

Department of Jobs,
Precincts and
Regions

Agriculture Energy Investment Plan Extension

Program Guidelines

AGRICULTURE VICTORIA

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Accessibility

If you would like to receive this publication in an accessible format, please telephone Agriculture Victoria on 136 186 or email agenergy@ecodev.vic.gov.au.

This document is also available in HTML and Word format at www.agriculture.vic.gov.au

1.0 OVERVIEW

The Agriculture Energy Investment Plan Extension (AEIP) supports farm businesses to reduce energy costs, improve energy efficiency and explore alternative energy options. Potential benefits include productivity improvements, energy and water efficiency gains, emission reduction and waste reduction, helping to sustain Victoria's adaptable and internationally competitive agriculture sector. The Program is made up of:

- Assessments – providing On-Farm Energy Assessments to assist farmers in identifying where they may reduce energy costs
- Grants – to support farmers to invest in energy efficient or own-generation technology within existing energy policy
- Demonstrations – showing energy efficient or own-generation technology on-farm
- Skills and education – linking farmers and businesses to information and education resources
- Research – facilitating partnerships to commercialise research for the farming sector

Applications for grants and assessments under the first round of AEIP opened in late-2018 and closed in mid-2020. Additional funding has been provided in the 2020-21 Victorian Budget to extend the AEIP.

If you have any questions, please contact Agriculture Victoria at agenergy@ecodev.vic.gov.au

1.1 WHAT'S AVAILABLE UNDER THE PROGRAM:

Program element	Who is it for?
Energy Assessments – to understand where energy efficiency improvements can be made	
Free On-Farm Energy Assessments – (Type 1)	Farm businesses with farm energy expenses from \$8,000- \$25,000 per annum (including GST)
Free On-Farm Energy Assessments – (Type 2)	Farm businesses with farm energy expenses over \$25,000 per annum (including GST)
Rebate and Grants - for equipment to improve farm energy efficiency	
Fast Track Rebate Up to \$20,000 ex GST with matched funding	Farm businesses that have received a Type 1 or Type 2 On-Farm Energy Assessment through the Agriculture Energy Investment Plan
Tier 1 grants – Between \$20,000 - \$50,000 ex GST with matched funding	Farm businesses that have received a Type 1 or Type 2 On-Farm Energy Assessment
Tier 2 grants – Between \$50,000 - \$250,000 ex GST with matched funding	Farm businesses that have received a Type 2 On-Farm Energy Assessment

1.2 HOW THE PLAN WORKS

The AEIP has two types of support to help farm businesses: energy assessments and grants (including a Fast Track Rebate).

1.2.1 On-Farm Energy Assessment

On-Farm Energy Assessments help Victorian farm businesses understand their energy consumption profile. The assessment, undertaken by a registered expert, makes recommendations tailored to the type and size of individual farms and will include:

- Analysis of on-farm energy use (electricity, gas and diesel);
- Identification of no and low-cost improvements to make energy savings; and
- Identification of capital equipment or whole-farm system requirements to improve energy efficiency and productivity.

On-Farm Energy Assessments are available free of charge for eligible businesses under the AEIP. Once an assessment has been undertaken applicants can apply for **grant funding** to assist them to purchase and install equipment that will support the improvements identified in their On-Farm Energy Assessment.

1.2.2 Grant and Rebate funding

The AEIP supports Projects that will deliver on the AEIP's objectives by undertaking activities such as the purchase and installation of capital equipment that improves the energy efficiency and productivity of an Applicant's farming activities.

Depending on eligibility, type of On-Farm Energy Assessment and value of project, businesses can apply for tiered grant amounts.

Please note: An On-Farm Energy Assessment is required before applying for a grant or rebate and the eligibility criteria for the particular grant must be met.

	Fast Track Rebate	Tier 1 Grant	Tier 2 Grant
	Refer to page 10 for further information and how to apply	Refer to page 15 for further information and how to apply	Refer to page 16 for further information and how to apply
Amount on offer	Up to \$20,000	Between \$20,000 and \$50,000	Between \$50,000 and \$250,000
Matched funding	Yes, you must match the grant funding \$1 for \$1 up to the maximum value of the rebate. Anything over the maximum grant value is your responsibility to fund.	Yes, you must match the grant funding \$1 for \$1 up to the maximum value of the grant. Anything over the maximum grant value is your responsibility to fund.	Yes, you must match the grant funding \$1 for \$1 up to the maximum value of the grant. Anything over the maximum grant value is your responsibility to fund.

How will I know what to apply for?	You will need to meet the eligibility criteria. You can only buy items as specified on your Type 1 or Type 2 On-Farm Energy Assessment. You must have received an option to apply for the rebate from the Department.	You will need to meet the eligibility criteria. You can apply for funding for items listed on your Type 1 or Type 2 On-Farm Energy Assessment.	You will need to meet the eligibility criteria. You can apply for funding items listed on your Type 2 On-Farm Energy Assessment.
How is my application assessed?	There are no assessment criteria for the rebate.	Your application will be assessed against the listed assessment criteria.	Your application will be assessed against the listed assessment criteria.
Am I required to enter into a grant agreement?	No. This is a rebate program – once you have evidence of having spent the funds on eligible items you can claim the rebate.	Yes. You must sign a DJPR grant agreement	Yes. You must sign a DJPR grant agreement
When can I purchase equipment with grant funding?	Once your On-Farm Energy Assessment has been completed you will receive an e-mail from the Department with the option to apply. On receipt of that email, you may purchase eligible items identified in your assessment.	ONLY after you and the Department have both signed a grant agreement. If you purchase equipment before receiving the fully executed grant agreement your application will be considered ineligible.	ONLY after you and the Department have both signed a grant agreement. If you purchase equipment before receiving the fully executed grant agreement your application will be considered ineligible.
What can I purchase with grant funding?	You must purchase the items EXACTLY (including size) as described on your Type 1 or Type 2 On-Farm Energy Assessment.	You must purchase items identified in your Type 1 or Type 2 On-Farm Energy Assessment. Items up to 30 per cent larger than identified in the assessment will be considered eligible for funding.	You must purchase equipment and services based on your Type 2 On-Farm Energy Assessment. Items up to 30 per cent larger than identified in the assessment will be considered eligible for funding.
How much time do I have to buy and install grant funded equipment?	You must buy, install, and claim your equipment within three (3) months of receiving an option to apply from the Department.	Project must be completed within six (6) months from receiving a letter of offer from the Department.	Project must be completed within twelve (12) months from receiving a letter of offer from the Department.

2. GENERAL PROGRAM ELIGIBILITY

2.1 CONDITIONS OF APPLYING

Eligible Applicants are permitted to apply for one On-Farm Energy Assessment per farm over the life of the program, unless otherwise agreed to by the Department.

Separate applications must be submitted for On-Farm Energy Assessment and rebate or grants. The On-Farm Energy Assessment application **DOES NOT** automatically progress to an offer of funding when the On-Farm Energy Assessment report is completed. The decision to offer funding is at the Department's absolute discretion.

Eligible applicants can apply for more than one grant or rebate, this includes grants you may have previously received under the Program. Applicants will only be able to receive funding to the total maximum available under each tier based on the type of On-Farm Energy Assessment. For example, if an applicant has previously received \$24,000 for a Tier 1 grant, they are eligible to apply for an additional \$26,000 in funding under the new guidelines, totaling the maximum Tier 1 grant value of \$50,000.

Applications for On-Farm Energy Assessments and grants are open as per the dates listed on the Agriculture Victoria website, or until available funding is exhausted (whichever occurs first). Applicants may apply for a rebate within up to three (3) months of receiving the option to apply.

The Department reserves the right, in its absolute discretion, to amend the funding conditions noted throughout this document without notice.

2.2 ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

2.2.1 General eligibility for the Agriculture Energy Investment Plan

On-Farm Energy Assessment applicants need to meet the general eligibility to be approved

For a grant or rebate - applicants need to meet the general eligibility and individual grant stream eligibility to be approved (refer to sections 5 and 6)

To be eligible for either an On-Farm Energy Assessment or a grant under this Program, the business must:

- be a legal entity;¹ with an Australian Business Number (ABN)
- have a farm/s located in Victoria that is a primary producer either:
 1. cultivating or propagating plants, fungi or their products or parts (including seeds, spores, bulbs and similar things) in any physical environment; or
 2. maintaining animals for the purpose of selling them or their bodily produce (including natural increase); or
 3. manufacturing dairy produce from raw material that they produce; or
 4. operating on-land aquaculture facilities.
- spend \$8,000 or more per annum (including GST) on energy on-farm inclusive of electricity, gas, LPG and diesel (excluding energy for transport);
- meet all industrial relations obligations as an employer in accordance with the National Employment Standards; and
- agree to participate in future program evaluation activity.

2.2.2 Who is not eligible under the Agriculture Energy Investment Plan?

- Primary producers engaged in forestry, on-sea aquaculture and agriculture transport operators;
- Individuals, unless operating as a sole trader;
- Commonwealth, state and local government agency or body;
- Publicly funded research institutions;

¹ A legal entity is an association, corporation, partnership, proprietorship, trustee of a trust, or individual that has legal standing in the eyes of the law. A legal entity has legal capacity to enter into agreements or contracts, assume obligations, incur and pay debts, sue and be sued in its own right, and to be held responsible for its actions.

- Industry associations; and
- Not-for-profit and community-based organisations.

2.3 OTHER ELIGIBILITY CONDITIONS

2.3.1 Applying as a Trust

A legal entity or an individual acting in its or his/her capacity as a trustee on behalf of a trust can apply for a grant provided that the trustee is entitled to be indemnified under the terms of the trust for any liability it undertakes on behalf of the trust and meets the eligibility criteria.

2.3.2 Applying as a Partnership

An individual may apply for a grant on behalf of a partnership provided that all members of the partnership remain jointly and severally liable for the completion of the Project.

2.3.3 Applying as an Individual or Sole Trader

An individual operating as a sole trader may apply for a grant provided that person meets the Eligibility Criteria.

2.3.4 Applying for Multi-site farms

Applicants conducting Eligible Farm Businesses across multiple geographical sites in Victoria and/or under multiple ABNs or through multiple legal entities are eligible to apply for funding. In order to meet the objective of maximizing the number of Eligible Farm Businesses that achieve energy efficiency gains under the AEIP, Applicants will need to demonstrate that each Eligible Farm Business is being conducted as a separate farm business to warrant multiple applications for a grant. The eligibility of Applicants to receive more than one grant in these circumstances will be considered by the Department on a case-by-case basis and the Department's decision will be final.

2.4 ELIGIBLE AND INELIGIBLE EXPENDITURE

2.4.1 General eligible expenditure

Eligible Project expenditure includes the following activities relating to the proposed Project:

- Equipment as detailed in the On-Farm Energy Assessment or equivalent energy assessment report;
- Capital expenditure (but does not include motorised transport vehicles);
- Wheeled equipment supporting irrigation, technology advances e.g. centre pivots and remote weeding, (as identified in the On-Farm Energy Assessment or Equivalent Energy Assessment report);
- Harvest equipment such as headers, seeding equipment, towable weed sprayers, (i.e. attachments to tractors and/or specific single-purpose equipment) and zero emission farm vehicles (excluding utes and motorbikes), as identified in the On-Farm Energy Assessment or Equivalent Energy Assessment report;
- Training specific to the technology for safe operation (external costs only); or
- Minor building alterations and fit-out costs (as identified in the On-Farm Energy Assessment or Equivalent Energy Assessment report).

2.4.2 Solar Power Eligible Expenditure

For solar power to be an eligible expense, the majority of the solar power generated must be utilised on-farm. Export to the grid is not preferred but will be considered on a case-by-case basis (maximum export of systems supported will be 20 per cent of generation, seasonally adjusted)

Solar installations on residential buildings and/or connected to the residence meter are ineligible for AEIP funding.

Exceptions will be considered on a case-by-case basis, at the Department's discretion, where farm building or equipment is connected to the residence meter and the level of on-farm energy use is clearly identified and measurable.

2.4.3 General ineligible expenditure

The AEIP does not support expenditure which involves:

- a) Any item that is not listed on the On-Farm Energy Assessment report;
- b) On-farm motorised transport vehicles (e.g. tractors, trucks, utes, etc);
- c) Routine maintenance costs;
- d) Internal costs, salaries or resources of the Recipient;
- e) Non-farm business activities on the specific geographical site/parcel of land e.g. café, bed and breakfast, farm shops;
- f) Non-farm activity e.g. trucking or other non-farm related transport;
- g) Costs associated with applying for government grants and funding programs;
- h) Basic professional services such as ongoing, routine accounting, tax and legal business requirements, licensing, costs associated with export documentation, legal/intellectual property costs, financing fees;
- i) Travel costs;
- j) Any administrative fees or surcharges for administering the expenditures listed above; or
- k) Any other expenditure as determined by the Department that does not meet the AEIP guidelines or objectives.

3 FREE ON-FARM ENERGY ASSESSMENTS

3.1 IMPORTANT INFORMATION

On-Farm Energy Assessments do not automatically progress to an offer of funding.

Separate applications must be submitted for On-Farm Energy Assessments and Fast Track Rebate or Tier 1 or Tier 2 grants.

3.2 WHAT IS AN ON-FARM ENERGY ASSESSMENT?

On-Farm Energy Assessments analyse on-farm energy use (electricity, gas and diesel) and identify opportunities to make energy savings; improve output volumes per energy unit; and convert to renewable energy sources. The assessments will make recommendations tailored to the type and size of individual farms.

On-Farm Energy Assessments are conducted by registered independent experts to the national standard (AS/NZS 3598.2:2014). Type 1 and Type 2 Energy Assessments are available depending on the farm business's energy expenditure.

3.3 HOW TO APPLY FOR AN ON-FARM ENERGY ASSESSMENT

An application must be submitted online with the following information and attachments:

- your ABN; and
- copies of energy bills for at least one quarter that most represents the average energy consumption and expenses on-farm in the 12 months prior to lodging your application; and
- for diesel expenses, information about usage and expenses that only relate to diesel-powered equipment used on-farm. When the application is being assessed, farmers may be contacted by Agriculture Victoria to provide further records that demonstrate usage and expenses.

3.4 HOW TO APPLY FOR MULTIPLE FARM/SITE ASSESSMENTS

A group of farmers can apply to have a group assessment to identify opportunities for large, shared investments which create benefits for multiple farmers and/or the broader community. All farmers participating in the joint assessment will need to complete the application by providing information about their farms.

The application will need to be submitted by a lead applicant. The lead applicant will also need to include the business name and ABN of the other farmers in the joint application.

If an assessor identifies an opportunity for a farm to collaborate with nearby farms, Agriculture Victoria will contact the identified farms and facilitate a discussion to enable farmers to make an informed decision on opportunities to collaborate.

3.5 ASSESSMENT PROCESS AND NOTIFICATION

- Your application will be assessed against the eligibility and assessment criteria;
- You will be advised if you have been successful or unsuccessful in your application;
- If you have been successful you will be allocated an assessor and given the assessor's details;
- Your energy assessor will contact you and request energy consumption data and information. The assessor may visit your farm to review the on-farm energy consumption;
- Once the assessment has been completed, applicants will receive a copy of the On-Farm Energy Assessment;
- After you have received your completed On-Farm Energy Assessment, you will have the option to have a one hour phone call with your assessor to discuss the findings of the assessment, or to discuss how you may wish to implement the recommendations.

3.6 WHICH ON-FARM ENERGY ASSESSMENT WILL APPLICANTS RECEIVE?

The type of assessment you receive will depend on your farm's total annual energy expenditure, as shown below.

Primary producer	Type of assessment
Annual energy expenditure less than \$8,000 (GST inclusive)	Not eligible
Annual energy expenditure between \$8,000 to \$25,000 (GST inclusive)	Type 1 Energy Assessment
Annual energy expenditure >\$25,000 (GST inclusive)	Type 2 Energy Assessment
Joint applications (groups of nearby farmers)	Type 2 Energy Assessment

On-Farm Energy Assessment (Type 1) – will provide an overview of energy performance. It will identify no cost and low-cost opportunities for improvements. Type one assessments will prioritise actions and upgrades based on energy savings.

On-Farm Energy Assessment (Type 2) – will provide a detailed assessment involving a comprehensive review and analysis of equipment, systems, and operational characteristics of the whole farm. Type 2 assessments include a financial analysis of recommended energy performance improvements including own-generation opportunities. Assessments will calculate energy savings and other related financial benefits and provide costs and benefits and prioritise actions and upgrades.²

² AS/NZS 3598.2:2014 Energy Audits industrial and Related Activities

4 FAST TRACK REBATE UP TO \$20,000

4.1 HOW THE REBATE WORKS

- You will receive an option to apply for a Fast Track Rebate once you have received your completed On-Farm Energy Assessment;
- Once you have received notification of the option to apply for the rebate, you can purchase items as specified in your On-Farm Energy Assessment;
- If you wish to purchase an item that differs in size from what is recommended in the energy assessment you cannot apply for rebate and must submit a Tier 1 or Tier 2 grant application for consideration prior to any purchase (please see relevant grant information from page 12 onwards);
- Once you have purchased and installed the items, you can then apply for the rebate for up to \$20,000 or 50 per cent of total item/s cost (whichever is smaller) via the link on the option to apply notification; and
- Applications for Fast Track Rebate are only valid for 3 months from receiving the option to apply from the Department.

If you previously received an On-Farm Energy Assessment through the Department, please contact agenergy@ecodev.vic.gov.au to receive more information about the Fast Track Rebate.

Note: you do not have to take up the option for a Fast Track Rebate and can instead apply for a Tier 1 or Tier 2 grant.

4.2 ELIGIBILITY

To apply for a Fast Track Rebate, Applicants need to:

- a) meet the general eligibility criteria for the program;
- b) be in receipt of an On-Farm Energy Assessment issued as part of the AEIP Program (independently sourced energy assessments **are not eligible** for the Fast Track Rebate);
- c) attest to having obtained all relevant regulatory permits and approvals for the Project to commence (where applicable);
- d) have purchased and installed equipment within 3 months of receiving the option to apply;
- e) have a certificate of electrical safety or compliance report where applicable – as demonstration of compliance to electrical standards, occupational health and safety requirements; and
- f) claim for the exact items listed on your On-Farm Energy Assessment.

4.3 ELIGIBLE EXPENDITURE

Expenditure under the Fast Track Rebate of the AEIP must be on the recommended items/actions listed in an On-Farm Energy Assessment issued under the AEIP. Items that are outside of the recommendations (including in equipment size) may only be considered under a Tier 1 or Tier 2 grant application (refer to relevant section).

If you have any concerns about item eligibility, please contact the AEIP team at Agenergy@ecodev.vic.gov.au **PRIOR TO** making your purchase. If your rebate application is ineligible you will be required to cover all costs. Similarly, independently sourced energy assessments are not eligible for a Fast Track Rebate. Farm businesses with an independently sourced energy assessment will be required to apply for a Tier 1 or Tier 2 grant.

Project expenditure must be:

- a) incurred by the Recipient within three (3) months from being offered the Rebate option;
- b) a direct cost of the Project; and
- c) exclusive of Goods and Services Tax (GST) for rebate calculation purposes.

4.4 REBATE AMOUNT AND CO-CONTRIBUTIONS

Funding of up to \$20,000 (excluding GST) is available for Projects under the rebate. Items that match those recommended on the On-Farm Energy Assessment will be reimbursed up to \$20,000 or 50 per cent of total item cost (whichever is smaller).

All funding provided under the AEIP must be matched by the Applicant, with a minimum cash co-contribution of \$1 for every \$1 funded, meaning that recipients must contribute a minimum of 50 per cent of the total cost of the proposed expenditure.

Funds from other State and Commonwealth Government programs and in-kind contributions cannot be included as part of the cash co-contribution.

4.5 FUNDING CONDITIONS

There is no guarantee that any application will be supported for funding, or that the amount of funding requested will be offered.

The Department reserves the right, in its absolute discretion, to amend the funding conditions without notice.

4.6 PAYMENT OF REBATE

To receive the rebate, applicants must submit a claim within three (3) months of receiving the option to apply from the Department. The claim will request proof of your purchase and your co-contribution. Applicants must ensure they are claiming for an expense that is listed as eligible expenditure for a Fast Track Rebate.

You cannot claim a rebate unless the Department receives:

- a) Proof of purchase (including proof of payment) for the equipment;
- b) A certificate of electrical safety or compliance report where applicable;
- c) a Statutory Declaration which states that the expenditure has occurred; and
- d) Other evidence as the Department if requested that may reasonably require as evidence of Project completion.

5 GENERAL GRANT CONDITIONS

5.1 WHAT IS A GRANT PROJECT?

An AEIP grant project is the funded activity designed to improve energy productivity, manage energy costs, reduce emissions, improve reliability or support own-generation capacity for an Eligible Farm Business and as identified through an On-Farm Energy Assessment or an Equivalent Energy Assessment.

Grant Projects must support the AEIP objectives of improving the energy efficiency and productivity of the business's farming activities.

5.2 WHAT GRANT FUNDING IS AVAILABLE UNDER THE PROGRAM:

For an overview of the grants available under the program please review the table in the Program Overview.

Applicants will need to ensure they review the general information in this section and the detailed information in the Tier 1 and Tier 2 grant sub-sections.

5.3 WHAT IS THE PROCESS FOR APPLYING FOR AND RECEIVING A GRANT?

- You can apply for a Tier 1 or Tier 2 grant through the online portal
- Your application will be assessed against the eligibility criteria
- If eligible, your application will be assessed against the relevant assessment criteria
- If approved, you will be sent a letter of offer and a grant agreement to sign and return
- The Department will then counter sign the grant agreement and send you the executed document
- Once received, you can start your energy project by buying equipment etc.
- The grant agreement will set out the timing of the project and the conditions for payment
- To receive payment under the agreement, the project must be complete, with proof of payment of equipment and all eligible project expenditure incurred (including matched funding)
- An upfront payment of 25 per cent is available for applicants (to be requested on the application form at the application stage)
- Proof of purchase, payment and electrical compliance (where applicable) must be provided to confirm spending.

5.4 GRANT FUNDING AND CO-CONTRIBUTIONS

Recipients must contribute a minimum of 50 per cent of the total cost of the Project. A co-contribution requires evidence of a cash payment for a cost that is incurred for activities directly related to the Project supported by the grant. The grant will only be provided for up to a maximum of 50 per cent of eligible and actual expenditure.

Funds from other State and Commonwealth Government programs and in-kind contributions cannot be included as part of the cash co-contribution.

Deemed Victorian Energy Efficiency Certificates (VEECs) and Small Technology Certificates (STCs) are not considered as co-contribution, rather Project savings to be shared by the Applicant and Government. Future revenue streams generated from VEECs under its 'Project based activities' and Large Generation Certificates (LGCs) (Commonwealth) will not be considered as project co-contributions and may impact the level of funding provided by the State Government.

The State of Victoria reserves the right to cap the amount of grant funding that any one organisation receives over the period of the fund.

5.5 APPLICATION AND ASSESSMENT

Applicants are required to submit an application through the online portal. The Department will not accept physical (hardcopy) applications.

Documentation required:

- a) One itemised quote for each equipment item and/or fit-out costs identified in the On-Farm Energy Assessment report showing costs exclusive of GST;
- b) For individual applicants that have received a Group On-Farm Energy Assessment, an itemised energy assessment report that relates to the Applicant's equipment requirements;
- c) For applicants that are using an equivalent energy assessment to industry standard AS/NZS 3598.2:2014, not undertaken through the AEIP, a copy of this document must be attached. The Department can request amendments to assessments to ensure alignment to the program (see glossary for definition); and
- d) If applying for a Tier 2 grant, financial information must be provided so a Financial Risk Assessment can be undertaken will need to be provided (refer section 7.6).

To avoid delays, applicants must ensure they attach all supporting documentation with an application. Assessment of applications will not commence until all required documentation is provided. Applicants may be contacted by the Department to provide additional supporting documentation. The Department reserves the right to request additional information from Applicants (including on quoted prices to ensure competitive market rates).

Additional information on the assessment process for grants is listed under the Tier 1 and Tier 2 grant sub-section.

5.6 APPROVAL OF GRANTS

Applicants will have 30 calendar days from the date of the letter of offer to accept the grant and sign the grant agreement. The offer may be withdrawn if the grant agreement is not executed within the 30-day timeframe.

5.7 GRANT CONDITIONS AND GRANT AGREEMENTS

Subject to acceptance of an offer by an Applicant, a legally binding grant agreement will be prepared reflecting the Project, proposed outcomes, milestones, conditions of payment and other obligations of the parties.

Project expenditure is to be incurred only after a grant agreement has been executed. Funding will not be provided for retrospective activities. Any payments required for a Project prior to completion and any upfront payments must be covered by the Recipient.

Any additional costs incurred for a Project will be the sole responsibility of the Recipient.


5.7.1 Grant payment milestones under the grant agreement

Payment of a grant will occur at Project completion as one payment under the executed grant agreement unless otherwise agreed.

Requests can be made for the grant to be paid in instalments in your application to a maximum of two milestones payments for Tier 1 grants and three milestone payments for Tier 2 grants under the grant agreement. Only 25 per cent of the grant can be paid upfront to cover deposits and project commencement costs, otherwise instalments are paid on evidence of completion.

5.7.2 Evidence required for payment under the grant agreement

The Department will require certain documentation in order to pay a grant depending on the size of the grant and equipment funded. These requirements will be detailed in the grant agreement and may include:

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- a) a Statutory Declaration which states that the project expenditure has occurred;
 - b) evidence of equipment ordered or purchased;
 - c) proof of payment;
 - d) evidence of co-contribution;
 - e) any additional documents, copy of final invoice/statement from supplier or other evidence as the Department may reasonably require as evidence of Project completion; and
 - f) a certificate of electrical safety or compliance report (where applicable – as demonstration of compliance to electrical standards, occupational health and safety requirements) upon final milestone payment.

6 TIER 1 GRANTS - \$20,000 - \$50,000

6.1 APPLICANT ELIGIBILITY

- a) Meet the general eligibility criteria for the program
- b) Be in receipt of an On-Farm Energy Assessment (Type 1 or Type 2) undertaken as part of the AEIP, or an approved Equivalent Energy Assessment;
- c) be able to meet the agreed (minimum 50 per cent) private cash contribution, and provide evidence of the contribution³;
- d) Attest to having obtained all relevant regulatory permits and approvals for the Project to commence (where applicable).

6.2 DURATION OF PROJECTS

Projects must be completed within six (6) months from the date of the letter of offer from the Department or as otherwise required by the Department. The Department reserves the right to withdraw funding and terminate a grant agreement for a Project which is not completed within the six (6) month period.

6.3 ELIGIBLE PROJECT EXPENSES

Project expenses must directly align with the On-Farm Energy Assessment recommendations. Project expenses that do not align with the On-Farm Energy Assessment recommendations will be considered ineligible.

6.4 ASSESSMENT PROCESS FOR TIER 1 GRANTS

Applications for funding will be considered in order of submission of a complete application to the Department. Applications will be assessed by a departmental assessment panel. All applications will be assessed against the eligibility criteria and assessment criteria for the particular funding stream.

There is no guarantee that an application will be supported for funding, or that the amount of funding requested will be offered. The Department may request additional information, documentation or clarification at any time in the assessment process.

6.5 ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

The proposed energy equipment project will be assessed against the following assessment criteria, using the energy assessment and information provided in the application.

Assessment Criteria
1. Will the Project improve the energy efficiency and productivity of the farm business? <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Confirmation the Project will deliver a reduction in energy consumption and/or increased energy efficiency/savings, water efficiency, emissions reduction, productivity of energy use, or waste reduction to the farm business.
2. Will the Project improve the competitiveness and sustainability of the farm business? <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Confirmation that the Project will deliver additional benefits to the business, such as productivity improvements or scale of operations.
3. Does the Project represent value for money? <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Does the proposed equipment represent a fair market value?

³ Evidence of a contribution includes one of the following i) an approved loan facility (including loan amount), or ii) cash at bank (current bank statement) or iii) management accounts demonstrating satisfactory cash flow or liquid assets.

7 TIER 2 GRANTS - \$50,000 - \$250,000

7.1 APPLICANT ELIGIBILITY

- a) Meet the general eligibility criteria;
- b) be in receipt of an On-Farm Energy Assessment (Type 2) undertaken as part of the AEIP Energy Assessment Program, or an approved Equivalent Energy Assessment;
- c) be able to meet the agreed (minimum 50 per cent) private cash contribution, and provide evidence of the contribution⁴;
- d) attest to having obtained all relevant regulatory permits and approvals for the Project to commence (where applicable)⁵.

7.2 DURATION OF PROJECTS

Projects must be completed within twelve (12) months of the execution of a grant agreement, unless otherwise agreed by the Department.

In exceptional circumstances, longer term project completion can be negotiated on a case-by-case basis if there is demonstrated justification.

7.3 ELIGIBLE PROJECT EXPENSES

Projects considered for funding under the Tier 2 stream must reflect the recommended items or actions listed in the On-Farm Energy Assessment. Projects must demonstrate a significant improvement in energy productivity of an Applicant's farming activities

Preference will be given to items which achieve the greatest energy efficiency and productivity improvement.

Eligible Project expenditure must be:

- a) incurred by the Recipient within twelve (12) months of execution of the grant agreement;
- b) a direct cost of the Project; and
- c) exclusive of GST for grant calculation purposes.

Applicants will be required to provide at least one quote for each item requested in the application. The Department may request an applicant to provide additional quotes. The grant proposal must align with recommendations from the On-Farm Energy Assessment or Equivalent Energy Assessment.

7.4 ASSESSMENT PROCESS FOR TIER 2 GRANTS

Applications for funding will be considered in order of submission of a complete application to the Department.

To be competitive, an application must address each assessment criterion and make the best possible case for funding, including providing full details of all underlying risks and assumptions.

Applications will be assessed by a departmental assessment panel. All applications will be assessed against the eligibility criteria and assessment criteria for the particular funding stream.

There is no guarantee that an application will be supported for funding, or that the amount of funding requested will be offered.

The Department may request further information or determine that the Project is better suited to a Tier 1 grant.

⁴ Evidence of a contribution includes one of the following i) an approved loan facility (including loan amount), or ii) cash at bank (current bank statement) or iii) management accounts demonstrating satisfactory cash flow or liquid assets.

⁵ Exceptions may be granted in extraordinary circumstances and will be negotiated on a case by case basis.

7.5 ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

The Application will be assessed against the following assessment criteria, using the On-Farm Energy Assessment and information provided with the application.

Assessment Criteria
1. The extent to which the Project will improve the energy efficiency, productivity, water efficiency, emissions reduction, productivity of energy use and waste reduction of the farm business: <ul style="list-style-type: none">percentage of on-farm energy efficiency and productivity savings,degree to which the Project improves energy reliability.
2. The extent to which the Project maintains and improves the competitiveness of the farm business and contributes towards a competitive Victorian agriculture industry: <ul style="list-style-type: none">degree to which the Project facilitates improved cost management,degree to which the Project contributes to long term farm business sustainability,how the energy savings will be utilised to improve the farm business,economic contribution beyond the farm business.
3. The extent to which the Project represents value for money: <ul style="list-style-type: none">demonstration that the submitted quote represents market value,expected payback from energy savings period – more than 2.5 and less than 15 years.

7.6 FINANCIAL RISK ASSESSMENT

The outcomes from the mandatory Financial Risk Assessment may impact whether the applicant receives a grant, the amount of the grant and how the grant is paid under a grant agreement.

To enable DJPR to assess the financial viability of applicants and ability to manage and complete the project, Applicants will need to provide financial statements and reports for the last three consecutive financial years. These must comprise of:

- 'final accounts' with Directors' Report and Declaration and should include Profit & Loss Statement;
- Balance Sheet; and
- Notes to the Accounts.

Where the latest financial statement and report is more than six months old, applicants will also need to provide up-to-date management or interim financial statements (Profit & Loss Statement and Balance Sheet) or in the case of public listed corporations, half yearly financial report.

8 GENERAL TERMS AND CONDITIONS

In accordance with any grant agreement, the Department may in its absolute discretion withhold, suspend, cancel or terminate any payment or payments due.

8.1 PRIVACY

Any personal information about a person or third party contained in the application and grant agreement reporting will be collected, held, managed, used and disclosed by the Department for the purpose of grant administration and the program (including to third parties that may assist with the assessment of grant eligibility and the administration of the grant program), and for the purposes of future programs and will be collected, held, managed, used, disclosed or transferred in accordance with the provisions of the Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014 and other applicable laws. For further information, please email privacy@ecodev.vic.gov.au

8.2 POST PROJECT EVALUATION

Recipients may be requested to complete a post-Project evaluation demonstrating the energy productivity outcomes achieved.

The evaluation surveys may be required for up to three years following completion of the Project. This is a non-negotiable requirement for all participants of the AEIP. Non-compliance could affect an Applicant's future applications to the Department's funding programs.

Successful outcomes may be used in AEIP evaluation reviews and Department marketing collateral.

8.3 PUBLICITY

The Department may publicise the benefits accruing to the Recipient and/or the State associated with the provision of the On-Farm Energy Assessment or a grant and the State's support for the assessment. The Department may include the name of the Recipient and/or the On-Farm Energy Assessment cost in any publicity material and in the Department's annual report.

Recipient's may be asked to assist the Department in promotion of the AEIP. This may include involvement in media releases, case studies or promotional events and activities.

The Department may request Recipient's to fact check any text and seek approval to use any Department owned imagery prior to the publication of any such promotional materials.

Recipients must not make any public announcement or issue any press release regarding the receipt of a grant without prior written approval from the Department.

9 GLOSSARY

Term	Definition
Applicant	means a body corporate, partnership or individual, conducting an Eligible Farm Business in Victoria, which applies to the Department for a grant to implement the recommendations of an On-Farm Energy Assessment.
Department	means the Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions and includes Agriculture Victoria.
Eligible Farm Business	<p>means a farm business involving the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • cultivating or propagating of plants, fungi or their products or parts (including seeds, spores, bulbs and similar things) in any physical environment; • maintaining of animals for the purpose of selling them or their bodily produce (including natural increase); • manufacturing of dairy produce from raw material that the farm produces; or • operating of on-land aquaculture facilities. <p>The Department reserves the right to amend the definition of an Eligible Farm Business without notice and at its discretion.</p>
Energy Assessor	means an organisation registered by the Department to serve on a panel of assessors to undertake On-Farm Energy Assessments.
On-Farm Energy Assessment	means either a Type 1 or Type 2 Energy Assessment funded by the Agriculture Energy Investment Plan – Assessments Program.
Equivalent Energy Assessment	<p>means an assessment that has been:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • meets the Australian Standard AS/NZS3598.2:2014; and • has been conducted within the previous 24 months from the date of application under the AEIP. • assessments provided by the technology supplier will not be accepted for grant applications.
Project	means an activity which is designed to improve energy productivity, manage energy costs, improve reliability or support own-generation capacity for an Eligible Farm Business and as identified through an On-Farm Energy Assessment or an Equivalent Energy Assessment
Recipient	means an Applicant that has successfully applied for and been offered an assessment, rebate or grant to undertake a Project.