**A Guide to the National Landcare Programme 2001/2002**

**Inquiries:**

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**Introduction**

**This Guide describes the activities and types of projects that can be funded by the National LandCare Programme. It also details the criteria that must be met.**

**Please read the entire Guide carefully before developing your proposal.**

**Government Policy**

**Agriculture plays a key role in the development of South Africa as a nation. The Government believes that profitable and internationally competitive agricultural sector will continue to play a key part in South Africa’s economic and social well being. The vision of the National Department of Agriculture is to raise the long term productivity and ecological sustainability of our land resources and thereby ensure a future for our land resources within the agricultural sector. To achieve this, the government will work towards:**

All Land users being able to make well informed decisions based on an understanding of 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 into the future.

**About 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 their livelihoods. This means 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 run off of water etc) is curtailed.

To help achieve this, the national Department of Agriculture gives support for natural resource management through the National Landcare Programme. Through this Programme, community groups, Provincial and local governments 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 to all spheres of government and other stakeholders by implementing this Programme.

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

**Themes of the National Landcare Programme**

Landcare investment is intended to provide resources and incentives that facilitate the achievement of the NLP objectives through focussing on major themes, WaterCare, SoilCare, VeldCare, JuniorCare, and Small Community Grants.

The investment concentrating on the above themes will be initially targeted at five Provinces, Kwazulu-Natal, the North West Province, the Northern Province, Mpumalanga and Eastern Cape. Other Provinces will benefit from the Small Community Grants Theme.

A Provincial Programme Proposal (PPP) will be encouraged from each of these five provinces, focussing on the specific theme identified for the Province.

**Themes**

**Soilcare**

The Eastern Cape, Kwazulu-Natal and Mpumalanga will work within the theme of Soilcare. This theme will include addressing issues on soil acidity and the reduction in soil fertility caused by the selective removal of fine particles, nutrients and organic matter. This theme will also address issues on soil erosion

**Watercare**

The Northern Province will work within the theme of Watercare. This theme will include the major problem of soil loss which has damaged the catchments and hydrological systems by accelerating the siltation of dams used for irrigation, reducing infiltration and lowering the watertables.

**Veldcare**

The North West Province will work within the theme of Veldcare. This will include the reduction in ground cover of grazing lands, exposing soil to erosion, and deteriorating the species composition relative to the nutritional requirements of the grazing animals. Widespread bush encroachment has reduced the livestock productivity of the veld and this theme should concentrate on addressing these broader degradation issues.

**Juniorcare**

Our children will reap the benefits of our Landcare efforts. Their involvement is an investment that will deliver future benefits. The objectives of Juniorcare are to empower previously disadvantaged young people with regard to training in facilitation and leadership skills. This includes the promotion of food security at home and at schools, awareness in sustainable agriculture, stimulating the formation of youth clubs, and small projects that aim to promote other components of Landcare. Juniorcare addresses the needs of young people, in an integrated way that involves interdisciplinary approaches.

**Small Community Grants**

This theme improves the ability of resource-poor communities to manage land, water and vegetation in a sustainable and self-reliant manner, through an incentives programme. It includes elements from all other themes already mentioned.

Within the specified theme, each proposal must include a component of the following:

* Improving the ability of land users to manage their natural resources in a sustainable and self-reliant manner;
* Addressing the causes of environmental and resource degradation, rather than the symptoms;
* Promoting long term integrated approaches to local catchment and regional planning;
* Demonstrating innovative approaches to natural resource management;
* Encouraging the sustainable use of natural resources;
* Addressing the needs of former disadvantaged groups
* Fostering partnerships amongst different sectors of the rural community including government;
* Developing relevant experience, knowledge and skills in the community;
* Encouraging socio-economic or business enterprise development that must link to sustainable resource use and environmental repair;
* Communicating results to other interested individuals and organisations.

The Provincial Programme Proposal must 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 agriculture policy for further information);

These investments and incentives are not intended to 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.

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

The participation of communities (Non Government Organisations (NGOs), Community Based Organisations (CBOs), Local Governments, farmer groups), public agencies and interest groups is essential in developing, assessing and implementing this proposal.

**Links with Other Initiatives**

The Provincial Programme Proposal 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.

**Application Process**

The Department of Agriculture will notify the provinces in August of each year requesting the submission of a programme proposal for funding. These proposals may be both new and ongoing.

**The Programme Proposal should:**

* detail a communication strategy for providing information from the project to other users;
* detail how the success of the project against the stated objectives and milestones will be assessed;
* demonstrate cost effectiveness of the proposed activities;
* include provision for the employment of full time program manager;
* specify links between the proposed activities;
* demonstrate how they will improve agricultural natural resource management;
* include a component of awareness raising, skills development and training that will address natural resource management issues;
* Identify opportunities for the development of business enterprises with a sustainable resource management focus.
* Please note that poverty nodes will receive priority

Send a hardcopy plus an electronic copy on disk (in Microsoft Word 6 or 98) to your **PROVINCIAL LANDCARECO-ORDINATOR** (Contact details attached)

**Deadline**

**The closing date is 30 September 2001.**

- No faxed copies will be accepted.

- Please keep a copy of your proposal.

**Help with applications**

Before you apply, please contact your local Facilitator, Provincial Co-ordinator or Agricultural Extension Officer for assistance.

**Assessment Process**

A Provincial Endorsement Panel. Comprising the Provincial Forum members, will assess the programme proposal and provide endorsement or otherwise to a National Assessment Panel (NAP). The NAP, convened by the National Department of Agriculture, will assess the programme proposals from the Provinces, considering the potential environmental and socio-economic impacts of the proposals from a technical and business perspective.

If your Programme Proposal is successful you can expect to receive written advice early in the first month of the financial year (April). The Minister of Agriculture will also publicly announce the successful proposals.

**Ineligible Activities**

Funds will not be provided for the following:

programmes not appropriately co-ordinated or integrated with other stakeholders;
programmes 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;
programmes with a focus on production not linked to a more sustainable management of the agricultural natural resource base;
insurance, legal costs, overseas travel and general Provincial and local government administration costs;
activities more appropriately funded by other government agencies or the community;
Research programmes - funding for such activities may be available through Government Departments. Some programmes may, however include an investigative component, which contributes directly to achieving the project outputs. This latter will be funded.
individual farm activities of private benefit;
Activities in national parks or equivalent reserves.

**Administrative, Financial and Reporting Arrangements**

**Administrative Arrangements**

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

**Acknowledgment of Funding**

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

**Financial Arrangements**

**Funding**

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

**Ownership of Assets**

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

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

**Reporting, Audit & Evaluation Requirements**

Programme performance information is required as part of the annual review of the programme and to meet audit requirements. Your original proposal should have identified milestones against which the progress of the programme can be assessed. Funding for ongoing programmes will not be available until this information is provided. In addition the National Department of Agriculture requires quarterly progress and financial reports. Photographs are required on a regular basis by the National Landcare Secretariat.

To ensure programme objectives and accountability requirements are being met satisfactorily; the National Department of Agriculture may inspect a programme at any time. Information from continuing and final programme evaluations and assessments are important for reviewing the progress of each program and for the continuing development of the grants programme.

**Continuing Programmes**

Programme 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 programme against its stated aims and outcomes, benefits to the environment and possible social, economic and educational benefits to the community. It is suggested that between 2-4% of the total budget for the program be allocated to monitoring and evaluation activities. These could include report writing, physical monitoring such as photographs taken before and after the program has been implemented, and keeping track of costs.

Provincial and/or National Assessment Panels will systematically review program performance taking into consideration the progress of the programme against planned activities.

**Final reports**

Programme managers will need to provide a final report when the programme is completed, clearly evaluating the success or otherwise of the programme in meeting its objectives.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION**

Landcare is spreading rapidly throughout rural areas of South Africa. There are Landcare groups working on projects, identifying and solving local degradation issues. For further information, kindly contact your Provincial Landcare Co-ordinator

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