



DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING, INDUSTRY & ENVIRONMENT

2020 Environmental Education Grants Program Guidelines

NSW Environmental Trust



© 2020 State of NSW and Department of Planning, Industry and Environment

With the exception of photographs, the State of NSW and Department of Planning, Industry and Environment are pleased to allow this material to be reproduced in whole or in part for educational and non-commercial use, provided the meaning is unchanged and its source, publisher and authorship are acknowledged. Specific permission is required for the reproduction of photographs.

The Department of Planning, Industry and Environment (DPIE) has compiled this report in good faith, exercising all due care and attention. No representation is made about the accuracy, completeness or suitability of the information in this publication for any particular purpose. DPIE shall not be liable for any damage which may occur to any person or organisation taking action or not on the basis of this publication. Readers should seek appropriate advice when applying the information to their specific needs.

All content in this publication is owned by DPIE and is protected by Crown Copyright, unless credited otherwise. It is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International (CC BY 4.0), subject to the exemptions contained in the licence. The legal code for the licence is available at Creative Commons.

DPIE asserts the right to be attributed as author of the original material in the following manner: © State of New South Wales and Department of Planning, Industry and Environment 2020.

Cover photo: Community engagement. Peter Robey/DPIE

Published by:

Environment, Energy and Science
Department of Planning, Industry and Environment
Locked Bag 5022, Parramatta NSW 2124
Phone: +61 2 9995 5000 (switchboard)
Phone: 1300 361 967 (Environment, Energy and Science enquiries)
TTY users: phone 133 677, then ask for 1300 361 967
Speak and listen users: phone 1300 555 727, then ask for 1300 361 967
Email: info@environment.nsw.gov.au
Website: www.environment.nsw.gov.au

Report pollution and environmental incidents
Environment Line: 131 555 (NSW only) or info@environment.nsw.gov.au
See also www.environment.nsw.gov.au

EES 2020/0431
September 2020

Find out more about your environment at:

www.environment.nsw.gov.au

Contents

Part 1: About the program	1
Who are we?	1
What the program is about?	1
What's new for 2020?	1
Program direction	2
Important dates and milestones	4
Need help?	5
Part 2: Eligibility	6
Who can apply?	6
Lead applicant	6
Collaborators	7
Nominating an administrator	7
Ineligible applicants	7
Consideration of past performance	7
Part 3: What can be funded?	8
Guiding principles of environmental education projects	8
Target audience	9
What the Environmental Trust will not fund	9
Part 4: Application process	10
How to apply:	10
Assessment	10
Application assessment criteria	10
Technical Review Committee	12
Part 5: Managing your grant	13
During your project	13
Completing a project	14
General obligations	14
Privacy	15
Resources	15
Appendix 1	16
Theoretical framework behind the Trust's Education Grants Program	16
Theory of change	17
More about the system and its influence on practice	18

Part 1: About the program

Opening date for applications: Monday 21 September 2020

Closing date for applications: 3pm, Monday 16 November 2020

Who are we?

The NSW Environmental Trust (the Trust) is an independent statutory body established by the NSW Government to fund a broad range of organisations to undertake projects that enhance the State's environment. The Trust's main responsibility is to make and supervise the expenditure of grants.

The Trust's mission is 'To ensure that current and future generations can enjoy a thriving natural environment in NSW.'

The Trust is currently administered by the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment (DPIE).

What the program is about?

The Environmental Education Grants Program is a contestable grants program aiming to support educational projects that develop, broaden and transform the community's knowledge, skills, and intrinsic motivation to undertake sustainable behaviour and encourage participation in the protection of the environment.

The objectives of the program are to:

- facilitate change in the practices and behaviour of individuals and groups to improve specific or broad environmental problems
- develop and promote education projects that improve the environment and address sustainability challenges.

What's new for 2020?

The *NSW Environmental Trust's Strategic Plan 2020-24* has identified three overarching priorities to direct funding over the next four years:

- Strengthen the NSW's natural environment - A healthy natural environment is the foundation for our health and wellbeing.
- Support native species and their habitats – Thriving native flora and fauna rely on healthy habitats.
- Reduce human induced impacts on the environment – Human induced impacts are one of the largest challenges facing our environment.

What priorities you need to address in 2020

From within these broader priorities, the **immediate funding priorities** you need to address as part of the 2020 Education program are:

- **supporting threatened species recovery**
- **addressing climate change impacts on the natural environment – both mitigation and adaptation.**

To be considered for funding, applications must focus on one or both of these **immediate funding priorities** for assessment as part of the Education grants program.

More information on the *[NSW Environmental Trust's Strategic Plan 2020-24](#)* to guide your application is available on the [Trust's website](#).

Changes to the application process for 2020

For the 2020 round, only full applications will be sought via a single process. The call for applications will remain open for eight weeks to allow additional time for project concept development and completion of the online application.

Program direction

The Environmental Education Grants Program was evaluated in 2017–18 which found that the program is well regarded, efficiently managed within the Trust and addresses a market gap. The program has been adjusted to reflect contemporary best practice environmental education which incorporates transformative learning for sustainability principles and practices. These adjustments include (but are not limited to):

- incorporating value-based engagement methods that tap into the target audience's intrinsic values, worldviews and motivators, and seek longer term transformative changes in behaviour and practices
- developing a clear program logic to communicate how funded projects contribute to longer term transformative learning, behaviour and practice
- providing additional support to prospective applicants and funded grantees in both the development of their project, and the ongoing management of their project
- refining project indicators to fewer, but more meaningful measures
- staging the implementation of the program.

The Trust has considered all recommendations from the evaluation and is in the process of phasing them in over multiple rounds, starting from the 2019 round. A copy of the evaluation and administration response is available on the Trust's [website](#) under Program evaluation.

An overview of the *Theoretical Framework Behind the Trust's Education Program* is provided at [Appendix 1](#) to guide you in your thinking and application.

What is transformative learning for Sustainability?

'Transformative learning is about eliciting changes in the identity of the learner¹...through motivation, practice and feedback. It is about challenging underlying beliefs and frames of reference about an attitude and world belief, through critical reflection, open discourse and implementing new understandings into practice.'²

Explanation of funding tiers

Table 1 Overview of funding tiers

Funding tier	Funding amount per project	Project timeframe	Total Allocation for 2020
1	up to \$60,000	2-3 years	\$1 million
2	from \$60,001 to \$250,000	3-5 years	

Tier 1

Tier 1 will fund grants of up to \$60,000 for projects running for two to three years (see Table 1).

This stream is best suited towards implementing local projects through education that address a specific/small scale issue.

Projects must seek to achieve environmental outcomes involving either one or both of the **immediate funding priorities** referred to under What priorities you need to address in 2020 to be assessed by the program Technical Review Committee.

Tier 1 projects are expected to:

- engage with target groups in the development stage
- move beyond 'workshops and educational materials' towards engaging and experiential activities
- allow for innovative ideas and adaptive management
- measure and report on the rate of participation and satisfaction by target groups
- provide qualitative and quantitative evidence of the differences they have made to environments and/or human/organisational practices.

Tier 1 applicants are strongly encouraged to read and consider *Creating change through your environmental education project Practical Guide* before applying.

¹ Illieris K 2014, Transformative Learning and Identity, Journal of Transformative Education, vol.12(2), pp.148-163.

² Meziro J et al. 2000, Learning as Transformation, Critical Perspectives on a Theory in Progress. Jossey-Bass, San Francisco pp. 3-33

Tier 2

Tier 2 will fund grants of between \$60,001 and \$250,000 for projects running from three to five years (see Table 1).

This grant stream seeks to enable emerging contemporary thinking in the design of education solutions to tackle complex and enduring environmental problems.

Projects must seek to achieve environmental outcomes involving either one or both of the **immediate funding priorities** referred to under What priorities you need to address in 2020 to be assessed by the program Technical Review Committee.

Projects are expected to:

- address the systemic causes of problems
- include social research or co-design in project development to ensure solutions are carefully targeted to the practical realities of people's lives
- conduct small scale field tests, prototyping, or piloting of ideas, and then amend project plans based on learnings, prior to full implementation
- take risks and trial innovative ideas
- move beyond the formula of 'workshops and educational materials' towards engaging, experiential, personally transformative or agency-building activities
- leave a sustained legacy in environments/systems that assist long-term shifts in human/organisational behaviours
- measure and report on the impact on the environmental problem they are tackling, as well as changes to organisational/human systems and environments.

An important outcome will be transformations in thinking and assumptions by the project teams themselves, so that they understand and appreciate the process their target audience is expected to go through.

Grantees will work with Trust Administration and leading environmental education and behaviour change experts for up to 12 months investigating and planning their projects in line with these expectations, before implementing projects over the following two to four years.

Tier 2 applicants are strongly encouraged to read and consider [*Creating change through your environmental education project Practical Guide*](#) before applying.

Important dates and milestones

The program has a single application process for both Tier 1 and Tier 2, as outlined in Table 2 below.

Table 2 Important program milestones

Milestones	Dates
Call for applications (both tiers)	
Open	Monday, 21 September 2020
Close	3pm, Monday, 16 November 2020
Funding announcement of successful projects	April–May 2021
Projects commence	June-July 2021

For more information about the application and assessment processes, go to [Part 4: Application process](#).

Need help?

If you require assistance at any stage or have questions regarding this guide, please contact the Trust on **02 8837 6093** or at info@environmentaltrust.nsw.gov.au.

Part 2: Eligibility

Who can apply?

To be eligible, proposals must have a lead applicant and collaborators. Lead applicants must follow the guiding principles for defining their collaborations (see [Figure 1 Guiding principles of environmental education projects](#)) and consider the assessment criteria for their engagement of collaborators (see [Criterion 3, assessment criteria](#)). The application limits (Table 3), eligibility criteria for lead applicants and your collaborators are outlined below.

Lead applicant

Each proposal requires a lead applicant. If successful in securing a grant, the lead applicant will hold primary responsibility for delivery of the project. This includes administration and finance requirements, and performance of your collaborators.

Table 3 Application limits

Tier	Maximum no. of applications per lead applicant
1	2
2	1

The following organisations are eligible to apply as the lead applicant:

- Community organisations
- Community groups
- Incorporated associations
- Incorporated non-profit organisations
- Non-commercial cooperatives
- State government agencies and/or statutory committees
- Local councils
- Local Land Services
- Universities
- Regional organisations of councils
- Other local government-controlled organisations
- NSW Local Aboriginal Land Councils
- Registered NSW Aboriginal Corporations

Collaborators

Collaborators are key project partners and the Trust requires that collaborators are to be actively involved in the project delivery, as well as committing to ongoing use of the project outcomes. Collaborators will help lead grantees reach and target the primary and secondary audiences identified in their application. They also provide a valuable source of expertise and skills to ensure the long-term success of a project (sustained behaviour change). It is vital that grantees engage and collaborate with other relevant stakeholders during project design and delivery. Therefore, to be eligible, proposals must show how collaborators will be involved in the project.

Collaborators can also help leverage time, expertise, material, resources, and reduce duplication. Collaborators must:

- be actively involved in designing the project
- have, and can show, the requisite capabilities and responsibilities to help to deliver the project.

Collaborators might include state government agencies, schools, universities, councils, non-government organisations, Aboriginal organisations, community groups, landholders, environment groups or industry groups.

Note: Written confirmation expressing the commitment offered by each collaborator is required within an application.

Nominating an administrator

Groups/organisations may nominate another organisation to administer grant funds on their behalf.

The administrator must be a legal entity and grant agreements are prepared in the name of the administering body. Grant payments are made payable to the administrator who is responsible for dispersing funds on the grantee's behalf and the preparation of financial reports. An agreement should be reached between the grantee and the administrator in relation to project management. It is expected that the actual project implementation will be led by the applicant, and not the administrator.

Ineligible applicants

Under this program, the following are not eligible to apply for funding:

- individuals
- industry joint ventures
- profit-distributing corporations.

Consideration of past performance

Please note that the Trust will take into consideration past poor performance in respect of previous Trust funded projects, or any history of non-compliance with statutory or regulatory obligations when assessing eligibility.

If it is considered that negative past performance presents a substantial risk to the timely and effective performance of the project, an applicant may be asked to respond to the negative determination. This response will be taken into consideration alongside the overall merits of the application. Special conditions may be included in the grant agreement to address any issues of concern.

Part 3: What can be funded?

Guiding principles of environmental education projects

Figure 1 provides a set of guiding principles for effective and impactful environmental and/or sustainability education projects, which should be reflected in all applications. These principles are also reflected in the assessment criteria (see [Assessment](#)).

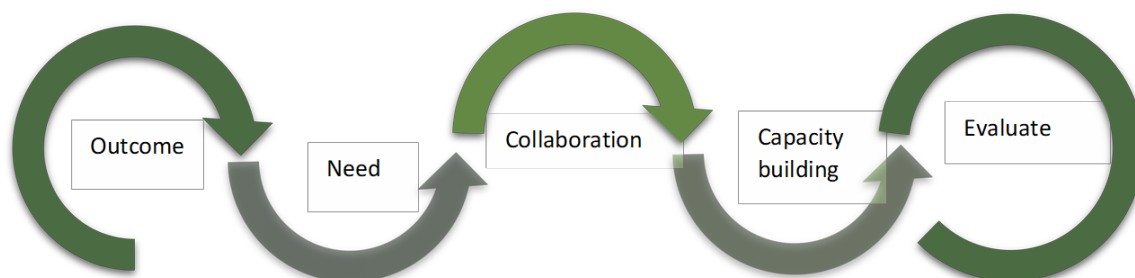


Figure 1 Guiding principles of environmental education projects

Environmental Outcome

- Identify the environmental problem you are addressing.
- Understand and clearly demonstrate the **theory of change** underlying your project (i.e. how the project proposal will improve the environmental problem).
- Look beyond the traditional focus on single behaviours to broader approaches considering practices, values, worldviews, and changes in organisations and institutions.

Community Need

- Know the target audience (e.g. Who are they? Where are they located?)
- Explore and build evidence on the target audience needs (e.g. what are their typical behaviours, characteristics, values, and worldviews).
- Understand appropriate ways to engage and educate the target audience to inform the project design and delivery.

Collaboration

- Identify relevant collaborators (or partners).
- Establish how collaborators can add value to the scoping, implementation, evaluation and dissemination of the project.
- Collaborators can help leverage time, expertise, material, resources and reduce duplication.
- Indicate how collaborators will be actively involved in the project.

Capacity building

- Consider how the project will enhance the skills and capacity of the target audience or collaborators.
- Capacity building and training is integral in developing sustained behaviour and skills.

Evaluation and dissemination

- Consider how you will reflect, monitor and evaluate your project to:
- Measure the success of the project (i.e. have changes occurred in the practices of the target audience that will result in an environmental outcome?)
- Ensure continuous improvement based on findings.
- Share education and engagement outcomes (e.g. approaches, tools, resources).

Target audience

The target audience will be the key beneficiary of the project activities. The Trust is seeking:

- projects where there are opportunities or challenges in engaging audiences to understand, care and act differently for our environment.
- projects that apply innovative approaches to educate and engage their audiences.
- target audiences that must be able to improve the identified local environmental problem or be able to engage with those that can.

When selecting a target audience, grantees should carefully consider a community's characteristics including geographic location, socio-economic status, specific needs, drivers, or interests.

Note: The Trust uses a merit-based assessment process for all applications, so does not allocate specific funding for specific areas or regions of the State. However, in recognition of the historically low allocation of education program grants to regional areas, we strongly encourage applications from regional and rural communities, or projects that incorporate regional collaborations or partnerships.

All applicants are strongly encouraged to read and consider [Creating change through your environmental education project Practical Guide](#) before applying.

What the Environmental Trust will not fund

The following activities are not eligible for funding:

- Projects that, in the normal course of events, are clearly the core business of local or state government authorities or educational institutions.
- Continuing administration/operational costs of organisations.
- Capital equipment purchases, unless it is more cost effective to purchase than to lease capital equipment for the life of the project. Costs for capital items should generally not exceed 20% of the total project budget.
- One-off information activities and events (projects that will not lead [or contribute to] demonstrable change in knowledge and behaviour).
- Projects that fund devolved grants (i.e. projects offering grants to other organisations).
- Ongoing maintenance of projects to which organisations have committed as part of a previous grant or their core business operations.
- Reimbursement of salaries of existing state or local government staff who will be supervising or working on the project as part of their usual duties.
- Retrospective funding i.e. activities that have commenced before the grant is offered and accepted. You should plan to begin your proposed activities after 1 March 2021.

'Core business' can be difficult to define as it varies for different organisations.

Generally, core business is essential business or legal responsibility of an organisation. The Trust will consider funding works that are related to core business but additional to the organisation's usual work or responsibilities.

Part 4: Application process

The Education Program has a single stage application process.

How to apply:

Step 1

Download and read the Program Guidelines (this document).

Step 2

Check your suitability for applying:

- Are your activities suitable for this program? (refer to [Guiding principles of environmental education projects](#))
- Download and read the [Creating change through your environmental education project Practical Guide](#) for examples and advice on designing successful projects
- If you require assistance at any stage or have questions regarding the program, please contact the Trust on **02 8837 6093** or at info@environmentaltrust.nsw.gov.au.

Step 3

Access the [Grants Management System \(GMS\)](#) to register and complete an application. The GMS will automatically assign you a project reference number. This reference number should be used in any correspondence with the Trust.

Assessment

Selection for NSW Environmental Trust grants is a statewide, merit-based process. Eligible applications will be assessed by the program's independent Technical Review Committee using a set of assessment criteria. Applications that are focused on one or more of the priorities outlined in the *NSW Environmental Trust's Strategic Plan 2020–24* will be prioritised during assessment.

Application assessment criteria

Ensure you address the following assessment criteria in your application.

Projects must seek to achieve environmental outcomes involving either one or both of the **immediate funding priorities** referred to under [What priorities you need to address in 2020?](#) to be assessed by the program Technical Review Committee.

Criterion 1: Environmental outcome

- Clear explanation of the environmental problem (aligned with the Trust's Strategic Plan 2020-24 priorities) and sustainability challenges to be addressed
- i.e. need is clearly demonstrated.
- Likelihood the project will make a difference to this problem. Clear description of the theory of change underlying the project and the inclusion of more systemic and transformative approaches (considering practices, values, worldviews, and systemic change).
- Demonstrated evidence that similar or existing programs/projects are not duplicated (this does not include expansion of pilot projects or implementation of plans developed through previous programs/projects).
- Degree of originality or innovation of your approach (not essential).

Criterion 2: Target audience

- Clear specification and understanding of target audience.
- Likely impact of target audience communication and engagement strategy.
- Extent to which project activities build capacity of target audience.

Criterion 3: Project team and collaborators

- Strength and appropriateness of the collaboration.
- Demonstrated engagement of collaborators in developing proposal and commitment to involvement in project.
- Relevance of project team expertise.
- Relevance of expertise of collaborators.

Criterion 4: Project planning

- Quality of the project plan to show how the proposed activities will facilitate behavioural and systemic changes.
- Proposed changes in behaviours and systems, and the activities and resources that facilitate these are measurable, either quantitatively and/or qualitatively.
- Clear explanation of how the project, including research and testing phases, will be evaluated and disseminated.
- How well the project plan incorporates measures to monitor and address identified risk factors.
- Feasible timeframe for achieving proposed outcomes and outputs.

Criterion 5: Value for money

Extent to which the budget supports the proposed activities and resources, and whether it will ensure the viability of the project overall.

The likely environmental/sustainability impact of the proposal relative to the amount of program funds sought.

Appropriateness of the mix in the total budget for materials and other direct project costs and in-kind contributions to the project.

Demonstrated commitment of the applicant to continue to support the project's outcomes beyond the life of the grant.

Transferability for dissemination of project outcomes.

Timeline of assessment process

Step 1 – November 2020

Your application is submitted via the Trust's online Grants Management System and you are assigned a project reference number.

Step 2 – November 2020

Trust Administration will check whether your application is eligible and complete for assessment purposes.

Step 3 – November 2020 - January 2021

The Technical Review Committee will assess the merit of your application using the assessment criteria and will make recommendations for funding to the Environmental Trust. Trust Administration staff may also contact you or your nominated referees for further information about your application.

Step 4 – March 2021

The Trust, having considered the Technical Review Committee's recommendations, determines which applicants will receive grants. Decisions by the Trust are final. There is no appeal process. Successful applicants may not receive the full amount requested and may be subject to special, as well as general, conditions of funding.

Step 5 – April/May 2021

Successful applicants will be announced by the Minister for Energy and Environment or a member of the local electorate in which the project is based. A summary of each successful project will be published on the Trust website.

If your application is unsuccessful, you will receive notification from the Trust. Please take the opportunity to contact the Trust for feedback on your application.

Technical Review Committee

The Trust establishes an independent Technical Review Committee for each grant program. These committees are made up of people with skills, knowledge and experience relevant to the specific program, and include at least one representative from community, government and industry.

Part 5: Managing your grant

Successful grantees will be notified in April/May 2021. Upon commencement, grantees will work with Trust Administration to prepare the following documents which will be used to guide delivery of their project.

The Funding Agreement

Grantees are required to sign a Funding Agreement that sets out the terms and conditions of the grant as well as providing payment amounts and dates.

Research and testing plan

Grantees must develop and submit this plan at the beginning of their project.

Note: The Trust encourages you to incorporate a research phase into your project so that you have good evidence to base your project on. If you already have evidence for your project from thorough social research, you can opt out of conducting further research. **A testing phase of your project is, however, compulsory for all successful grantees.**

Workplan

A draft workplan including project outcomes and associated activities, measures and associated outputs, dates and budget amounts for each activity is submitted during application stage. Successful grantees need to then review and refine the workplan during the research and testing phase. The workplan is designed to help grantees and the Trust gauge the impact of a project and be used as a reference point for annual milestone reporting to the Trust. It will also build on the findings from the research and testing phase.

Invoicing

A tax invoice (subject to GST if applicable) is required for each milestone payment at the time the instalment is due. The funding agreement will outline payment amounts and due dates.

Tier 2 grantees and their key collaborators will be required to attend free 'kick-start' workshops early in the project to assist with design of their research and testing phase and finalisation of their project workplans.

The Trust's Grants Administration team are available to answer questions and help with preparation and development of all required documentation. The Trust can be contacted on **02 8837 6093** or via email at **info@environmentaltrust.nsw.gov.au**.

During your project

Grantees are required to prepare and submit milestone reports periodically throughout their projects. Milestone reporting due dates and associated payment amounts will be finalised by Trust Administration working with grantees. These will be included in the Funding Agreement which is signed by the Trust and grantee. Generally speaking, milestone reports are required

every 12 months. A report on the outcomes from the research and testing phase will also be required at its conclusion.

The Trust recognises that variations to your project are sometimes necessary and these can be negotiated with your Grants Administrator and applied for via the online Grants Management System throughout your project.

Each milestone report allows grantees to provide details on activities, achievements and expenditure. It also provides the opportunity to reflect on the implementation and application of the project workplan.

Each report is reviewed by a representative of the Trust with relevant technical expertise. Where a report demonstrates that the project is progressing well, the next funding instalment is authorised, and the grantee is provided with feedback on their report.

Completing a project

When a project is complete, grantees are required to submit a final milestone report reflecting on achievements on the project's expected outcomes. As with all milestone reports, the final report will be reviewed by a representative of the Trust.

A Grants Administrator will provide the grantee with project feedback and if the requirements of the grant agreement have been met, the grant will be formally acquitted.

General obligations

Signing the Funding Agreement commits the grantee to fulfilling the following general obligations. The standard conditions of this agreement will not be changed at the request of grantees. Some key commitments are outlined below:

- Comply with all conditions contained in the Funding Agreement.
- Provide evidence of appropriate insurance coverage on request.
- Start your project within one month of receiving funding.
- To conform to relevant governance and probity standards, the Trust requires all grantees to follow [NSW Government procurement procedures](#). This relates to all major budget items, such as the purchase of materials, or the engagement of contractors or consultants. The Trust will instigate random audits of grantees to ensure compliance.
- Seek prior approval for budget changes greater than 10% (while being aware that project administration costs should never be more than 10% of the project costs).
- Seek prior approval from the Trust to alter proposed outputs, outcomes or timeframes.
- Provide milestone reports in accordance with the Trust's reporting guidelines. This should also include a report on project measures.
- Include the relevant financial reporting with all milestone reports.
- Acknowledge the Trust's support in all promotional material or any public statements about your project. Your acknowledgement must include the NSW Government logo in written material.
- Be prepared for all knowledge gained as part of the grant to be made publicly available whether that be publishing the final report or promoting the project via other avenues available to the Trust.

Privacy

We use the information you supply to us for processing and assessing your application. While we do not publicly release your application as a matter of policy, we may be required to do so under the *Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009* or other lawful requirement. The Trust may also disclose information you supply to us for the purpose of evaluating and/or auditing its grant programs. If you require strict commercial and/or personal confidentiality, you should address this in your application.

Resources

All applicants are strongly encouraged to read *Appendix 1* and refer to the *Creating change through your environmental education project Practical Guide* developed for the Environmental Trust's Education program by the Australian Association for Environmental Education (NSW Chapter).

Appendix 1

Theoretical framework behind the Trust's Education Grants Program

There are many theories of education and the learning process. Theories may arise from researching how environmental education is done in practice. Alternatively, theories may be developed and then tested by applying them to practice, and from these, models of practice are developed. The reality though, is often more complex than these models imply.

There are many studies, often led by governments, to inform policy implementation that have tried to assemble the various theories of behaviour change into models that identify the determinants of behaviour for more pro-environmental behaviour.³ These 'models have looked to individuals' beliefs, attitudes and values as predictors of behaviour' and assume that behaviour is the 'outcome of a linear and ultimately rational process, possibly because they assist in making policy responses relatively straightforward.'⁴ 'More recently, however, it has been recognised that individuals do not exist in a social vacuum and, indeed, that in some cases the surrounding context overrides all of the cognitive factors included in the models.'⁵

The redesign of the Trust's Environmental Education Grants Program is in response to an evaluation by the University of Technology Sydney in 2017-2018. Three theories were recommended for consideration to enhance the effectiveness of environmental education projects and enable projects to consider the changes required in the system and not just the individual.

We are reminded that:

'it is not just people that need to change but the circumstances under which we relate to one another and the Earth – circumstances that we, collectively have created, and that we, collectively, must change.'⁶

Rather than a focus on the individual and mainly increasing awareness and knowledge, the reviewers recommended that project design looks beyond a 'traditional focus on behaviour change to consider more systemic and transformative approaches considering practices, values, worldviews, and systemic change.'⁷ These aspects have been embedded into the Trust's Tier 2 Grant program 'theory of change'⁷ for environmental education projects.

3 Darnton A, 2008, GSR Behaviour Change Knowledge Review: Practical Guide: An overview of behaviour change models and their uses, Government Social Research Unit, London.

4 Hargreaves, T, Halkier B, Katz-Gerro T and Martens L 2011, Practice-ing behaviour change: Applying social practice theory to pro-environmental behaviour change, *Journal of Consumer Culture*, vol. 11(1), pp.79-99.

5 Hargreaves, T, Halkier B, Katz-Gerro T and Martens L 2011, Practice-ing behaviour change: Applying social practice theory to pro-environmental behaviour change, *Journal of Consumer Culture*, vol. 11(1), pp.79-99.

6 Kemmis S and Mutton R 2012, Education for Sustainability (EFS): Practice and Practice Architectures, *Environmental Education Research*, vol. 18(2), pp 187-207

7 Riedy C, Ryan R, Ahmed S, Faure-Brac A, Fahey G, McKenna K and Daly M 2018, Evaluation of NSW Education Environmental Trust Grants, University of Technology Sydney, Sydney p.90.

Theory of change

The ‘theory of change’ shows how your project activities will improve the environment, individual learning and change systems that support sustainable practices. These might include new practices, communities of practice, social networks, infrastructure, procedures, services and policies, as well as a transformation in mindsets or worldviews, personal knowledge, values and behaviour and skills to act for the environment.

The theories proposed by the reviewers to inform the theory of change are:

- Transformative Learning for Sustainability
- Social practices theory
- Values Theory.

To expand educators thinking when planning a theory of change, Figure 2 below draws attention to the system factors that influence people’s needs and wants which in turn affects their lifestyle choices, which ultimately affects the environment. As the figure indicates, people live in communities and societies and work in organisations and homes with policies, procedures, practices and politics which can enhance or constrain a more sustainable lifestyle. It is these ‘system’ factors that need to be changed to support sustainable lifestyles and need to be considered when planning an education program.

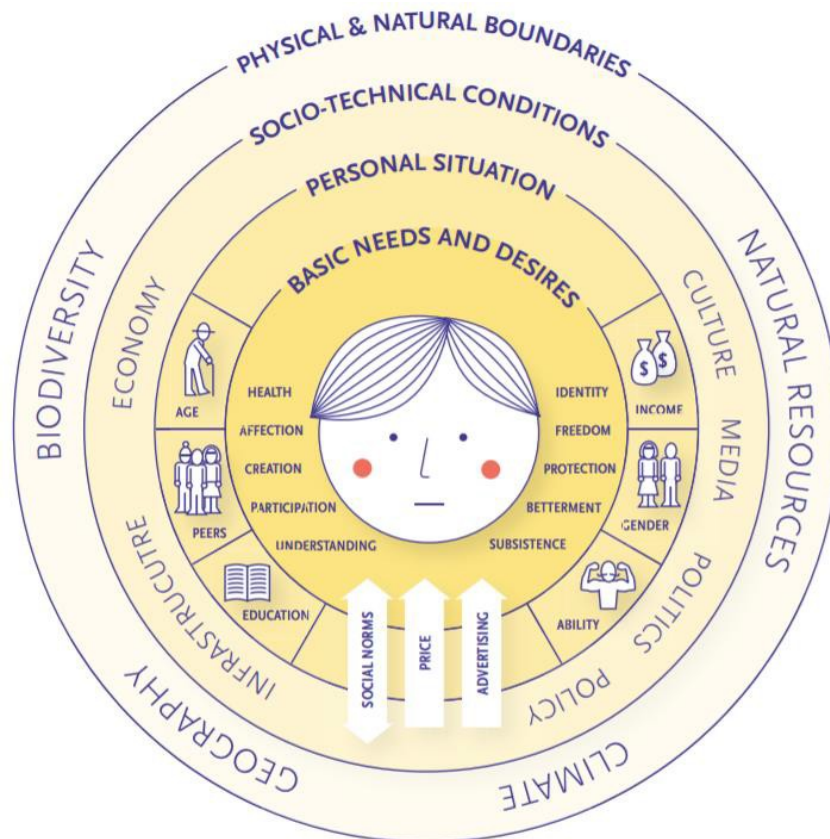


Figure 2 The factors that influence needs and wants⁸

⁸ Akenji L and Chen H 2016, A framework for shaping sustainable lifestyles: determinants and strategies, United Nations Environment Programme, Kenya p. 29.

This is why the new grant program encourages a research phase on the target group/s and the system constraints before planning the program and the proposed approach. A prototype testing phase has been included in the grant process to allow assumptions to be tested about what can enhance environmental improvement. Integrating this phase develops a reflective learning from practice approach (or action research).

More about the system and its influence on practice

Basic needs and desires are motivators for our values and behaviour. Needs are driven by many complex factors from the biological to the emotional including social needs. Desires are shaped by culture, values, social norms, economic factors and advertising. Decisions about meeting these needs and wants can be driven by conscious and unconscious ‘frames’ or deep values and worldviews that form a person’s identity. What also determines people’s lifestyle is their ‘personal situation’, including their education, peers, gender, income and what they are capable of doing (knowledge, attitudes, skills).

However, to adopt a sustainable lifestyle there are further influences like social norms, culture, policy, politics, economy, media and infrastructure, that shape our practices and constrain or enhance a sustainable lifestyle (social – technical conditions). Besides this, a person is situated in a certain place, with a physical environment, availability of natural resources and climate which again may act as either a constraint or enabler of a sustainable lifestyle.

‘environmental education and education for sustainability (EfS) must be directed at changing things over and above the knowledge and actions of individual people.’
 ‘This means that EfS must necessarily be directed towards transforming both unsustainable collective social practices and the practice architectures that hold those practices in place.’⁹

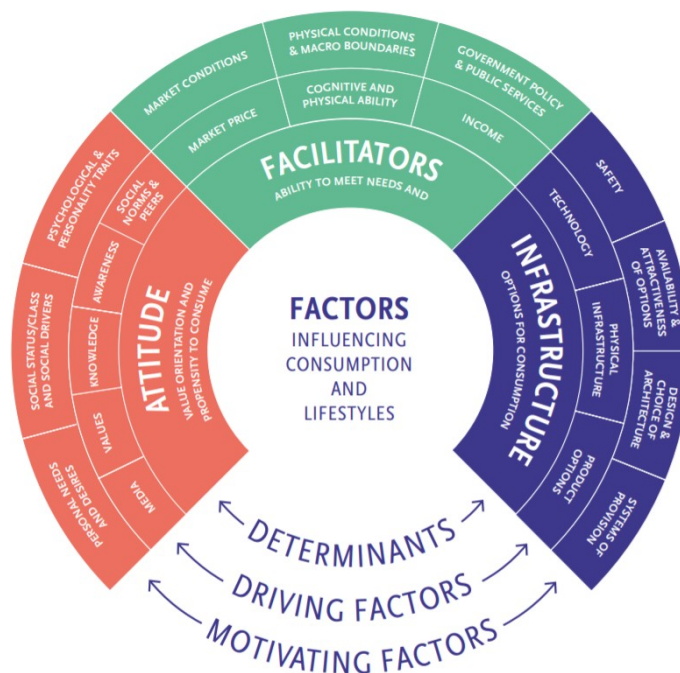


Figure 3 Factors influencing sustainable lifestyles¹⁰

9 Kemmis S and Mutton R 2012, Education for Sustainability (EfS): Practice and Practice Architectures, Environmental Education Research, vol. 18(2), p.188.

10 Akenji L and Chen H 2016, A framework for shaping sustainable lifestyles: determinants and strategies, United Nations Environment Programme, Kenya p23.

Designing a program to improve the environment means working with people to adopt more sustainable lifestyles, perhaps as a result of transformative learning. However, we often hear calls for transformation of the system too, from infrastructure, to services, to policy. Figure 3 lays out the complexity of the determinants of behaviour, the driving factors and motivational factors that influence sustainable lifestyles and consumption.

The system changes might include policies and infrastructure for a renewable energy system, or policies for energy efficient appliances, or electric cars; or incentives to encourage insulating homes, or services that make it easier to gain specific advice on installing solar energy.

System changes make it easier for people to live more sustainably. When designing the education program these system factors need to be researched and analysed too, to better understand the root causes of unsustainability. As Lakoff¹¹ says, 'the environment is political and developing capacity for people to change the system should be considered a part of an education program'.

11 Akenji L and Chen H 2016, A framework for shaping sustainable lifestyles: determinants and strategies, United Nations Environment Programme, Kenya p23.