



**Australian Government**  
**Department of the Environment  
and Water Resources**

# THE NATIONAL PLAN FOR WATER SECURITY

## Modernising Irrigation in Australia

### UPGRADING WATER METER TEST FACILITIES

# GUIDELINES

OCTOBER 2007

Applications close 4.00pm, Canberra time,  
on Monday 19 November 2007

**It is essential that these Guidelines are read in conjunction with the Application Form for *Upgrading Water Meter Test Facilities*.**

**The Minister for the Environment and Water Resources reserves the right to amend these Guidelines at any time.**

**Applicants should ensure they are using the latest version of the Guidelines and Application Form by checking the version currently available at [www.environment.gov.au/water/programs/metering](http://www.environment.gov.au/water/programs/metering)**

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## PURPOSE OF THE GUIDELINES

These Guidelines are designed to help applicants prepare a proposal for funding to upgrade water meter test facilities under the Australian Government's *National Plan for Water Security*.

We strongly recommend that all potential applicants contact the Department of the Environment and Water Resources (the Department) to clarify aspects of the Guidelines of which they are uncertain. However, the Department will not help an applicant to prepare an application.

These Guidelines provide an overview of the programme requirements. The Guidelines also set out the basis on which applications will be considered, assessed and evaluated. These Guidelines are not intended to present all terms and conditions of funding. Successful applicants will be required to enter into a Funding Agreement with the Commonwealth of Australia. The Funding Agreement will contain full details of the terms and conditions governing the provision of funding.

*Upgrading Water Meter Test Facilities* is a competitive discretionary granting programme. Meeting all of the eligibility and assessment criteria does not guarantee funding. All projects selected for funding will need to be approved by the Minister for the Environment and Water Resources (the Minister).

Applications will be considered on their merit against the eligibility and merit criteria specified in the Guidelines and against other applications. Applicants may reapply for funding in future calls for proposals if unsuccessful in the first instance. They should contact the Department for feedback on their first application before reapplying.

### Legally binding rights or obligations

Nothing in these Guidelines is intended to create legally binding rights or obligations. The Minister may vary the processes or timing set out in these Guidelines, and will not be obliged to accept any application.

## INTRODUCTION

On 25 January 2007, the Prime Minister announced the *National Plan for Water Security* (the National Plan). The National Plan is a \$10 billion, 10 year package designed to ensure rural water use is placed on a sustainable footing. It will significantly improve water management across the nation with a special focus on the Murray-Darling Basin, where the bulk of our agricultural water use takes place.

The National Plan will accelerate the implementation of the National Water Initiative, which is the blueprint for water reform nationally. The key objectives of the National Water Initiative are to improve the efficiency of water use and establish clear pathways to return all water sources to environmentally sustainable levels of extraction.

### Meter Standards

The National Water Initiative specifies that national standards be developed for non-urban water meters and their installation. Meters compliant with these standards are an essential requirement for implementing the National Plan's Modernising Irrigation programme. The Department has engaged the National Measurement Institute (NMI) and Standards Australia to develop these standards.

The NMI is developing Pattern Approval Standards and associated test standards. They are due for completion by the end of 2007. The standards will apply to open channel and closed conduit meters of all sizes and flow-rates currently found in Australia. Applicants can receive a copy of the draft standards by emailing the address found in *Where to Obtain Further Information*.

Once these standards have been published, it will be possible for new non-urban water meters to be tested against the requirements of the standards and, if compliant, to achieve Pattern Approval for the meter design. In order for a test facility to be technically and legally suitable to undertake testing for Pattern Approval purposes, it must hold accreditation to ISO/IEC 17025 or its Australian equivalent and be appointed as an Approving Authority under the *National Measurement Regulations 1999*.

### Water Meter Testing Facilities

The Australian Government has announced this call for applications as part of ensuring there are sufficient and appropriate water meter test facilities in Australia in order to meet the implementation timeframes of the National Plan.

There are two sets of Guidelines relating to water meter test facilities.

- The *Accreditation of Water Meter Test Facilities Guidelines* are relevant to owners/operators of those water meter test facilities that would like to seek accreditation under ISO/IEC 17025 or its Australian equivalent for their existing water meter testing capability.

- These *Upgrading Water Meter Test Facilities Guidelines* that are relevant to owners/operators of those water meter test facilities that would like to upgrade their water meter testing capability and seek accreditation under ISO/IEC 17025 or its Australian equivalent for that expanded capability. These are available at [www.environment.gov.au/water/programs/metering](http://www.environment.gov.au/water/programs/metering)

## OBJECTIVES FOR UPGRADING WATER METER TEST FACILITIES

The **objectives** for *Upgrading Water Meter Test Facilities* are:

- to ensure that sufficient water meter testing capability exists to test non-urban water meters against the forthcoming national water meter standards (i.e. testing for the purpose of achieving Pattern Approval). The intention is that when meter testing facilities are considered in aggregate, the physical infrastructure is available to test the full range of meter types, including meters for open channels; and
- to ensure that sufficient water meter testing facilities are accredited to ISO/IEC 17025 or its Australian equivalent in order to test non-urban meters against the forthcoming national water meter standards.

Note: Once accreditation is achieved, the facility owner/operator would need to apply to be appointed as an Approving Authority under the *National Measurement Regulations 1999*. The Department is working towards this goal with the NMI which carries responsibility for implementing the provisions of the *National Measurement Regulations 1999*.

## HOW MUCH FUNDING IS AVAILABLE?

Funding for *Upgrading Water Meter Test Facilities* will be awarded on a competitive basis of up to 100 per cent of the total eligible project costs.

## WHO IS ELIGIBLE TO APPLY FOR FUNDING?

You are **eligible** to apply for funding if you:

- own or operate an existing water meter testing facility in Australia; and
- meet the other eligibility criteria contained in these Guidelines.

## WHO IS NOT ELIGIBLE TO APPLY FOR FUNDING?

You are **not eligible** to apply for funding if you are:

- seeking to enter the water meter testing industry by establishing a new facility;
- seeking funding for a water meter testing facility located outside Australia; or
- a meter manufacturer or a related entity.\*

\* Note: The National Measurement Institute applies a policy of not allowing the self-testing of meters for the purposes of Pattern Approval. Additionally, meter manufacturers have indicated great reluctance to provide meters for testing by their competitors.

## WHAT IS ELIGIBLE TO BE FUNDED?

The following items and activities will be funded under *Upgrading Water Meter Test Facilities*:

- upgrading and/or expansion of an existing water meter test facility; and
- accreditation of the expanded water meter test facility to ISO/IEC 17025 or its Australian equivalent.

Proposals that require a feasibility study to confirm the overall practicability of a larger proposal will need to demonstrate the potential benefits. As a general rule, feasibility studies will not be accorded a high priority for funding.

Where a feasibility study is proposed, funding may only be provided for the initial stage of the project to finalise the design and confirm funding, viability and the benefits outlined in the proposal. Funding for further stages may be conditional on the outcomes of the initial stage. Before initial funding is agreed the proposal must be able to demonstrate the overall practicality of the larger project and show the potential for meeting the criteria to a high degree.

## ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

Applications will be considered against three categories of criteria to determine eligibility:

1. **Applicant;**
2. **Application; and**
3. **Proposed Project.**

## Applicant Eligibility

The Australian Government cannot enter into a Funding Agreement with entities that do not comply with state or federal law, such as the *Equal Opportunity for Women in the Workplace Act 1999* or the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*.

An **applicant** must also meet the following eligibility criteria:

- be financially viable as demonstrated through the provision of audited certified financial statements and related documents (covering the previous 12 months from the date of application);
- be a legal entity capable of entering a Funding Agreement with the Commonwealth of Australia (note: unincorporated associations are not eligible); and
- be registered with the Australian Taxation Office for GST purposes and have an Australian Business Number.

## Application Eligibility

An **application** must meet the following eligibility criteria:

- be submitted on the specified Application Form for *Upgrading Water Meter Test Facilities* and be received by the Department by the closing date; and
- include a well developed business case demonstrating the project's technical feasibility, a cost/benefit analysis, and the applicant's ability to upgrade facilities (and if required, obtain ISO/IEC 17025 accreditation or its Australian equivalent).

## Proposed Project Eligibility

A **proposed project** must meet the following eligibility criteria:

- relate to an existing water meter test facility in Australia;
- not relate to a water meter test facility that is owned or operated by a meter manufacturer or a related entity; and
- will increase Australia's capability for testing non-urban water meters against the new standards.

Note: Assessment of applications will take into account the objective to obtain, in aggregate, testing facilities for the full range of meters. Where two or more applications overlap there is no guarantee that all proposals will be accepted.

# MERIT CRITERIA FOR APPLICATIONS

Eligible applications will be assessed against the following assessment criteria:

- a) current and increased range of non-urban water meter testing that the facility could undertake (i.e. the types and sizes of meters, and their flow-rates) and how many meters can be tested for each type and size;
- b) technical feasibility of upgrading the facilities to increase the range of non-urban water meter testing;
- c) time to complete the upgrade and achieve accreditation to ISO/IEC 17025 or its Australian equivalent (noting that the preference is for less than six months);
- d) length of time that the applicant intends to maintain accreditation and provide Pattern Approval testing services (non-urban) to the water industry. Five years is the expected minimum period of time;
- e) the degree to which the applicant is willing and able to test non-urban meters from any meter manufacturer or distributor against the forthcoming standards;
- f) relevant qualifications and/or skills and experience to implement and complete the project successfully. This includes but is not limited to:
  - relevant skills and experience of people who will implement the project;
  - demonstrated project management capability;
  - organisational resources available to applicant; and
  - the ability to meet the Australian Government's reporting requirements.
- g) provision of a realistic and verifiable project budget including demonstrated access to financial resources;
- h) level of risk associated with the project and the applicant's demonstrated ability to manage that risk; and
- i) compliance with the standard Funding Agreement. Applicants will be required to indicate any clause/sub-clause/paragraph/subparagraph in respect of which they 'do not comply' or 'partially comply' and provide reasons for that non-compliance or partial compliance.

## APPLICATION FORMS AND SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

### Where to obtain Application Forms

Application forms may be downloaded from the Department's web site [www.environment.gov.au/water/programs/metering](http://www.environment.gov.au/water/programs/metering)

### Format of Application Forms to submit

Applicants are required to submit by the closing date:

- TWO UNBOUND ORIGINAL SIGNED hard copies of the application together with supporting documentation; and
- one ELECTRONIC COPY of the application in Microsoft Word Format and supporting documentation in Microsoft Excel or Adobe PDF Format on disc/CD ROM.

Please ensure applications are received by the closing date, allowing enough time for delivery. Additional documents may not be accepted after the closing date unless the Department requests or determines otherwise.

### Where to submit Application Forms

Hardcopy applications, supporting documentation and discs/CDs must be posted to:

*Upgrading Water Meter Test Facilities*  
John Gorton Building  
Department of the Environment and Water Resources  
King Edward Terrace  
GPO Box 787  
PARKES ACT 2601

### Applicant notification following lodgement of Application Forms

Applicants are required to inform the Department as soon as possible of any changed circumstances with regard to the Applicant or the proposed project after lodging an application for funding.

### Receipt of applications

The Department will acknowledge applications on their receipt. The Department reserves the right to call for additional information from applicants or any other entities.

## WHERE TO OBTAIN FURTHER INFORMATION

For further information you can email [WaterPlanEnquiries@environment.gov.au](mailto:WaterPlanEnquiries@environment.gov.au) or call 1800 218 478 and leave a message with your name, contact details and the subject of your enquiry. An officer from the Department will respond to your enquiry as soon as possible.

## THE ASSESSMENT PROCESS FOR APPLICATIONS

Applications that meet the eligibility criteria will be assessed on a comparative basis by the Department, against the claims in meeting the merit criteria contained within these Guidelines and on the basis of value of money.

### Conditions

The Department may refer an application to relevant technical experts to provide additional technical advice.

During the assessment process the Department reserves the right to seek clarification of issues or supplementary information above and beyond that provided in the application. However, applicants should submit complete applications and not expect to be contacted by the Department to seek clarification of issues or supplementary information above and beyond that provided in the application.

### Assessment process

Applications will be assessed through the following process:

1. The Minister for the Environment and Water Resources calls for applications.
2. Applicant consults *Upgrading Water Meter Test Facilities Guidelines* and develops proposed project.
3. Application submitted to the Department by closing date.
4. Review by Departmental officers and experts.
5. Formal recommendations submitted to the Minister for decision.
6. Decision by the Minister and announcement of approved applications.
7. Formal offer of funding made to approved applicants.
8. Project funding agreements developed and completed within 60 days of receiving the formal offer of funding.

All applicants will be contacted and advised of the outcome of their proposal and there will be a public announcement of applications that have been approved.

The Minister will make the final decision on all applications.

## FUNDING AGREEMENT

Once a project is approved, the Department will enter into a legally binding Funding Agreement with successful applicants. The Funding Agreement will describe the respective roles and responsibilities of each party.

The Funding Agreement will describe standard programme terms and conditions, together with attached schedules that will set out details of project specific matters, payment timetables, requirement for due recognition of all Australian Government funding contributions, reporting requirements and any other relevant matters as necessary.

The Funding Agreement will be substantially in the form available at [www.environment.gov.au/water/programs/metering](http://www.environment.gov.au/water/programs/metering) and applicants should advise the Department at an early stage of any amendments that they might seek.

Final approval of funding will be dependent upon the willingness of the applicant to accept the standard Funding Agreement. The Department will only negotiate variations to the standard terms and conditions in exceptional circumstances.

Funds cannot be paid to a successful applicant until it and the Commonwealth have signed a formal Funding Agreement. The Funding Agreement must be completed and signed by the applicant and returned to the Department **within 60 days from the date of the formal letter of offer**, or the offer of funding may be withdrawn.

### Final reporting

All successful applicants will be required to prepare a comprehensive final report once their project is completed. The report will be required within 60 days of the project completion date.

The Department will provide a template for the final report.

### Funding acquittals

All successful applicants will be required to prepare a comprehensive final acquittal statement as part of the final report for a project. Acquittals will be required to be endorsed by a qualified and independent auditor.

### Payment schedule

The Department and the applicant will develop an agreed schedule of payments as part of the Funding Agreement. The amount of each funding payment will also be determined in this schedule and will be tied to project milestones. Grant recipients must submit a tax invoice to the Department to receive a payment for each milestone that is completed to the satisfaction of the Department.

Payments for projects will generally be made by progress instalments. Provision can be made for payments to be made in advance where this is shown to be necessary for a project.

### Bank accounts

For audit and accountability purposes, applicants will be required to keep a separate account for funding.

## THE TREATMENT OF INFORMATION PROVIDED BY APPLICANTS

Once a selection round is finalised, an application for funding may continue to be used by the Department for development of the National Plan.

### Privacy

Any personal information, which may include contact details, the content of an application and information about applicants and potential applicants collected by the Department in its administration of the programme will be managed according to the *Privacy Act 1988* (Cth).

### Confidentiality

If an applicant believes any information provided in its application is confidential, the applicant will need to clearly identify such information and the reason for its confidentiality in its application form.

Applicants should be aware that the Department is subject to certain legislative and administrative accountability and transparency requirements of the Commonwealth, including disclosures to the Parliament and its Committees. While the Department will treat all information provided by applicants sensitively, any information contained in or relating to an application, including information identified by an applicant as confidential, may be disclosed by the Department:

- to its employees and advisers in order to evaluate or assess an application;
- to the Minister;
- within the Department or other agencies where this serves the legitimate interests of the Commonwealth;

- in response to a request by a House or Committee of the Parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia;
- where information is authorised or permitted by law to be disclosed; and
- where the information is in the public domain otherwise than by the Department’s disclosure of that information.

### Announcement of successful projects

The Minister publicly announces the successful projects under the programme. This is done through a media release that states the successful applicant’s name, the successful applicant’s contact telephone number and a project summary (as provided in the application form) and the amount of funding awarded for the project.

### Conflict of Interest

If there are any matters related to the business interests of persons directly involved with a project that may conflict with their role in the project, compromise or reflect poorly on the Commonwealth’s decision to provide funding for the project, this should be brought to the Department’s attention in the application form.

### Freedom of information

Applicants are reminded that any application is subject to the requirements of the *Freedom of Information Act 1982* (Cth).

## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Before preparing and submitting an application you should read the following information.

### Taxation

Funding sought under *Upgrading Water Meter Test Facilities* is GST exclusive. The Australian Government will add 10 per cent to funding instalments to cover any GST the applicant is required to remit to the ATO. The taxation requirements will be outlined in the Funding Agreement.

Applicants should consider the tax implications involved with receiving a government grant and it is recommended that you seek advice on this matter from a qualified financial adviser and/or tax adviser. Contact the Australian Taxation Office Business Call Centre on Freecall 13 28 66.

### Publicity and acknowledgement of Australian Government support

All publicity for a project shall give appropriate recognition to the role of the National Plan and the Australian Government in supporting that project. This includes invitations to participate in formal project opening or launch ceremonies and publicity events.

Projects will also be required to include appropriate branding and written acknowledgement of the Australian Government on all publicity and written materials developed for the project. The Department will work with successful applicants with respect to project communications.

### Conditional funding

Support for a project does not indicate the Australian Government support for subsequent or related proposals.

### Other funding programmes

Projects will not be eligible for duplicate funding. Where applicants have applied to other funding programmes, the Department may discuss the application with the manager of that programmes.

## GLOSSARY

<b>Merit Criteria</b>	Defined criteria each eligible application will be assessed against
<b>Department</b>	Australian Government Department of the Environment and Water Resources
<b>Eligibility Criteria</b>	Defined criteria to determine eligibility
<b>Funding Agreement</b>	Legal contract to be executed between the Commonwealth of Australia and successful applicant
<b>Minister</b>	Minister for the Environment and Water Resources
<b>NMI</b>	National Measurement Institute





