



WILDLIFE CONSERVATION FUND RESEARCH GRANTS PROGRAM

HINTS AND TIPS FOR WRITING A GRANT APPLICATION

To help you to apply for a research grant through the Wildlife Conservation Fund (WCF) we are happy to provide you with the following information.

We encourage you to use this information in conjunction with other resources to assist you through the process of applying for a grant. However this is not intended to be a definitive guide to preparing grant applications.

Grants are highly competitive and applications need to be thoroughly prepared. Before starting, it is important to read the guidelines carefully.

Pay particular attention to the deadlines and the eligibility rules.

All grants require an original research project, hence asking input from your future supervisor and/or from as many colleagues as you can find is essential.

We suggest making contact with a relevant DEH contact officer in your area of research to assist with your preparations.

Address all sections of the grant application

Applicants must address all questions and provide adequate explanation for each section of the grant application form.

The more information you provide the clearer your application will be to the assessors.

Collaboration is encouraged so please indicate if you will be collaborating with other individuals, organisations or agencies. Include details of who you have collaborated with and their contact details where applicable.

A good place to start might be to contact the relevant DEH Officer in the area you hope to conduct your research (location or research area). Discuss where your project might fit in with the work that DEH is currently doing and how it might add to biodiversity conservation efforts in the region.

Staff at DEH that might be suitable to talk to may include Regional Ecologists, Rangers, Threatened Species Officers and Bush Management Advisors.

Should you wish to do so, contact details of DEH offices have been provided for your convenience. These details can also be found on the DEH website at the following address <http://www.parks.sa.gov.au/parks/contact/index.htm>

Department for Environment & Heritage – Regional Offices

Adelaide Region	Kangaroo Island Region
Black Hill Conservation Park 115 Maryvale Rd Athelstone SA 5076 Australia Phone: (61 8) 8336 0924 Fax: (61 8) 8336 0994	PO Box 39 Kingscote SA 5223 Australia Phone: (61 8) 8553 2381 Fax: (61 8) 8553 0311
Murraylands Region	Outback Region
PO Box 231 Berri SA 5343 Australia Phone: (61 8) 8595 2111 Fax: (61 8) 8595 2110	PO Box 78 Pt Augusta SA 5700 Australia Phone: (61 8) 8648 5300 Fax: (61 8) 8648 5301
South East Region	West Region
PO Box 1046 Mt Gambier SA 5290 Australia Phone: (61 8) 8735 1111 Fax: (61 8) 8735 1110	PO Box 22 Port Lincoln SA 5606 Australia Phone: (61 8) 8688 3111 Fax: (61 8) 8688 3110
Northern and Yorke Region	Helpful Hint
Unit 6/17 Lennon Street Clare SA 5453 Australia Phone: (61 8) 8841 3400 Fax: (61 8) 8841 3411	Contact your local Regional Ecologist, Ranger or Threatened Species Officer to discuss what research they are doing and see if you can contribute!

HINTS AND TIPS FOR WRITING A WCF GRANT APPLICATION

Some General Hints And Tips

- Keep your text as short and succinct as possible.
- Clearly state the scientific problem. Answer the "why do this?" question early.
- Credit other people in the field where appropriate.
- Where applicable, ensure your project proposal is linked with other broad scale initiatives such as initiatives under the State Strategic Plan.
- Do not omit important information (e.g. contact details, ABN, budget justifications etc).
- Justify each request and do not over inflate the budget.
- If you are a student, make sure the relevant University Administrative processes are adhered to. For example: ensure the Office of Research has copies of your correspondence and manages your application for you.

Basic Steps In Budgeting a Grant Application

The budget is often the most difficult part of a grant application, with many making common mistakes. A general rule is to only ask for the minimum amount of money you need to do the work.

The hints listed below may help with your preparations:

1. Specify the start and end dates of the project budget period.
2. Price the items.
3. Justify budgetary requests, in narrative form, where needed.
4. Review budget to ensure that it is complete, realistic and readily comprehensible.

Typical budget items:

- Salaries (project director, student help, technicians, etc.) Salary costs must be justified and should generally not exceed \$27.50/hour.
- Travel and Fuel costs (Vehicle costs to be calculated at 52 cents/km for 4 cylinder, and 56 cents/km for 6 cylinder vehicles).
- Supplies & Materials
- Value of donated resources including Volunteer time
- Accommodation Costs (these costs should be reasonable and not over estimated)

- Consultants
- Other direct costs (ex. photocopying, postage, telephone charges)
- Facilities and Administrative Costs (Indirect costs or overheads)
- Please try to justify every budget item. Don't assume that anything will be obvious to the reviewer. For example: 10 planter pots @ \$15 = \$150

What are the Reviewers looking for?

Always keep the reviewers in mind when preparing a grant application. You need to convince these assessors that your project is well organized, worth doing, and that you are the right person to conduct the research.

That being said, here are some general things that reviewers look for:

1. Organized Applications!

Make their job easier by exactly following the guidelines, and be sure the guidelines are the latest edition. (Some of them change from year to year.) Use a title that really conveys quickly the thrust of your project. Number your pages, always. Watch out for sloppiness, incorrect references, or unclear explanations of figures.

2. Applications that are easily understood

Avoid jargon. Keep your language as clear and concise as possible. Don't leave assessors guessing, and leave nothing to the imagination. Ensure you justify each and every statement, particularly in the budget section.

3. Applications that someone else had read

Make sure your application has had 'another set of eyes' to look over it. If something is clear to you but confusing to anyone else, it is best to discover this before you send in your application. Having another reader is one of the best things you can do for your application.

4. Proposals that answer their questions.

Reviewers approach all applications with many of the same questions:

- What is this applicant aiming to do?
- Why is it important?
- Is it innovative? (*Innovation is an essential ingredient in applications today*)
- How is this applicant going to do it?
- Has the applicant made a strong case for the funding?

Assessment Criteria

The four criteria used to assess Wildlife Conservation Fund grant applications are evenly weighted and reviewers examine applications to see if the research proposed is:

1. Scientifically sound
2. Technically feasible
3. Has a positive conservation outcome
4. Shows value for money

Initial review criteria places emphasis on:

- The significance and originality from a scientific or technical standpoint of the goals of the proposed research;
- The adequacy of the methodology proposed to carry out the project;
- The experience and qualifications of the principal investigator and any proposed staff; and
- The reasonableness of the proposed budget to the proposed research.

Feedback to Applicants

If your application is not recommended for funding it is important to be able gain feedback on your application. Feedback enables applicants to improve the quality of their applications in the future.

Call or email the contact for the grants program and request some feedback on potential improvements and what might have been lacking in your application. Some grants programs will offer both verbal and/or written feedback upon request.

The contact for the Wildlife Conservation Fund Research Grants Program is the Secretary for Council and Advisory Committees, details below.

*Secretary, Council and Advisory Committees
Natural and Cultural Heritage Directorate
Department for Environment & Heritage*

Phone: (08) 8124 4708

Fax: (08) 8124 4938

Email: Coates.Emma@saugov.sa.gov.au

WILDLIFE CONSERVATION FUND GRANT APPLICATION CHECKLIST

Some Initial Checks

- Are you applying to an appropriate scheme?
- Have you read and followed the Guidelines and Instructions to Applicants carefully?
- Is your title accurate and appropriate?
- Does the summary clearly and accurately reflect the aims and objectives of the project?
- Is the hypothesis clearly stated in bold in the early stages of the application?

Aims and Objectives Section

- Do the aims address the hypothesis (or objectives) in a logical way?
- Does it clearly set out the project's state and national context?
- Does it demonstrate the relevance of your own work?
- Does it establish your expertise as a researcher?
- If the project is collaborative, does the section clearly establish the need for collaboration?
- Does it establish the significance of the research and refer to key references?
- Does it address the objectives and priorities of the funding body?

Methodology

- Have you clearly outlined the methods for the research?
- Is the method proposed suitable for the research?
- Do you need approvals for your research? If so, indicate the appropriate approvals have been sought.
- Have you clearly outlined who will do what, and when?

Budget

- Have you checked the relevant salary levels that will be funded?
- Have you clarified 'in-kind support'?
- Have you checked the increments and on-costs with Human Resources?
- Have you set and checked the priority rankings of requested items?
- Do your totals add up correctly?

- Are the requested items allowed under the guidelines of the scheme?
- Is every capital item requested clearly and correctly costed (with quotes where necessary)?

Budget Justification

- Have you justified every request for a capital item?
- Have you justified the need for personnel and the levels requested?
- Have you justified named personnel (where applicable)?
- Have you justified the travel requested?
- Have you provided details of all other anticipated sources of funding? You need to specify what other funding sources have been allocated, if any.

Final Checklist

- Has the researcher signed the application and all others as required?
- Have you followed the format set out?
- Is the whole application within the scheme's prescribed page limits?
- Is the application set in a suitable font at an acceptable point size?
- Is the application set out in appropriately spaced sections with headings in bold?
- Has all the required documentation (CVs, statements of support, copies of permits etc) been attached?
- Have ethics clearances been obtained (where applicable)?
- Have the nominated referees or assessors been contacted to check their willingness and availability?
- Has the application been read and checked by at least one other person?

GOOD LUCK WITH YOUR APPLICATION!