

Reef Trust Partnership

*Technical Panel and
Technical Advisory Group -
Water Quality Program*

Expression of Interest Guidelines

Issued Tuesday 13 October 2020



Australian Government

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Great Barrier
Reef Foundation



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About this Expression of Interest

This call for expressions of interest (EOI) is to identify, via an open and transparent process, suitably qualified experts to provide water quality-related advisory services to the Water Quality Component of the Reef Trust Partnership, including to participate in a technical advisory group.

Potential applicants should read these Guidelines in their entirety, as well as the EOI Application Form, before deciding whether to submit an EOI.

Applicants who applied to the call for EOIs issued in December 2019 for the technical panel and technical advisory group need not apply again.

The package comprises:

- EOI Guidelines
- EOI Application Form

Key dates

Table 1. Key dates

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| Call for Expressions of Interest open | 13 October 2020 |
| Call for Expressions of Interest close | Ongoing for the technical panel. To be considered for appointment to the initial technical advisory group applications must be received by 5pm on Friday 23 October 2020. |
| Assessment against criteria and applicants advised if their application has satisfied the criteria | On a rolling basis, but at a minimum every 2 months |
| Successful applicants engaged | Ongoing as roles arise |

About the Partnership and the Water Quality Component

The partnership between the Australian Government and GBRF is centred on a landmark investment of \$443.3 million to build the resilience of the Great Barrier Reef. Commencing in July 2018 and running over six years, this investment will support delivery of the Reef Trust Partnership (the Partnership).

The Partnership includes an investment of \$201 million to address water quality improvement targets impacting the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area through activities such as improved farming practices, improved fertiliser use efficiency and uptake of new technology and land management practices (the Water Quality Component).

The approach to investing the \$201 million for water quality improvement is identified in the [Annual Work Plan for 2019/20](#). The plan allocates funding to four distinct work streams:

- \$141 million for regionally focussed on-ground actions – open calls for the first two of the regional programs (Mackay-Whitsunday and Fitzroy regions) have been completed. Detailed planning for these programs will be undertaken in the first half of 2020. A total of seven major regional programs are expected to be in place by the end of 2020.
- \$10 million for innovation and system change – an open call for expressions of interest was released in December 2019.
- \$20 million for Traditional Owner-led water quality improvements.
- \$10 million for protection and conservation measures aimed at maintaining water quality, particularly in less-disturbed catchments.

In addition, \$19.7 million has already been contracted under the Reef Water Quality Improvement Grant Program Stage 1.

About the Technical Panel and Technical Advisory Group

The vast majority of the funding under the Water Quality Component will be allocated to a broad range of on-ground actions. GBRF has identified the need for expert technical advice to support the delivery of this work, including with respect to design, implementation, and monitoring. This is likely to include:

- High-level advice across the whole of the water quality portfolio, including providing independent, strategic advice to support decision making and ensure quality and consistency in setting and applying standards and methods, such as for activity design and for water quality data collection, monitoring and evaluation across the regional and innovation programs.
- Specific, detailed input into the design and implementation of the regional water quality programs and related projects, including into the design of biophysical and socio-economic monitoring systems.
- *Ad hoc* technical advice and support to the GBRF water quality team, including in assessing proposals/EOIs or undertaking minor consultancy work.

Proposed arrangements

The intention of the call is to identify a number of suitably qualified experts with a view to:

1. Appointing a small core group of experts who will form a technical advisory group supporting the oversight and delivery of the water quality work, and

2. Identifying a larger group of experts who have pre-qualified as part of a technical panel arrangement and who can be drawn upon where required. This would include making members of the technical panel available to regional program managers for the regional water quality programs, to ensure high quality advisors are utilised for key roles.

Being appointed to the technical advisory group or the technical panel will not automatically exclude an individual from bidding for funding or other roles under the Water Quality Component, although any potential conflicts would need to be considered and addressed at the time of the engagement.

Technical knowledge and experience

Expressions of interest are invited from senior technical experts with knowledge and experience in one or more of the following fields, including experience in the Reef catchments:

- Management practices in major agricultural industries across the Reef catchments
- Agricultural economics related to the major agricultural industries across the Reef catchments
- Water quality and erosion modelling at various spatial scales
- Behavioural science related to land management practice change, including monitoring changes in behaviour
- Stakeholder engagement, including co-design of water quality or catchment management programs
- Gully and stream bank remediation and riparian restoration
- Nutrient, sediment and pesticide abatement through catchment repair (natural and constructed) and treatment systems
- Financing for and financial mechanisms related to improved land management practices and catchment restoration
- Data acquisition and management systems related to agricultural, land and catchment management
- Water quality monitoring (technologies, program design, implementation, evaluation)

(Note that specific expertise related to Traditional Owner knowledge and engagement will be accessed through the Traditional Owner Reef Protection Component of the Reef Trust Partnership.)

Who can apply

To be eligible to submit an EOI, applicants need to meet the following requirements:

- be operating in Australia and have an Australian Business Number (ABN)
- confirmation that all actual, perceived or potential conflicts of interest relating to the the water quality program have been declared
- hold or be willing to hold the required insurances: Workers Compensation; Public Liability (minimum required: \$20,000,000 per occurrence); Professional Indemnity Insurance (minimum required to be determined in discussion with GBRF) and Motor Vehicles and Plant and Equipment Insurance (if applicable)

Rates

Applicants are requested to submit a schedule of rates. However, it is anticipated that GBRF will establish standard rates for certain activities and functions.

How expressions of interest are assessed

This EOI is a technical expertise-based, competitive process.

This EOI relates **explicitly to individuals, not organisational capabilities**. Where the applicant is an organisation, the applicant will be requested to submit a capability statement and schedule of rates for each individual within the organisation that wishes to be considered for the technical advisory group and technical panel. Where multiple individuals within the same organisation are intending to apply, each individual will be assessed separately.

EOIs will be reviewed on a rolling basis as they are submitted. Suitable candidates will be added to the Technical Panel. Members of the Technical Panel may subsequently be engaged to undertake a role as part of the Technical Advisory Group, or to provide other technical services to GBRF.

EOIs will be assessed as follows:

Stage one – eligibility assessment

Each EOI will be screened to check that the applicant is eligible to apply. Applications that do not meet the eligibility requirements will not be progressed to Stage two.

Stage two – assessment against criteria

Eligible applications will be assessed based on:

- Demonstrated high-level expertise of the individual experts in one or more of the fields set out above, with a strong preference for individuals with experience in the Reef catchments, and
- Value for money.

Applications that are assessed as meeting the minimum requirements against these criteria will be included in the Technical Panel.

As noted above, where an application identifies more than one individual advisor, the assessment process will consider each individual separately. The assessment of any one individual within an organisation will not affect the assessment of other individuals from the same organisation.

Stage three – engagement of experts

Where an individual has been assessed as meeting the minimum requirements as part of the Stage two assessment, GBRF may invite suitable individuals to be part of the Technical Advisory Group, or to provide other services in support of the Water Quality Component as part of the Technical Panel. The scope of work and terms of any engagement will be agreed at the time of the engagement.

Notification of applicants

Applicants will be informed in writing following the completion of Stage two whether or not their EOI has satisfied the minimum assessment requirements for one or more of the individuals associated with the applicant to be considered for future engagements.

GBRF will keep confidential all confidential information of the applicant which is obtained as part of the application process. However, GBRF may disclose confidential information to its personnel, contractors or advisors for the purposes of administering this process; or as required by law; or where GBRF is required to comply with any provision of Reef Trust Partnership Agreement in respect of confidential information.



Submitting an application

Applications may be submitted at any time and should be sent to grants@barrierreef.org

All applications should:

- be submitted using the prescribed EOI Application Form
- be complete and contain all the information that is relevant to, and necessary for, assessment
- have all mandatory documentation attached
- provide current and accurate information
- only contain attachments that are directly relevant, are concise and clearly labelled
- not contain information that is false or misleading (applications considered to contain false or misleading information may be excluded from further assessment).

GBRF may request verification of any information contained in the Application Form during the assessment process.

Queries

Applicants may contact the GBRF Grants Office by emailing grants@barrierreef.org or by telephoning 07 3171 0413.



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