

4 October 2023

Flagship Fish Habitat Rehabilitation Grants Guidelines

What is Flagship Fish Habitat Rehabilitation?

The “Flagship Grant” program is offering up to \$400,000 for projects that significantly enhance fish habitat, water quality and fish passage opportunities within the coastal catchments of NSW. Funds may be used for a broad range of actions required to ‘get the job done’ including project planning, site assessments and on-ground works. This innovative grant program is funded by the Recreational Fishing Trust and seeks to benefit recreational fishing opportunities by enhancing the habitats that fish need to thrive.

DPI Fisheries currently manages a successful fish habitat rehabilitation grant program (the Habitat Action Grants), where funding is capped at \$40,000 (excluding GST) and is primarily directed towards smaller projects involving on-ground works.

This works well for small-scale projects, but it is not enough to tackle larger, more complex sites that have a number of ecological, hydrological, and social challenges which require attention in order to deliver an ultimately successful outcome.

The Flagship Grants will support a range of actions including hydrological and environmental investigations, community consultation, economic assessments as well as on-ground works.

How much is available?

Eligible projects can apply for up to \$400,000 each (excluding GST). Funding requested **must**, at a minimum, be matched by other financial contributions or contributions “in-kind”.

How long can projects run for?

Projects can be up to three years in duration. This includes time required for environmental investigations, community consultation and the finalising of on-ground works (if proposed). Subsequent funding rounds may be available and enable a staged approach for longer term projects.

Who can apply?

Organisations that have experience with the management of large aquatic rehabilitation projects are encouraged to apply. Collaborative applications with other organisations are highly recommended.

Eligibility and priority areas

Grants are only available for NSW coastal waterways up to their headwaters in the Great Dividing Range.

Funding applications must relate to the enhancement of recreational fishing by improving fish habitat and / or fish passage.

What types of projects are funded?

These grants will fund large scale coastal habitat rehabilitation projects at sites where major aquatic habitat outcomes will be achieved.

Successful projects will most likely include partnerships with other organisations and will utilise other funding sources.

Projects that will be considered include those that are:

- “Shovel ready”, having completed ecological, hydrological, and social studies, be progressing necessary permits and approvals, and where an immediate injection of funds will allow a project to be completed, or
- Projects which require additional investigations including ecological, hydrological, design and/or social studies.

Project examples that are appropriate for this grant funding include large scale:

- Rehabilitation of riparian lands / wetlands (riverbanks, mangrove forests, saltmarsh), especially those with acid sulfate soil issues
- Environmentally sensitive bank stabilisation works
- Removal or modification of barriers to fish passage, including addressing floodgates, road-crossings, and construction of fishways
- Re-snagging of waterways with timber structures.

Expressions of Interest must:

- Be technically sound and utilise best practice methods
- Show how this project is a priority, including any preliminary investigations undertaken
- Have at least matching funds on a dollar-for-dollar basis (cash and/or in-kind support by the applicant or project partners)
- Show consultation has occurred with DPI Fisheries (see contacts above)
- Demonstrate how long-term maintenance of the project site will be achieved
- Demonstrate support of local recreational fishers or include fishers in the project delivery.

Ineligible activities

Projects that would not be supported include:

- Commercial ventures or materials developed for a primary commercial purpose
- Construction of fishing or boating related infrastructure (applicants should seek funding from the general NSW Recreational Fishing Trust funding or the “NSW Boating Now” program)

- Installation of artificial structures such as reef balls or artificial reefs (applicants should seek funding from the general NSW Recreational Fishing Trust funding)
- Construction of general amenities such as picnic tables, footpaths, toilet blocks, BBQs, and other picnic area enhancements
- Works that are primarily for asset protection rather than habitat enhancement
- Works that could be carried out through successive Habitat Action Grant funded projects.

How to apply

Expressions of Interest can be made by completing the Flagship Grant application form and submitting it during open rounds via email to: fish.habitat@dpi.nsw.gov.au.

What happens once the Expression of Interest has been submitted?

1. Expressions of Interests (EOIs) will be assessed against assessment criteria by a Flagship Grant Technical Assessment Panel.
2. Recommended EOIs will form a base from which projects will be further developed.
3. All applicants will be contacted with the outcomes. Recommended EOI applicants will be asked to provide a full project plan back to NSW DPI Fisheries for final approval that includes the following information to support their claim:
 - a. refined project methodology
 - b. detailed project budget
 - c. monitoring and evaluation plan
 - d. risk matrix
 - e. communications plan
 - f. evidence of successful delivery of similar large-scale projects.
4. Successful applicants will enter into a Flagship Grant Funding Agreement, subject to confirmation of co-funding arrangements and will be required to invoice NSW DPI for processing of their project payments.
5. Where required, investigations must be progressed, and relevant permits and approvals obtained prior to any on-ground works commencing.
6. Written progress reports (template to be provided) will be submitted as agreed milestones are completed and will link to project invoicing.
7. A final report (template to be provided) will be submitted within 60 days of project completion.
8. All publications and signage will acknowledge funding from the NSW Recreational Fishing Trust with appropriate logo included.

Who can assist you?

Project ideas should be discussed NSW DPI Fisheries staff that can advise you on completing your application and ensure that they are consistent with funding priorities.

- James Wraith james.wraith@dpi.nsw.gov.au 02 4222 8327
- Scott Nichols: scott.nichols@dpi.nsw.gov.au 0429 300 489