species Strategy priority species is improved
3. By 2023, the outstanding universal values of natural and mixed World Heritage Areas are maintained or enhanced by a reduction in invasive species threats
4. By 2023, the condition of nationally threatened ecological communities on private land is improved
5. By 2023, there is an increase in the awareness and adoption of land management practices that improve and protect the condition of soil, biodiversity and vegetation
6. By 2023, agriculture systems have a capacity to adapt to significant changes in climate, weather and markets.

These outcomes are key areas of Commonwealth responsibility (for example, the first four are Matters of National Environmental Significance under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act, 1999*). They provide opportunities to support existing investment from other projects under the National Landcare Program and other Government programs. The last two proposed outcomes provide opportunities to improve soil, vegetation and biodiversity conditions and support agricultural systems to adapt to change.

Regional Land Partnerships will build on the strengths of the regional delivery stream of the previous National Landcare Program (2013-18). For more information on regional delivery in the ACT, visit [here](#).

2. Purpose of Expression of Interest

ACT NRM will be submitting an application to the Australian Government to tender for services for Regional Land Partnerships for the ACT in early 2018. Through these guidelines, ACT NRM invites organisations to join a consortium bid to deliver a range of project services that align with Commonwealth funding guidelines and build on ACT NRM investment plan priorities. EOIs are sought from experienced and skilled groups and organisations to incorporate in the portfolio of NRM Projects to be included in the ACT NRM tender to the Australian Government.

Expressions of interest will be considered by ACT NRM in consultation with the NRM Council. The process and timelines for the EOI process and submission of an ACT tender to the Commonwealth are included at [Attachment B](#) of these guidelines.

Expressions of interest should be submitted through the ACT NRM Regional Land Partnerships EOI Form. You must read this document before filling out an EOI form.

Note this EOI process is based on best available information at the time of its release (namely the Australian Government's [National Land Partnerships Consultation Paper](#)). EOI received will inform development of specific project proposals to be included in the ACT NRM tender to be submitted to the Australian Government in accordance with program guidelines yet to be released by the Australian Government.

3. Who may submit an EOI

ACT NRM is keen to receive EOI from organisations that are legal entities capable of entering into a legally binding and enforceable agreement with government. This includes:

- i. Aboriginal Corporation
- ii. Private Company
- iii. Public Company
- iv. Incorporated Cooperative
- v. Trustee on behalf of Trust
- vi. Incorporated Association
- vii. Organisation established through a specific piece of Commonwealth or State/Territory legislation
- viii. Universities or educational institutions

To receive funding organisations must:

- have an Australian Business Number (ABN)
- be registered for the purposes of GST
- have an account with an Australian financial institution.

Lead organisations are encouraged to consider a wide range of possible partners, such as:

- i. Industry associations and bodies
- ii. Farming systems groups
- iii. Landcare and community groups
- iv. Research and development bodies including Rural Research and Development Corporations
- v. Universities and educational institutions
- vi. Farmers, land owners and land managers
- vii. Groups whose membership is predominantly made up of Indigenous Australians or people from a culturally and linguistically diverse background
- viii. Agribusinesses and other supply chain businesses
- ix. Technology/ Emerging technology groups.

4. Partnerships and cross regional projects

Collaborations and partnerships that help to deliver on-ground environmental and agricultural outcomes at the local and regional level are strongly encouraged. ACT NRM is seeking opportunities for increased participation from a wide range of collaborators and partners, including those operating in the ACT and adjacent areas of NSW (the 'ACT Region').

The ACT NRM tender will need to clearly set out the involvement of their communities, and how delivery of projects involve working with Indigenous, agriculture, industry, community and Landcare groups to achieve the outcomes under Regional Land Partnerships.

The Australian Government has a requirement that at least 20 per cent of the annual project budget within each Management Unit (region) is used for supporting small, on-ground projects and related activities that are delivered by, or directly engage with the local landcare community.

Participation of Indigenous communities and delivery of Indigenous natural resource management outcomes is important under Regional Land Partnerships. Consistent with the Commonwealth Indigenous Procurement Policy, which aims to increase the rate of purchasing from Indigenous enterprises, Regional Land Partnerships are expected to incorporate contracting and employment of Indigenous peoples and organisations by ACTNRM and/or project partners.

ACT NRM is encouraging innovative methods of delivery that will increase value-for-money, including approaches that deliver services across the ACT border.

5. Funding

There is no notional allocation for any of the 56 Management Units across Australia, including the ACT. For the purposes of this EOI, ACT NRM is proposing an indicative allocation for the ACT region (see Table 1). The percentages are indicative only, and ACTNRM may consider the strength and number of proposals when determining the value of projects selected for inclusion in the tender to the Australian Government.

Category of services	National indicative split (%)	ACT NRM tender indicative split 2018-23
Core Services and RLF	28	2,000,000
Threatened Species Services	30	1,500,000
Ramsar Services	5	100,000
Threatened Ecological Communities Services	20	2,100,000
Soil, Biodiversity and Vegetation Services	12	750,000
Supporting Agriculture Systems to Adapt to Change Services	5	350,000
TOTAL	100%	\$6,800,000*

Table 1: indicative national split and ACT expression of interest allocation

*Note – this amount is indicative only. Given the 20% reduction in funding available to regions nationally, it is likely that this figure may be reduced for the final tender submission.

Core services, including the Regional Agriculture Landcare Facilitator, will be developed and delivered by ACT NRM. This EOI process is for services to be delivered through NRM Projects.

6. Services to be delivered through NRM Projects

NRM Projects are to deliver services that contribute to the Regional Land Partnership Outcomes listed in the Introduction to these Guidelines. ACT NRM’s tender to the Commonwealth will be based on the priorities in the ACT NRM Investment Plan, which best align with the Categories of Services to be performed (see page 14-16 of the [National Land Partnerships Consultation Paper](#))

The ACT NRM Council has provided advice that identifies the best alignment between Regional Land Partnership services required by the Commonwealth and the ACT NRM Investment Plan (see [Attachment A](#)).

7. How will EOIs be assessed?

The EOI process is intended to identify the most promising project concepts and partners.

EOIs will first be assessed by the ACT NRM Council against the assessment criteria in Table 2. The NRM Council will provide recommendations for consideration by ACT NRM.

The most promising of the recommended projects and partners will be contacted by ACT NRM to co-design projects with detailed activities and budgets for inclusion in the ACT NRM tender to the Australian Government. The timing of this process is outlined in the diagram at [Attachment B](#).

Selection Criteria 1: <i>Alignment with funding and ACT priorities</i>	Projects will be assessed on the level to which they are able to deliver services that align with Regional Lands Partnership Services and related ACT NRM Investment plan priorities (see Attachment A). Note, each NRM Project can meet multiple services and priorities.
Selection Criteria 2: <i>Project effectiveness</i>	Projects will be assessed on how appropriate and relatively important the proposed approach and activities are, including appropriate location of on-ground activities and additional impact of the project.
Selection Criteria 3: <i>Capacity to deliver project</i>	Projects will be assessed on the organisation’s capacity to plan, develop, manage and implement all aspects of the project. This includes consideration of the organisations track record in delivering similar projects, capacity to effectively scope and plan the project, details of project steps, develop the project budget, establish monitoring methods, report on project outcomes, administer funding, and effectively manage project collaborations and partnerships.
Selection Criteria 4: <i>Project efficiency</i>	Projects will be assessed on value for money. This will include an assessment of the indicative project costs against project deliverables; taking into consideration co-contributions (cash and in-kind); and the level of public benefit.
Selection Criteria 5: <i>Community and</i>	Projects will be assessed on the level of community and stakeholder engagement, including with the broader community, and landcare and

<i>stakeholder engagement</i>	farmer groups. The organisation’s capacity to undertake this engagement to deliver on-ground project deliverables will also be assessed.
Selection Criteria 6: (where applicable) <i>Indigenous engagement</i>	Where applicable, projects will be assessed on the level of indigenous inclusion in a project to improve engagement, obtain and apply knowledge, and create opportunities for participation.

Table 2 – Selection criteria

8. Developing and submitting an expression of interest

EOIs must be submitted through the EOI form, which can be downloaded from the ACT NRM website [here](#).

Organisations may submit a single form, or multiple forms.

If you would like further information about the EOI process, please contact:

Email: actnrm@act.gov.au

Ph: 0262053806 (Tim Wong)

Attachment A – Alignment with Regional Lands Partnership Services and associated ACT NRM Investment plan outcomes

Category of services	Description of services	ACT Services requested through expression of interest	Alignment with ACT NRM Investment Plan
1. Threatened Species Services	Deliver projects to improve the trajectory of Threatened Species Strategy priority species, for example by:	Note, may also incorporate threatened species services into projects delivered under Categories 2, 4, 5, 6 below	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National threatened species • ACT threatened species • Pink Tailed Worm Lizard
	Culling feral cats	yes	
	Controlling pest animals	yes	
	Removing weed infestations	yes	
	Revegetating habitat	yes	
	Managing fire regimes	yes	
	Managing grazing regimes	yes	
	Constructing fencing to protect habitat from pest animals	yes	
	Establishing and maintaining feral free enclosures	no	
	Incorporate traditional knowledge and land management practices	yes	
	Deliver projects to establish and maintain ex-situ breeding sites and/or populations of threatened species	Improve the trajectory of the Grassland Earless Dragon.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grassland Earless Dragon • ACT threatened species • National threatened species

	Deliver projects to undertake emergency interventions to prevent extinctions of threatened species	Improve the trajectory of the Grassland Earless Dragon.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grassland Earless Dragon • ACT threatened species • National threatened species
2. Ramsar Services	Deliver projects to improve or maintain the ecological character of Ramsar sites, for example by:	The ACT has one RAMSAR listed wetland (Ginini). Partners are welcome to submit a proposal that improves or maintains the ecological character of this site.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bogs and Fens
	Controlling pest animals	yes	
	Removing pest weeds	yes	
	Removing upstream barriers to water flow	no	
	Remediating riparian areas	yes	
	Supporting management practice change on properties abutting water bodies	yes	
	Monitoring	yes	
	Incorporating traditional knowledge and land management practices	yes	
3. World Heritage Services	Deliver projects to improve or maintain the natural heritage components of the outstanding universal values of eligible World Heritage Areas, for example by:	The ACT does not have World Heritage sites	Not applicable
4. Threatened Ecological Communities	Deliver projects to improve the condition of nationally threatened ecological communities on private land, for example by:	(a) Improve the condition, extent and connectivity of natural temperate grasslands in the ACT.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grasslands • Capable connected community • Aboriginal NRM

Services		(b) Improve the resilience of Yellow Box-Red Gum Grassy Woodlands	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Native vegetation on farms • Woodlands • Riparian corridors • Aboriginal NRM • Capable connected community • Supporting our farmers • Climate change adaptation (community adaptation and knowledge; and Eucalyptus dieback)
	Controlling pest animals	yes	
	Removing pest weeds	yes	
	Managing diseases	yes	
	Constructing fences and controlling access to restore habitat, exclude pest animals and protect functional species	yes	
	Removing barriers to water flow and other activities to restore hydrology	yes	
	Implementing fire and/or grazing regimes to restore structure and diversity	yes	
	Revegetating habitat or encouraging natural regeneration	yes	
5. Soil, Biodiversity and Vegetation Services	Deliver projects that encourage land managers to implement activities that:	Maintain groundcover; improve pasture health and diversity, and reducing offsite impacts of farming practices.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improving the resource base • Innovation and resilience • Supporting our farmers • Aboriginal NRM
	Use practices that maintain good stubble and pasture cover	yes	

	Avoid set stocking and manage total grazing pressure	yes	
	Reduce tillage frequency	yes	
	Use strip cropping, contour planting, intercropping, agroforestry and other management practices that reduce runoff rates	yes	
	Where appropriate, use riparian buffers, buffer strips, wetlands, water harvesting and cover crops to minimise the export of soil particles	yes	
	Monitor soil acidity and minimising surface and sub-surface soil acidity by using proper amendments (such as lime, gypsum and clean ash)	yes	
	Balance fertiliser and organic amendment applications to manage acidity, and use appropriate use of acidifying fertiliser types	yes	
	Increase biomass production by increasing water availability for plants using methods such as irrigation with drippers, irrigation scheduling, monitoring of soil moisture	yes	
	Increase organic carbon content through practices such as managing crop residues, using forage by grazing rather than harvesting, applying soil manure, using compost etc.	yes	
	Avoid fire management practices on productive paddocks, which will destroy organic carbon content, where possible	yes	
	Make optimum use of all sources of organic inputs, such as animal manure	yes	
	Use management practices that ensures sufficient organic cover, such as no tillage practices	yes	

	Implementing crop rotations, planting legumes and/or improving crop mix	yes	
	Identify and ameliorate soil, biodiversity and vegetation degradation sites (public or private) that will have significant public benefits	yes	
	Increase knowledge of evidence based soil, biodiversity and vegetation management practices amongst agricultural land managers	yes	
	Increase rates of monitoring changes in the condition of soil, biodiversity and vegetation on private land	yes	
	Incorporating traditional knowledge and land management practices	yes	
6. Supporting Agriculture Systems to Adapt to Change Services	Deliver projects that:	Assist the grazing industry in the ACT and region to better understand opportunities to adapt.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supporting our farmers • Innovation and resilience
	Assist agricultural industries (including fisheries and forestry) to adapt to growing market preferences for products with demonstrable traceability and sustainability	yes	
	Increase land and marine managers' awareness and understanding of changes in climate, weather and markets so that they can adopt effective response strategies that maintain farm productivity and natural resource conditions	yes	

Attachment B – Process diagram for EOI and tender submission

NLP2 is designed and announced to achieve Australian Government objectives
This EOI opportunity is part of the NLP2 Program announced through the 2017-18 budget.
(<http://www.nrm.gov.au/national-landcare-program>)
Announced September 2017



ACTNRM consult on Investment Plan
Draft ACT NRM Investment Plan released on ACT NRM website and consultation held with community
(<https://www.environment.act.gov.au/act-nrm/investment-plan>)
August to November 2017



Australian Government consults on Regional Landcare Partnerships
29 September and 23 October 2017.



ACT NRM opens EOI opportunity for ACT Management Unit (ACT Region)
ACT NRM publishes guidelines on the ACT NRM website and calls of EOI from potential partners.
13 November 2017



Potential project partners complete and submit an EOI
ACT NRM seeks EOIs from potential project partners. EOIs from cross-border partners are welcomed
Closes Friday 15 December 2017



Consideration of EOIs and co-design of projects
ACTNRM, in consultation with the ACT NRM Council, will consider EOIs against the assessment criteria in the guidelines, and select promising EOIs for further discussions. ACT NRM will develop and finalise projects with these potential partners.

18 December 2017 – 31 January 2018*

(*depending upon Commonwealth submission timelines).



Development and submission of tender

ACT NRM will write the tender and submit to Commonwealth

1 Feb 2018 – Submission date (TBC)



Australian Government notify us of the outcome

ACTNRM will receive notification of the outcome of our tender and communicate this to project partners.



Deed with Australian Government

If successful ACTNRM will enter into a Deed of Standing offer until 30 June 2023.



Grant Agreements with Project Partners

Grant agreements with Project partners to deliver tender. ACTNRM manages the grant by working with project partners, monitoring progress and making payments based on progress.