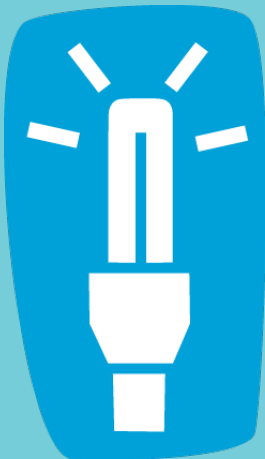




Australian Government
Department of Climate Change
and Energy Efficiency

Green Start

Program Guidelines – Round One



thinkchange

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PART 1 – GREEN START OVERVIEW

1.1 What is the Green Start program?

The Australian Government is committed to developing programs and rebates to support householders, industry and the community to save energy and reduce emissions.

The Green Start program will help households improve the energy efficiency of their homes by providing grants to individuals or organisations to undertake on-site home energy assessments of eligible residential homes. The program will also provide grants to individuals or organisations to assist low income and disadvantaged Australian households, including support for implementing projects or actions to reduce energy use.

The program will be delivered through two separate rounds of competitive grant funding. Round one of the Green Start program will deliver home energy assessments to households. Round two of the program will focus on delivering projects that assist low income and disadvantaged households and will have separate program guidelines with specific requirements. The guidelines for round two of the program will be available later this year. These guidelines are to assist round one applicants prepare their applications.

Green Start projects will contribute to reducing Australia's greenhouse gas emissions and improving energy efficiency by:

- enhancing community engagement and participation; and
- educating Australian households on practical steps to improve their energy efficiency and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

1.2 What are the objectives of Green Start round one?

The key objectives for round one of Green Start are to:

- a) provide Australian households with assistance, in the form of a home energy assessment, that will allow them to contribute to Australia's greenhouse gas emission reduction targets by improving energy efficiency in their homes; and
- b) encourage Australian households to engage in activities that will raise both their awareness of the need for, and willingness to participate in, action to address climate change.

1.3 Who can apply?

Green Start round one grants are targeted towards interested experienced individuals, companies and organisations that can provide high quality energy efficiency or sustainability advice to Australian households. Individuals and organisations working across all geographic areas, including remote and regional Australia, are encouraged to apply. Applicants are encouraged to check the eligibility criteria in Part 2 before applying, to ensure they meet the specified criteria.

Successful applicants will be required to enter into a funding agreement with the Australian Government in order to participate in the program. A draft funding agreement is available on the Department of Climate Change and Energy Efficiency's website.

Round one applicants, regardless of whether they are successful or not, will also be able to apply for round two of the Green Start program if they meet the round two eligibility criteria. For round one,

only one application may be submitted for each organisation or individual. The last application received by the closing date will be assessed and multiple applications will not be considered.

1.4 What funding is available?

The Australian Government will allocate funding under round one of the Green Start program for organisations or individuals to provide high quality home energy assessments to Australian households. There are limited numbers of assessments to be delivered under the Green Start program. The Australian Government expects to fund delivery of between 300,000 and 500,000 assessments under round one. Projects must be able to be completed by 30 June 2011.

Grants will fund costs associated with the supply of home energy assessments to a specified number of households. The current benchmark cost per home energy assessment is \$211 (GST exclusive.) Other associated eligible costs (e.g. travel costs, some communication costs and other operating overheads) can also be claimed under the program.

1.5 What is the closing date?

Round one will be open for applications from 26 July 2010 to 20 August 2010. Applicants are responsible for ensuring that they complete and lodge all parts of their application by 5pm (Canberra Local Time) on the closing date. Applicants will be notified about whether their application has been successful after the assessment process has been completed. The assessment process is expected to be completed mid to late October 2010.

PART 2 - ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

A successful application for the program is one that meets the eligibility criteria for the program in this part of the guidelines, and is assessed under the merit criteria as competitive in comparison to other applications (see Part 3.2 Assessment Process).

For an application to be deemed eligible so it can be assessed under the merit criteria, the Program Manager needs to be satisfied that the application involves an eligible applicant proposing an eligible project that aims to supply high quality home energy assessments to eligible householders in eligible residences. These concepts are explained further in this part of the guidelines.

2.1 Who is eligible to apply?

To be eligible to apply in round one, the applicant must meet both of the following criteria:

- a) be one of the following:
 - Individual
 - Trustee on behalf of a trust
 - Sole trader
 - Company
 - Partnership
 - Indigenous corporation
 - Incorporated association
 - Incorporated cooperative
- b) be registered for GST with the Australian Taxation Office and cite their valid Australian Business Number (ABN) on the application form.

An applicant who wishes to apply to bring together a group of assessors, but does not wish to employ all of them directly, can do so by subcontracting other entities for the project. In such circumstances, the applicant will be the lead manager for the project and will be responsible under the funding agreement for meeting all obligations in respect of the project, including ensuring that subcontractors deliver work in accordance with program requirements. For this purpose, the funding agreement will oblige the grant recipient to ensure that subcontracts contain certain minimum terms.

In addition, applicants must declare any existing or potential conflicts of interest, including any apparent conflict, in relation to the awarding of a grant under the program to the applicant, or the delivery of the project by it or its identified subcontractors or Personnel. Conflicts of interest may relate to other services offered by the applicant, relationships between the applicant and the Australian Government, or the direct connection of the applicant with an organisation that would be ineligible for funding under the program (including subsidiary and partnership arrangements).

If, in the opinion of the Program Manager, an application, involves a significant conflict of interest or an applicant has a material conflict of interest, the Program Manager may decide in his/her absolute discretion that the applicant is ineligible for funding under the program. Conflicts of interest will also be considered during the merit assessment process.

2.2 Who is not eligible to apply?

The following are not eligible to apply for round one of the program:

- Consortia
- Informal or unincorporated groups
- Commonwealth Departments or agencies, entities or their subsidiaries
- Local Government organisations or bodies
- State or Territory Government Departments or agencies, entities or their subsidiaries

2.3 What is an eligible project?

Projects under Green Start will assist Australian households to become more energy efficient and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. An eligible project for funding under round one will include providing high quality home energy assessments to eligible residences and households across a geographic area and to a target number of households.

The Australian Government is particularly interested in receiving applications from highly experienced and skilled individuals and/or organisations that have proven capacity to deliver home energy assessments to households in rural and remote areas of Australia or in regions that were not well serviced under the Green Loans program. A map showing density of assessments delivered under the Green Loans program is available on the department's website.

To be eligible, a project must meet all of the following criteria:

- a) Energy assessments must be undertaken by Home Sustainability Assessors accredited by the Association of Building Sustainability Assessors (ABSA)
- b) Assessors must adhere to the Home Sustainability Assessment Scheme Assessor Procedures Manual 2009 as issued from time to time by ABSA
- c) Home energy assessments must be undertaken, using the Home Sustainability Assessment Tool, and reports prepared for householders using the Home Sustainability Template (both of which will be provided by the department to successful grant recipients)
- d) Project activities must only be delivered to eligible residences and households
- e) Project activities must include the ability to take direct bookings from householders for home energy assessments and to deliver a home energy assessment report directly to householders; and
- f) Projects must be able to be completed by 30 June 2011.

It is intended that grant funding under the Green Start program will be allocated to a range of qualified, experienced individuals and/or organisations across Australia.

2.4 What are eligible residences and householders?

An eligible residence is a private dwelling within Australia or its territories that is the principal place of residence for a householder.

Further, the residence must not have:

- an assessment under the Green Loans program or a home energy assessment or substantially similar assessment conducted on site within in the last 12 months (whether under the program or under a State or Territory program); or
- been constructed within the last 12 months.

An eligible householder must be:

- an Australian Citizen or a permanent resident of Australia;
- aged 18 years or over; and
- the owner of the home being assessed or a trustee of the home (as shown on the current title) or a tenant who has a current lease arrangement with the owner of the home.

The householder will be required to complete a declaration to the effect that:

- they are an eligible householder under the program; and
- the residence is eligible to be assessed under the program.

2.5 Budget activities and items

2.5a What are the eligible budget activities and items?

Each application for grant funding under round one of the program will need to include a proposed budget for the project. In preparing a budget, applicants should bear in mind that an important part of the merit assessment process is the value that will be delivered under the project in comparison to its costs (i.e. value for money). Applications that would deliver the greatest value for money for the Commonwealth have the best chance of success in the assessment process.

The direct cost of carrying out home energy assessments for eligible residences and households is eligible expenditure under round one of the program. This includes the costs to the applicant of engaging accredited home energy assessors to carry out the assessments.

In addition, the following 'other' costs and expenses are eligible expenditures that can attract grant payments under the program:

- Other salary costs and expenses that directly support the provision of the assessments under the project (e.g. administrative and office support functions)
- Reasonable project administration costs incurred in the delivery of the assessments
- Reasonable costs of communication activities that are directly attributable to the provision of home energy assessments included in the project
- Costs of products consumed, and equipment used, in carrying out the assessments
- Travel costs and expenses incurred in carrying out the project

- Training costs and expenses for assessors to carry out home energy assessments that are part of the project
- Other costs, the incurring of which is consistent with the achievement of the program objectives and which are approved by the Program Manager

The proportion of administrative and other costs as part of the total budget will be considered under the merit criteria. A high proportion of 'other' costs may reduce the relative merit of the application unless there is specific rationale for the additional expenses e.g. travel to remote or regional locations rather than metropolitan locations.

2.5b What activities will not be funded?

The following activities and items are not eligible for funding:

- Activities required by law such as managing the occupational health and safety of personnel
- Activities already funded through other Commonwealth grants or programs or by State, Territory and Local Governments
- Items that are not included in the specified budget for the project
- Labour supplied by the applicant, other than for conducting home energy assessments, project coordination, management and administration
- Activities designed to raise revenue
- Business set up or establishment costs
- Purchase of major capital items, including expenditure on the purchase, lease or acquisition of vehicles, business premises or land, except expenditure on minor items of equipment used in carrying out home energy assessments as per funding agreement conditions
- Hospitality
- Activities that are primarily for political advocacy
- Activities where the major purpose is to beautify or improve amenity
- Activities that, in the opinion of the Program Manager, are not consistent with the objectives of the program
- Activities outside of Australia and its territories

The Program Manager may decide to remove any ineligible items from the budget for the project, and consequently reduce the amount of funding sought in the application prior to it proceeding for merit assessment.

2.6 Confidentiality and disclosure of applicant and assessor Information

Information contained in applications and information received by the department during the application process may be used and disclosed for the purposes of establishing applicant eligibility and assessing the application against these guidelines. This may include disclosure of information to other Australian Government agencies, ABSA, State or Territory Governments and persons providing advice to the department.

In addition, the department may disclose information contained in applications or received during the application process to:

- staff
- relevant Ministers
- other Australian Government agencies
- the Australian National Audit Office
- the department's internal auditor
- a House or a Committee of the Parliament
- any person to whom the information is required by law to be disclosed
- satisfy reporting requirements established by law or government policy

Applicants are required to obtain from all assessors who are specified in the application consent to the use of their information in the application process and otherwise for the purposes of the program.

PART 3 – CONDITIONS AND INSTRUCTIONS FOR APPLYING

3.1 Submitting an Application

Closing Date

To apply for a Green Start grant, applicants will need to complete all sections of the application form and submit it online by 5pm (Canberra Local Time) 20 August 2010 (closing date).

However, if you do not have access to the internet or a computer, you may request an application package from the Green Start Enquiries Line on 1300 778 451. If you are completing a hard copy form, it is the applicant's responsibility to ensure that it is received by the closing date.

Post your application to:

Green Start Program
Department of Climate Change and Energy Efficiency
GPO Box 854
Canberra ACT 2600

If courier delivery, send to:

Green Start Program
Department of Climate Change and Energy Efficiency
Level 5, 5 Farrell Place
Canberra City ACT 2600

Receipt of all applications (online and hard copy) will be acknowledged.

No extensions of time for lodgement will be considered.

Incomplete applications will be rejected by the department. Applicants must take care to ensure that they submit a complete application.

Only one application may be submitted for each organisation or individual.

Where to obtain the application form

The online application form can be found on the department's website:
<http://www.climatechange.gov.au/government/programs-and-rebates/greenstart>.

However, if you do not have access to the internet or a computer, you may request an application package from the Green Start Enquiries Line on 1300 778 451. If you are completing a hard copy form it must be received by the closing date.

Contact Officer

If you have any enquiries regarding applying for the program, please contact:

Program Manager

Green Start Program

by sending an email to greenstart@environment.gov.au

or by calling the Green Start Enquiries Line on 1300 778 451.

3.2 Assessment Process

How will applications be assessed?

The Green Start program, through round one of funding, aims to provide high quality home energy assessments across Australia covering various sectors of the community. After the closing date, all complete applications that meet the eligibility requirements will be assessed through a competitive and comparative process against the merit criteria of the program. Applicants that have been assessed as meeting the merit criteria and providing value for money for the department will be assessed for financial viability. Applicants that are not assessed as being financially viable will not be recommended for funding.

Successful applicants, in the funding agreement, may be asked to provide up to 3 years of audited/externally compiled financial statements that have been prepared in accordance with Australian Accounting Standards and/or bank bonds of up to 20% of the total funding requested.

Merit Criteria

All eligible and complete applications for round one will be assessed against the following merit criteria:

1. Demonstrated skill, experience and expertise of the applicant and proposed personnel in energy efficiency and home sustainability assessment;
2. Demonstrated ability of the proposal to contribute to the Green Start objectives and any additional potential public benefits including the ability to deliver activities to regional and remote areas;
3. Demonstrated skill, capacity and experience in delivering projects to agreed timelines and with the allocated budget; and
4. Value for money of the application.

The merit criteria are weighted according the relative importance as follows:

- Criterion 1 will be weighted as 30% of the total
- Criterion 2 will be weighted as 30% of the total

- Criteria 3 will be weighted as 20% of the total
- Criterion 4 will be weighted as 20% of the total

The application form will provide further information to guide applicants in addressing these criteria. Please see the application form for further information at:

<http://www.climatechange.gov.au/government/programs-and-rebates/greenstart>

Unsuccessful applications

The department will advise all unsuccessful applicants at the conclusion of the assessment process. Unsuccessful applicants can request feedback via the Program Manager.

Complaints

Any complaints regarding the Program should be lodged with:

The Program Manager

Green Start Program

via form at: <http://www.climatechange.gov.au/en/government/programs-and-rebates/greenstart>

or by phone to 1300 778 451

Complaints will be handled in accordance with the Department's complaints handling mechanisms.

3.3 Grant conditions

What are the tax implications of receiving a grant?

Goods and Services Tax (GST) may apply to grant payments and certain grant payments may be subject to income tax in the hands of certain recipients. Grant recipients should seek independent legal, taxation or financial advice regarding tax implications.

What are the conditions of receiving a grant?

Successful applicants must enter into a funding agreement with the Australian Government before they can receive grant funding under the program. All successful applicants will be contacted and will receive a written offer of grant funding and a funding agreement, and will have 14 calendar days to execute a funding agreement with the Australian Government from the date the offer is made. Failure to execute the funding agreement within this time may result in the department withdrawing the offer of funding.

A draft funding agreement is available on the website listed above.

The following sets out some of the key features of the funding agreement:

Roles and responsibilities

The funding agreement will clearly define the roles and responsibilities of the parties. Under the funding agreement, the grant recipient must maintain public liability and professional indemnity insurance at the specified levels. The grant recipient will also be required to provide an indemnity to the Australian Government against claims arising out of the delivery of the project.

Successful grantees will only use personnel:

- specified to undertake assessments who hold valid Home Sustainability Assessment accreditation with the Association of Building Sustainability Assessors (ABSA) (accreditation must have been achieved or pending at the date of announcement of these guidelines) and
- who have completed the Professional Home Sustainability Assessment Training Course by 24 December 2009.

Personnel (including subcontractors) must operate in accordance with the specified procedures issued by the department. Energy assessments must be undertaken using the Home Sustainability Assessment Tool and reports prepared for householders using the Home Sustainability Template. Grant recipients should contact the department for further information.

Branding and communication

The department has specific requirements for grant recipients in regards to acknowledging the source of the funding for the program and the use of government branding. Guidelines will be provided to all grant recipients of funding. It is important that the grant recipients and any subcontractors, in any interaction with the public, do not represent themselves as from the department or the government.

Milestones, reporting and payment

The funding agreement will include a budget and a payment and reporting schedule. The payment profile in the agreement will depend on the budget submitted for the project and the setting of appropriate milestones for the delivery of the project. Budgets can include a reasonable advance payment, payable in late 2010. Subsequent grant payments would then be made at intervals based on eligible expenditure incurred, with each payment subject to satisfactory completion of payment milestones, substantiation and compliance generally with the funding agreement.

Compliance, monitoring and auditing

The program's Compliance Plan will contain activities that audit and monitor the adherence to the funding agreement. This will include random and targeted samples of various aspects of the program such as quality of the assessments, householder satisfaction, accreditation of assessors and the correctness of the milestone report and associated request for payment. A number of compliance checks will be selected undertaken prior to payment.

Subcontractors and Personnel

The funding agreement requires that all assessors to be used by the grant recipient to deliver the project must be Home Sustainability Assessors accredited by ABSA. Grant recipients must maintain a list of personnel used to deliver the project and this must be made available to the department on request. In certain circumstances, the department can require the grant recipient to remove personnel from the project.

Details of subcontracting arrangements must be specified in the application so that they can be taken into account in the assessment process and listed in the funding agreement. Further, under the funding agreement grant recipients are obliged to ensure that any subcontracts contain clauses that reflect critical aspects of the funding agreement.

Requirements for assessments

The funding agreement specifies various requirements as to who is eligible to undertake assessments and the scope and quality of the home energy assessment. All assessors used by the grant recipient, whether they are engaged by the grant recipient as employees or through subcontract, are personnel under the funding agreement. Home energy assessors must be accredited as ABSA. Home energy

assessments must be completed in accordance with funding agreement and specified procedures issued by the department. This includes grant recipients not offering other commercial services while carrying out home energy assessments in respect of which grant payments will be claimed. Assessors are required to undertake the energy assessment using the Home Sustainability Assessment Tool and prepare reports for householders using the Home Sustainability Template.

Householder declaration of assessment

Grant recipients must obtain a signed declaration form from the householder. Part one of the declaration form, which is to be completed prior to the home energy assessment taking place, gives the assessor permission to conduct the assessment. Part two of the form, which is completed after the assessment, will verify the delivery of the assessment and obtain consent for the assessor to provide the householders personal information to department as required. This declaration form will be retained by grant recipients and made available to the department on request.

The template for the form is available from the department's website:

<http://www.climatechange.gov.au/government/programs-and-rebates/greenstart>

Specific limitations on funding recipients

Grant recipients under the program are permitted to advertise their services, including by mail or letterbox flyers but not by way of unsolicited direct marketing to individuals such as cold calling (by phone, email or door knocking). Limitations will also apply about the grant recipient offering other services to the householders that are not part of the assessment. The funding agreement specifies various limitations that will apply to grant recipients.

Audit

The funding agreement will include the requirement for the grantee recipient to fully participate in any performance audit, including commissioning and bearing the financial responsibility for the audit, if requested by the department or the Australian National Audit Office.

Householder confidentiality and privacy

The funding agreement will contain stringent requirements for the security and management of householder information by grant recipients. That information may be used and disclosed by the grant recipient only where the use or disclosure is required for the purposes of delivering the program, or if disclosure is required by law. Any subcontractors to the grant recipient will be obliged to observe those same requirements.

Householder data cannot be used by the grant recipient for any purpose other than delivering the program unless the grant recipient has obtained the prior approval from the department and the consent of the customer in question.

Security of information

All information generated in carrying out the program must be retained by the grant recipient in the required format under appropriate conditions as specified within the funding agreement, for a period of not less than 7 years. If requested, the data must be provided to the department for the purpose of undertaking performance audits or compliance checking.

Legislative requirements

Grant recipients must comply with all relevant Commonwealth, State and Territory legislation and regulations when delivering services under the Green Start program.

3.4 Program Delivery Arrangements and Responsibilities

Role of the department and the Australian Government

The department will deliver the program for the Australian Government.

Under round one of the program, the Australian Government will fund the provision of home energy assessments to Australian households. These will be conducted by suitably qualified organisations and individuals that submit successful applications for funding.

The Australian Government's role under the program is limited to the provision of funding only. The Australian Government will not organise assessments, distribute reports to households nor will it select individual assessors for households.

Grant recipients will be responsible for the quality of the assessment work that they carry out. Further, as a condition of participation in the program the Australian Government will require grant recipients to be covered by appropriate insurances and to provide guarantees against any third party claims arising out of the home energy assessment.

Role of the Program Manager

The Program Manager is a senior member of staff within the department, who is responsible for the administration and application of the guidelines. The Program Manager will formally decide which grant applications are eligible, and which eligible applications are of sufficient merit to recommend for funding under the program. The Program Manager will, taking into account which eligible applications are of sufficient merit for funding under the program and the available funding for the program, recommend to the Minister which applications should be approved to receive offers of grant funding for the provision of home energy assessments under round one of the program.

The Program Manager has the sole and absolute discretion to determine matters arising under the guidelines, other than the final decision to approve an application for funding, which lies with the Minister.

Role of the Minister

The Minister will make the final decision whether to grant financial assistance under the first round of the program. The Minister will consider the advice of the Program Manager in determining which applications are to receive funding.

Rights reserved by the Australian Government

The making of an eligible application for funding under the program does not guarantee that funding will be provided. Eligible applications will be assessed against the merit criteria. Applications need to demonstrate a high level of merit against the criteria and be competitive with other applications. The department and Minister will also consider the overall availability of funds in determining what assistance can be provided.

3.5 Where do I go for more information?

More information on the Green Start program's round one funding can be found at:

<http://www.climatechange.gov.au/government/programs-and-rebates/greenstart>

or by emailing greenstart@environment.gov.au

or by calling 1300 778 451

Separate program guidelines will be released to detail the specifications for round two funding under the Green Start program.

APPENDIX A - DEFINITIONS

Association of Building Sustainability Assessors (ABSA) - means the organisation that administers the national Accreditation Scheme for Home Sustainability Assessments.

Assessor - means an individual who is to carry out home energy assessments for eligible residences under the program.

Australian Government - means the Commonwealth of Australia.

Department - means the Department of Climate Change and Energy Efficiency, and its administrative successors.

Eligibility criteria - means the criteria, contained in section 2 of these guidelines, for determining whether an application should proceed to relative merit assessment under the merit criteria.

Eligible expenditure - means expenditure that can attract a grant payment as defined in section 2.4 of these guidelines.

Eligible residence - means a home that meets the eligible residence requirements in these guidelines.

Funding agreement - means the deed of agreement, between a successful applicant for round one of the program and the Australian Government, for the provision of funding for the carrying out of home energy assessments.

Home Sustainability Assessment Scheme Assessors Procedures Manual - means the procedures issued from time to time by ABSA for carrying out home energy assessments under the program.

Guidelines - means this document, which provides guidelines for the operation of the program.

Home energy assessment - means an energy assessment for a home conducted in accordance with the funding agreement and the Assessors Procedures Manual as issued by the department. Assessors are required to undertake the energy assessment using the Home Sustainability Assessment Tool and prepare reports for householders using the Home Sustainability Template.

Merit criteria - means the criteria for relative merit assessment that are contained in section 3 of these guidelines.

Minister - means the Australian Government Minister responsible for the Green Start program (currently the Minister for Climate Change, Energy Efficiency and Water).

Program - means the Green Start program.

Project - means the activities that are proposed for grant funding in the application under round one of the Green Start program