



Research and Adoption Innovation Hubs webinar 3

Program overview transcript

27 November 2020

Introduction

This is the transcript of a webinar, presented by the Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment. The 54 participants included individuals and representatives from state and local government and industry.

Transcript

[Webinar begins]

David Pembroke: Hello everyone. My name is David Pembroke. And on behalf of the Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment I'd like to welcome you all to this webinar that will explain today the drought resilience research and adoption Hubs grant opportunity. I'd like to begin by acknowledging the Ngunnawal people of the Ngunnawal nation, who are the traditional custodians of the land on which we're broadcasting from today. I'd like to pay my respects to their elders past, present and emerging and recognise the ongoing contribution they make to the life of the city and region.

David Pembroke: So, today's information session will explain the Drought Resilience Research and Adoption Program and how it relates to the Future Drought Fund. We'll also explain the Drought Resilience Adoption and Innovation Hubs and detail the related grant opportunities and what is required to submit an application. But also, what's very important for you to understand is that today's session is an information session. So, the purpose is to cover eligibility for the program and the process that you need to follow to apply.

David Pembroke: What we won't be doing today is answering questions about the relative merits, or any of potential proposals or ideas. What we will be doing is providing as much clarity and as much certainty as we can about the program and the process. But in terms of any sort of guidance around those ideas, or proposals, we'll allow that to be appropriately dealt with during the application assessment process. So, if you do ask questions that sort of start to sort of move into that territory, we will recognise that we won't be able to answer those questions for you. So, this is very much an information session about the process.

David Pembroke: I'd like to today welcome our experts. So, Travis Bover, who is the Assistant Secretary of the Drought Preparedness and Policy branch and Michele Akeroyd, who is the director of the Future Drought Fund, Drought Resilience Research and Adoption Program. So, welcome to you Travis.

Travis Bover: Thankyou David and welcome to all of our participants.

David Pembroke: Michele, welcome to you as well.

Michele Akeroyd: Thanks David and thanks to everyone from across Australia for joining us today. I really look forward to sharing further details about the program with you.

David Pembroke: I'd also like to recognise the team members from the Future Drought Fund team who are also here, beavering away in the background. They will be doing what they can to provide some of the background to the questions and looking at those as they come through. So, thanks very much for them to helping us today to put this program together. The Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment has a long history in helping farmer and rural communities prepare for and manage drought. So, Travis, perhaps you might kick us off with an overview of the Future Drought Fund.

Travis Bover: Yeah, very happy to David. So, drought, as we know is an enduring feature of the Australian landscape and has significant economic, social and environmental impacts. That's why the federal government is committed to providing farmers with the tools they need to prepare for and manage and sustain their livelihoods through drought. That's why the Future Drought Funds been established. It's about preparing for future droughts. It's not about in drought response and recovery, which is the subject of other programs.

Travis Bover: Under the Future Drought Fund, there's 100 million dollars available every year. Spending of that money is guided by Drought Resilience Funding Plan. That Funding Plan was developed by an independent expert-based committee. The Committee consulted right around Australia in developing that plan. The Committee also advises on the programs to deliver the plan. This is the first year of funding under the Future Drought Fund. On the first of July, Minister Littleproud announced the first suite of programs.

Travis Bover: For the most part, the first year has been approached as a foundational year. It's about testing and refining, about building foundations such as institutions, plans and relationships and it's about generating momentum. The programs include investments in innovation to improve drought resilience and that's a particular focus for the program we're talking about today. Other programs touch on building farmers business and risk management capabilities, regional drought resilience planning to inform regional scale priorities and inform future investments. Information services and tools, making climate data and projections more accessible and usable to help people understand and manage drought risks and building social networks and capital that can help drive efforts to improve drought resilience and support people in times of drought.

Travis Bover: Government will consider how to build on these foundation year investments through normal budget processes. The Research and Adoption Program which we're talking about today is perhaps the exception to this foundation new framing. So here the government's made a 4-year commitment initially. That's because we want to build the adoption innovation Hubs as enduring institutions. Anyone wanting to know more about the programs, the full suite of programs can register their interest on our 'Have Your Say' website. And you'll be automatically notified when there's new information, when programs open and so forth. We'll provide the details at the end of the presentation.

David Pembroke: How many programs have been rolled out under the Future Drought Fund?

Travis Bover: So, there's 8 programs underway in this first foundational year. The details are on the screen there and there's further details on our website. Those programs touch on those areas of investment that I mentioned earlier, innovation, farm business, risk management capability, drought resilience, planning, information, services and tools and social networks and capital.

David Pembroke: Okay. How many more programs are still to be announced? Or are there more programs to be still announced?

Travis Bover: So, at the moment, the full \$100 million that's available this year is fully allocated through those programs. But as I said earlier, there's \$100 million available each year and the government will announce further programs and make decisions on those programs in the context of the federal government budget processes.

David Pembroke: Okay. Now, our first question has come through and I'll direct it to you, Travis, Hi, will you be taking questions also about the FDR Innovation Grant Scheme that opens in February 2021? We'll be talking about that today.

Travis Bover: So, we'll talk about it briefly as we talk about the overall research and development program. But what I will say on that program is it will be a competitive grants program and the details of that program will be worked up subsequently. So, we won't be able to get into details, but we can certainly talk about the broad parameters and objectives of that program.

David Pembroke: Now listen Travis, the Drought Resilience Research and Adoption Program. Plenty of interest in that, can you perhaps explain the program and its different elements?

Travis Bover: Absolutely. So, the Research and Adoption Program is a national program, and it will invest \$86 million over 4 years. The objective of the program is to leverage innovation and knowledge to support drought resilience. The focus is on collaborative approaches. We want to ensure that research and knowledge is useful to and it's used by farmers and others to build drought resilience. In other words, we want to see a really strong end user focus.

David Pembroke: Okay, great. Thanks Travis. Well actually if we look to the screen, yep, there it is. On the screen at the moment the audience can see an infographic which describes those elements of the program. From the infographic as I'm looking at it, it looks as though the Adoption and Innovation Hubs are at the centre of the program. Is that the case?

Travis Bover: That's right David. The Hubs certainly have a central role to play in the program but it's important to recognise all of the elements of the program because they all work together in an integrated way. So, as well as the Hubs, we have the Innovation Grants, which someone just asked about a moment ago. That'll provide opportunities for collaborative drought resilience projects to assist primary producers and communities to adapt and transform.

Travis Bover: Since the questions been asked, that program will be for \$14 million. We expect it will open early in 2021. The specific targeting of that program is something that we'll still be working up in detail. Second element to touch on is a national Research and Adoption Investment Plan which will be developed to identify national drought resilience priorities for research and adoption. We'll have a Science to Practice Forum next year to engage stakeholders

in the delivery of the program as a whole and combine these activities are all directed at harnessing research, development and innovation to build drought resilience.

David Pembroke: Okay, great. We have another question. Good morning from Western Australia. And a very good morning, I should say and welcome to everyone listening and attending this webinar today from the great state of Western Australia. Can you elaborate on what you mean by the Hub's being enduring institutions? So, you envision that they will be about more than drought in the future?

Travis Bover: That's a great question. And thanks for joining us. We know it's very early in Western Australia. So, in the first instance, the Hubs are very much focused on drought resilience. Even with that lens, we want to see them as enduring institutions because building drought resilience is a long-term task. It's not something that we can fix in certainly one year and not even in 4 years.

Travis Bover: So that's what we mean in terms of enduring institutions. But we have also flagged in the guidelines that there is potential for the Hubs to eventually take on a broader role and support a broader Agricultural Innovation Agenda but there's been no decisions on that matter and that's something that will be worked through but there's certainly that potential. Even if the Hubs do stay focused on drought resilience, that doesn't mean that they can't and shouldn't connect to the broader agricultural innovation system.

David Pembroke: Okay. Now listen clearly the Drought Resilience Adoption and Innovation Hubs, as Niki's question clearly indicates, they are of interest. So, Travis, can you give our audience some more detail about the Hubs please?

Travis Bover: Absolutely. So, \$64 million over 4 years is available for the 8 Drought Resilience and Adoption and Innovation Hubs that we're looking to establish across regional Australia. The role of the Hubs is to facilitate transformational change through co-design of research, development, extension, adoption and commercialisation activities. The funding for the Hubs on offer is not for new research, it's about the translation of existing research and knowledge into the adoption of new technologies and practices.

Travis Bover: This is not to say that the Hubs don't and shouldn't have a role in research. But there are other funding sources that can and should be accessed and the innovation grant stream under this program is one of those sources. There are other sources outside of the Future Drought Fund as well. Hubs should also play a role in informing and influencing research by bringing an understanding of regional and user needs and priorities.

Travis Bover: Hubs are intended to be networks for researchers, primary producers and community groups to work together in a collaborative way. The whole point of the Hubs is to bring a broad range of organisations together across the spectrum of research, development, extension, adoption and commercialization services brought through to end users. So, a key assessment criteria in the process is the inclusiveness of the Hubs in terms of membership and participation.

Travis Bover: In fact, we've even reserved the right to go to an ad-hoc grant process and ask applicants to work together and even combine their applications if we think that it can better achieve that objective of inclusiveness. The department will undertake the role of national coordination and administration of the Hubs and will be supported by an advisory committee

which is being stood up now. This is a really important dimension of the program and I want to emphasise that that national realm is not just about administration of the Hubs.

Travis Bover: While the Hubs have a role in servicing their region, it's important that the Hubs also remain connected to national priorities and advances. So, what we're looking for is a balance of the top down national perspective and the bottom up regional perspective. The leadership of the Hubs will be expected to play a role working with the department to get that balance right.

David Pembroke: Can you explain what you mean, by transformational change? Indeed, what are you hoping to transform?

Travis Bover: I'll get my colleague Michele to answer that one.

David Pembroke: All right, we'll throw that over to Michele. Michele Akeroyd.

Michele Akeroyd: Because we're about building drought resilience and that's not going to happen with incremental change. And so, the whole Future Drought Fund, and if you look towards the Funding Plan, it does outline what we mean by transformational change. It's really accepted that change in practice and knowledge and capability and capacity needs to have a much bigger transformational process to achieve and build drought resilience and develop the social, economic and environmental outcomes that we're seeking.

David Pembroke: It's fair to say, isn't it, that through transformation that the systems will continue to evolve and adapt and as these relationships form and the Hub's feedback, it's going to change and continue to change, isn't it?

Michele Akeroyd: Absolutely. And I guess if we look also at the climate projections that we're anticipating that droughts will be more severe and more frequent. Doing what we're doing right now or playing around the edges is not going to achieve the change that's needed to build that drought resilience into the future.

David Pembroke: Excellent. Now, Travis back to you if I may. The Hubs, I want to know a little bit more if you could give us some guidance perhaps as to where will they be located?

Travis Bover: Sure. So, eight Hubs across the country and they'll support define regional areas. Those areas are intended to broadly reflect key agricultural and climatic zones across the country. The targeted regions are on the screen in southern New South Wales, southern Queensland / northern New South Wales, Southwest Western Australia, Victoria, the Top End, tropical north Queensland, South Australia and Tasmania. These regional areas are intended to be indicative at this stage.

Travis Bover: They're not fixed definitions or boundaries for each region. Our intent is to achieve coverage of Australia's key climatic and agricultural zones. Coverage will be a key consideration in the assessment of Hub applications. We don't want gaps. In fact, we've reserved the option to move to an ad hoc grant process and potentially ask applicants to modify their proposal or combine with other applicants in order to achieve coverage.

David Pembroke: Can you speak to the process of refining the specific geographic areas that are covered in the 8 regions?

Travis Bover: Yeah, very happy to. So, as I say, the regional areas that we've put out there are intended to be indicative. We recognise that there's value in refining that in the context of applications being received. We see refinement as on the margins, not fundamental changes. We also would emphasise that at this point in time, the commitment is to establish 8 Hubs. The funding available is to establish 8 Hubs. So we wouldn't, for example, be splitting a region in half and having 2 Hubs but we might consider extending one region as specified into another region if it makes sense in terms of a Hubs positioning and capability to service that particular region.

David Pembroke: We're now going to hand over to Michele Akeroyd, who is the director of the Drought Resilience Research and Adoption Program. Michele will take us through the grant opportunity for the Drought Resilience Adoption and Innovation Hubs, Michele?

Michele Akeroyd: Great. Thanks David. Now that you have the background to the Research and Adoption program, I'm just going to run you through some of the finer details of the Hub grant opportunity, including the key timelines. Now, this is a competitive process, and it has been run through the Community Grants Hub. The funding available is \$2 million per annum per Hub over 4 years. So essentially, that's \$8 million per Hub over that timeframe.

Michele Akeroyd: Now, we're aiming for the Hubs to start operation from approximately March 2021 and operate until 30th of June 2024. The grant guidelines are now open, and applications will close at 11:00 PM Australian Eastern Daylight Time on the 23rd of December. You can access the information through our website or by contacting the Community Grants Hub directly and applications must be submitted through the Community Grants Hub process.

David Pembroke: Okay, we do have again some more questions coming through., What role do the RDCs have in the Hubs?

Michele Akeroyd: Yeah, great question. So, in terms of the Hubs, we are seeking a consortium of... A whole range of different organisations that are reflective of the regional priorities. We certainly encourage RDCs participating in those conversations in terms of forming Hubs and what those hub priorities are and particularly some of the depth of knowledge in terms of research and agricultural industries RDCs have is very important in contributing to the Hubs.

David Pembroke: Yeah. And we do have more information coming just exactly about who's in, who's out, who can lead who can't lead, etc. Another question: Where there is one hub identified each for Victoria, South Australia, and Tasmania, is the idea that those Hubs will service the whole of those respective states?

Michele Akeroyd: Well, as Travis alluded to, we're really looking for the applications to define what their regions are and the evidence base and the justification for that selection of those regions. We're not setting boundaries; we are not being specific or constraining applications. We want applicants to really consider what is best for that region and what model is best to be delivered to achieve the outcomes that we're seeking in terms of building drought resilience.

David Pembroke: Okay, great. To the next question: You speak about an end user focus and call out farmers. Does the term end user include the whole of the supply chain of the agri system, including not just farmers but food manufacturers, urban water providers, logistics, etc?

Michele Akeroyd: Yeah. We are really open to that whole of supply chain. Certainly, when we talk about farmers, that's very specific part of the end user chain. But the whole design process is

about having those end users who need this information to help in terms of their business decision making processes be involved in defining what those research needs, and priorities are.

David Pembroke: Okay, and one final question before we jump through to the next stages. If the fund is not for new research but for application of existing research, can the submission involve different researchers from different universities rather than single university partnerships and to a degree, until the geographic areas are clarified, it may not be possible to identify all the research areas that will be appropriate?

Michele Akeroyd: Multiple universities can be part of an application. Absolutely.

David Pembroke: Okay. Very good. So really, it's about getting out there and joining up, having good ideas and working together. So, listen, Michele, we now know how we can get involved. Can you tell us who is eligible?

Michele Akeroyd: Sure. We are looking for collaborative arrangements. It is required that applications are a consortium of different organisations. Now organisations must nominate a lead applicant and that lead entity or applicant must be an eligible entity.

David Pembroke: Now, what's that? What's an eligible entity?

Michele Akeroyd: Absolutely. Now to be eligible, we have a list on the screen on the PowerPoint at the moment. You must have an Australian Business Number and be one of the following organisations. So, a company, a cooperative, an indigenous corporation, a local government entity, an incorporated association, an incorporated joint venture or a trust. Now, one key point I'd just like to reinforce is that an eligible lead entity can form a consortium with entities that are not eligible. The whole consortium partnership is opened up to anyone who wants to participate.

David Pembroke: Okay. So, do you have rules on who can't participate in the program? Could you also tell us perhaps, who's not eligible to lead a Hub?

Michele Akeroyd: Yep, sure. The eligibility is really about the lead applicant. I'm hoping the information that we've prepared will help guide people through the process. Essentially, if you are a Commonwealth government agency, or body, an unincorporated association, an Australian state or territory government agency or body, an overseas resident, or organisation, a sole trader, an individual or any organisation not included in Section 4.1 of the guidelines, then you are not eligible to lead a consortium.

Michele Akeroyd: Now, as mentioned in the preceding slide, these organisations can still be part of a Hub application and part of that partnership model. They just cannot lead one. Now this rule in no way precludes or discourages participation of these entities in participating in Hubs. The grant guidelines should also assist people with navigating their way through the process. The Community Grants Hub is always on hand to help and clarify and respond to questions that you have about eligible organisations and partnership arrangements. If there are any questions on this, right now I'm happy to take them and answer.

David Pembroke: Okay, so send those through. We do actually, around the slides, we have all the contact details for how to get that assistance from the Community Grant Hub towards the latter part of the presentation. So, you will be able to get that information indeed as you go through your process so that you can get that help if in fact you need that. Now, I know we are getting

into the detail now. But I think probably the next question is something that many of our participants will want to know. Does a regional university need to lead a Hub?

Michele Akeroyd: No, they don't. The only essential element is that each consortium must have a regional university representative as a member of their Hub. Now a regional university is defined as one that has demonstrated connections to regional communities. Things like a regional campus, or another sort of physical presence constitutes that regional connection.

David Pembroke: Okay, so what about metropolitan universities, will they miss out?

Michele Akeroyd: Not at all, if a metropolitan university can demonstrate they have a physical presence or connection in a regional area, then we would also encourage them to apply to be part of a Hub. Now, I'll also add that if there is a regional university as a partnership in the Hub, we really encourage metropolitan universities to partner with them and be part of the Hubs as well.

David Pembroke: Okay, so what about those organisations who are interested in partnering in a Hub? What eligibility requirements are there for those organisations who want to be just a part of it?

Michele Akeroyd: Yeah. Well the good news is there are no restrictions on the type of entities that can participate in a partnership arrangement.

David Pembroke: Okay. Well, that's good news. So, Michele, can an organisation be part of more than one Hub application?

Michele Akeroyd: Yes, absolutely. They can. Now our focus is on collaboration and we would encourage any organisation that wants to participate in more than one Hub to do so.

David Pembroke: All right. So, the guidelines say that Hubs need matched funding and co-contributions can come from any source other than the Commonwealth. Does that mean that Commonwealth entities such as the CSIRO, the Bureau of Meteorology, and the Rural Research and Development Corporations can't be involved with the Hubs?

Michele Akeroyd: Not at all. The CSIRO, Bureau of Meteorology, and the Rural Research and Development Corporations are really important organisations for the success of the Hubs and are really encouraged to be engaged and involved with members of Hubs. The point in the guidelines is really about funding sources. Other than Commonwealth sources, the calculation of co-contribution in no way prevents, precludes or discourages or de-values the contributions from Commonwealth sources.

Michele Akeroyd: Now as set out in the guidelines, the total investment of the grant, leverage will be considered in assessing criterion for as well as the value for money of the proposal. That essentially means that it's not just the matching funding, but the entire co-contributions that are considered informing the Hub are considered as part of the process.

David Pembroke: Okay. Now we do have a question about that - My question surrounds contributions where the cash are in-kind from partners. The online form asks whether the contributions are, 'secured?' Are you able to clarify the difference between secured and not secured and provide examples of non-secured contributions as this will have implication for our letters of support?

Michele Akeroyd: Sure, that's a really good question. The 'secured' means that there's been a decision made and that the funding or co-contribution from that organisation is committed to the Hub, where non-secured is more that indicative level of funding that has not had formal approval or commitment towards the Hub. But we recognise that because there are reasonably short timeframes in terms of getting the Hub applications up, but not all organisations will be able to follow through an approval process that fully commits the funding. So that is the point about identifying secured and non-secured.

David Pembroke: All right, the next question is. Nanthi asks, [Isis](#) it appropriate to engage with Cooperative Research Centres, the CRC's, and national industry growth centres?

Michele Akeroyd: The only comment I'll make about this because we start getting to the merit base is that we just encourage you to have conversations with all organisations that are relevant to delivering your Hub.

David Pembroke: another- Isn't unincorporated joint venture with the university as the lead applicant permissible under the guidelines?

Michele Akeroyd: Yes. So, University is an eligible entity and for an unincorporated joint venture, obviously, that joint venture can't apply in itself. But if you have an organisation as part of that and incorporate a joint venture that becomes the lead applicant, then that meets our criteria.

David Pembroke: What will be the model for sharing research and outcomes from the various Hubs? Will that happen through the department?

Michele Akeroyd: Partly, but this is really a partnership. As Travis mentioned before, the role of the department is not just about administration, but more national coordination and ensuring there is connection between the Hubs, as well as with the Hubs to national priorities. You'll see in the guidelines that we've required that a Knowledge Broker role be included as part of a Hub process. We see those Knowledge Brokers as a really important function in helping share research outcomes across the Hub, partnership and family but also between Hubs and through the department and national priorities. We're really trying to build that partnership and network to share learnings and really be involved and engaged and connected with each other.

David Pembroke: Which again suggests to that earlier point around transformation. This is exactly what you're talking about isn't it. It's this evolving nature of the whole system.

Michele Akeroyd: Yep.

David Pembroke: What agreements need to be in place between participants in a Hub before the application is submitted?

Michele Akeroyd: Yep. I guess that's where we're looking at the letters of support in terms of people contributing to the hub and willing to participate.

David Pembroke: The guidelines asked for CVs of key personnel. Are we expected to have formed a board structure and show nominated people particularly indigenous and uni representation in the application?

Michele Akeroyd: Yep. As part of the application process, we're seeking a business plan which will outline governance and delivery arrangements. In terms of CVs we're asking for the key personnel of the Hub Director and Knowledge Broker.

David Pembroke: Michele, if I can, if the Hubs are to be inclusive and include a range of organisations, is there a way that organisations can connect to other organisations in a hub region? How can people know who else is interested and part of their area?

Michele Akeroyd: That's really important. What we've been able to do is through the Research and Adoption 'Have Your Say' website, we've created a map where interested organisations can pin their interest in a region or regions of interest. So, you can identify or show your interest as a consortium lead as well as interest in just participating to be a hub member through this map process.

David Pembroke: Okay, how does it work?

Michele Akeroyd: Okay, so organisations wanting to be part of a Hub can jump online and look at the pins on the map. That way you can determine who you might like to collaborate with and in what region. But you can also drop your own pin and let other people know that you're actually interested in participating in a Hub. Now the pins are colour coded to show an organisations interest, as whether they want to lead a Hub or be part of a Hub.

Michele Akeroyd: The website also features a table listing the contact details of interested organisations in the regions they have nominated. This just makes it easier for you to find what organisations have nominated for the region you're interested in and who to contact. So far, we have more than 40 organisations register their interest in Hubs using the map. It's a really quick and easy way of finding their details and how to get in contact with them.

Michele Akeroyd: Now the interactive map will remain open until mid-December just before applications close. So that way people have an opportunity to really use this tool to help form your applications. It's really just another way we're trying to connect Hub consortia to form throughout the regions. Now, I will say we're not actively facilitating the connections. We're just providing this tool so people can identify their interests and really have conversations with other like-minded organisations and their regions.

David Pembroke: Okay, so looking at the Hubs, we outlined some of the regions earlier in the presentation, but could you perhaps give us some more detail on how those Hubs will be defined?

Michele Akeroyd: Okay. Now, there are no fixed definitions of boundaries for each region, the regional areas for Hubs are intended to be indicative and those that broadly reflect the key agricultural and climatic zones across the country. I'd like to say, though that each application will need to justify the extent of the region that is proposed in its application. It is encouraged to consider a 'hub and spoke' model, where you have a central location headquarters that is complemented with satellite offices or locations. So, you really have that broader footprint.

Michele Akeroyd: Now, our focus is getting a good mix of research skills and expertise in these Hubs that will encourage innovation and that transformational change that we're seeking. Now, it's a really fantastic opportunity for all areas of Australia to be involved and participate in Hubs.

David Pembroke: So that's quite interesting. So, you don't necessarily have to have all of the team members in that sort of identified area. You can draw from wherever?

Michele Akeroyd: Absolutely.

David Pembroke: Okay. And overseas, you can draw people from overseas perhaps to get involved as well?

Michele Akeroyd: Well, I guess that's part of the Hub application process. Identifying relevant organisations and if international-

David Pembroke: And who can bring something.

Michele Akeroyd: If international organisations are deemed relevant for that hub to deliver those transformational changes, then please justify and let us know, because we're really excited about having this as an open process and not being very specific to really encourage that creativity and that whole design process, so that each region has a model that works for that region.

David Pembroke: Can you just clarify, are you wanting CVs only for the Director and the Knowledge Broker?

Michele Akeroyd: As part of the guidelines, we've specified that we need at least CVs for the Director and Knowledge Broker.

David Pembroke: Okay, so that's a minimum requirement?

Michele Akeroyd: Yep. But if there are other CVs and people that you'd like to include you're welcome.

David Pembroke: To fill out the story so to speak, if you feel that that's going to help explain what it is that you're going to be proposing. You can include that. Regarding the CV of the Director and Knowledge Broker, what if a Hub is planning to go to market for these positions? So, you maybe not quite have them...

Michele Akeroyd: I guess it's then up to the Hub applicant to provide or give us confidence about the capability and capacity and how it's going to be delivered.

David Pembroke: Again, it's that comprehensiveness of the tells us the story.

Michele Akeroyd: Correct, tell us the story.

David Pembroke: Michele, if I might just continue, what are the mandatory elements of a Hub application?

Michele Akeroyd: Okay, now all applications must specify which region the Hub will support, and more importantly, provide details on the geographical coverage and types of agricultural industries that the Hub will cover.

David Pembroke: Okay, so what else should they include?

Michele Akeroyd: Okay, applications should also include provision for a Hub Director, and we've had some discussions about this. That is who's the Hub leader and the Hub leader oversees the

delivery and governance arrangements of the Hub and a Knowledge Broker. This is someone who helps to make the connections between the science and research to end users and as I've mentioned previously, connecting other Hubs in terms of that information pathway as well as to the department and the national priorities and agenda.

David Pembroke: Travis mentioned earlier how the Hubs model align with that broader agricultural agenda? Can you tell us a little bit more about that?

Michele Akeroyd: Sure. Now, the Hubs are a key feature of the Future Drought Fund and will focus on drought resilience. In the broader context, the Hubs could also potentially help with delivering the National Agriculture Innovation Agenda's pillars. That is establishing world class innovation practises through collaboration, entrepreneurship, and ambition. This approach will really strengthen collaboration and maximise opportunities for innovation in our regional areas.

Michele Akeroyd: The Future Drought Fund and the Hubs will remain agile and responsive to drought resilience and the broader reforms that may be introduced to modernise Australia's agriculture innovation system. But as they're funded with Future Drought Fund money, their focus through that funding source is on drought resilience.

David Pembroke: Now, I know we're going to talk about match funding in a moment. But I do want to take another question from the audience today. Again, the department is very grateful for your participation today. Thank you to everybody who is sending through these very good questions. How will you measure whether you have a focus on incorporating appropriate research skill in a bid for a hub if the application concentrates on the adoption end of the RDEAC continuum? Presumably you're indicating that applications must also heavily stress the research history and the potential of the consortium as a whole. Are we wandering into territory-

Michele Akeroyd: We are and the only thing I will say is that we've made it very clear that the Hubs are about adoption, extension and commercialisation and not about new research with this 2 million per annum funding. That would have to be demonstrated in other applications for other funding processes.

David Pembroke: Okay, fair enough. I'm sure audience you do understand that this is an information session about the process, about the application. But it's great to see that people are thinking. The ideas are starting to formulate. I really like that map where you can go back and find out who's thinking. What are some of these great ideas that the country needs? I think that's very exciting. Another question - Will DAWE be taking a broader role to assist with the coordination of hub activities with existing initiatives?

Michele Akeroyd: Absolutely. We will be taking on that national coordination role and linking Hubs to other national government programs and particularly that evolving and emerging National Agricultural Innovation Agenda.

David Pembroke: Now, there are some things that we can't talk about today but again, there's plenty that we can talk about. So, what are the other considerations that organisations who are submitting and want to be involved, what are some of the other things that they need to know about?

Michele Akeroyd: Hubs must have matching funding.

David Pembroke: Okay, what's that? What does that look like? Give us the detail.

Michele Akeroyd: So, the matching funding can be a mix of cash and in-kind support. This means that every dollar sought for a Hub through the Future Drought Fund grant process must be matched. Now, this matching funding can come from any source other than the Commonwealth. This could include, for example, state territory local governments, the private sector and other industry organisations. As mentioned earlier, just because Commonwealth funding is not considered as a co-contribution in terms of matched funding, it in no way discourages or devalues co-contributions from Commonwealth sources. In fact, this will be considered as the whole package. Just not that matching funding.

Michele Akeroyd: Now, the proportion of cash to in-kind contributions will be considered in assessing the total investment of the grant as per assessment criteria for as well as the overall value for money which is in Section 8.1 of the guidelines.

David Pembroke: Okay. Perhaps is cash weighted more heavily than other in-kind contributions?

Michele Akeroyd: We've deliberately not specified any difference between cash and in-kind because we recognise that we do want a whole range of different organisations to be involved. Some organisations like community organisations may struggle to be able to contribute cash contributions. That's why we really value their in-kind contributions to this project as well.

David Pembroke: Okay. So in-kind contributions are the non-cash contributions, correct?

Michele Akeroyd: That's correct. In order for in-kind contributions to count, they must directly relate to their eligible activities included in your proposal. We consider in-kind to include salaries and on cost facilities, equipment and services. The in-kind value must only reflect the proportional activity that contribution makes to the hub. I'm really happy to take further questions on this if needed, because I know that sometimes particularly with in-kind, it can be a bit challenging to understand what the boundaries are but we do have some additional detail in Appendix A of the guidelines.

David Pembroke: So, to save people going to Appendix A, just so... They can obviously go through, but what's may be the top line summary of what's there in terms of more detail about in-kind?

Michele Akeroyd: Yep, just what you might consider in terms of how services and building and facilities might be calculated in terms of the in-kind contribution. We do actually value those because particularly, we recognise that for example, CSIRO have significant resources and facilities that people use and are available. While it's not going to be considered as a matching in-kind, they're really important in terms of helping Hubs establish but also deliver the projects and adoption and extension activities that are being sought.

David Pembroke: We do have another question - My understanding is that there are four types of resilience, physical resilience, soil and water, mental resilience, emotional resilience, and social resilience. I assume that the hub needs to cover all of these aspects involving social science, agricultural science, extension personnel and farming groups. I can intercept that one.

Michele Akeroyd: I would just refer Nanthito the Future Drought Fund Funding Plan that sets out the objectives and outcomes sought under the different resilience framework.

David Pembroke: Okay. So that's a pretty key document then, isn't?

Michele Akeroyd: It is.

David Pembroke: As you're building your ideas perhaps to be inspired by those foundational documents that are really sitting at the core.

Michele Akeroyd: Absolutely. The Funding Plan is what has designed and driven the development of the research and adoption program and the concept of the Hubs.

David Pembroke: Great, okay. Travis, can you tell us, what's the easiest way to apply?

Travis Bover: Sure. Before we get to that, the first point I'd make is before you apply, it's really important that you read the grant guidelines carefully. It sounds simple, I know. But there's a lot of important detail on those guidelines. Ultimately, those guidelines are the framework against which every application will be assessed. It's the consistent reference point if you like. The guidelines are obviously about the Grant Connect and Community Grant Hub website. And that's also got other details on how to apply.

David Pembroke: Okay, so let's just say I've read the guidelines and I understand it. What's my next step once I've gone through the guidelines?

Travis Bover: So, you jump online, and you complete the grant opportunity application form on the Grant Connect or Community Grant Hub website. You need to provide all the information requested in the form. You need to address all of the eligibility and assessment criteria and then submit your application. Make sure you include any attachments that support your application. Submissions close at 11:00 PM Australian Eastern Standard Time on the 23rd of December.

David Pembroke: Okay, and help. If people need help, need to ask a question, we had mentioned that before the Grants Hub, and I know the web address is there at the moment, but what help is available?

Travis Bover: So, the Grants Hub is your first point of contact. If you have questions raise it with them, and there's contact details on the website, and they'll get you answers. That sometimes might involve coming to us and getting the information necessary, but we'll get you answers through that means.

David Pembroke: The next question: Should a consortium focus on a particular area or whole of a state such as Queensland?

Michele Akeroyd: This is really getting into merit based because it's up to applicants to define the region that's relevant to them.

David Pembroke: Back to the guidelines, and again, go back, read through this transcript, look at the presentation again. Go to those foundational documents and be inspired by those guardrails really and then do what you can. The next question: Can you please confirm that the Commonwealth dollars from existing programs for instance NLP2 cannot be committed as cash or in-kind.

Michele Akeroyd: We've said and it's very clear in the guidelines that Commonwealth funding cannot be used as matching in-kind or cash support for the \$2 million.

David Pembroke: Okay, so that is-

Michele Akeroyd: It's just the matching funding, it can certainly be part of the proposal is just not considered as matching.

David Pembroke: Okay, fantastic. Again, questions ladies and gentlemen. And we do have another one: what's the difference between the hub, a program and project activities? This has implications for indirect costs. Can indirect costs be applied to Hub salaries; can indirect costs be applied to salaries for projects? The guidelines state, 'subsidy of electricity phone and rent is ineligible.

Michele Akeroyd: So just refer to the guidelines that we've been very clear about what Hub the \$2 million can be-

David Pembroke: Can be applied to.

Michele Akeroyd: Exactly.

David Pembroke: Okay. So, the guidelines, really understanding what those guidelines say. Again, that help is available from the Community Grants Hub. If you do have questions as you are going through your application, the assistance is there. And indeed, the department is encouraging as many applications as possible. Again, if I just refer you back to that great map, go and explore, understand, see who else is about, see who else is interested, and join up perhaps your own inspiration with somebody else's inspiration to come up with a contribution or an idea or whatever it is. But I do know the department is very keen for as many applications to this program as possible.

David Pembroke: Now, Michele, you mentioned attachments earlier. What should be in the attachments? What's permissible perhaps?

Michele Akeroyd: Okay, so we've been really clear in terms of the guidelines, the grant process. What attachments are required. So firstly, each application should include CVs of key personnel. We've identified the Hub Director and Knowledge Broker as at least minimum. We're also looking for the lead organisation structure and the proposed structure to deliver the Hub. A high level RDEA&C plan and a template is provided to capture those activities in a consistent format. A business plan, a risk management plan and once again, a template is provided to ensure that you capture the information that we need to assess your proposal.

Michele Akeroyd: It is really important that where there are templates that these need to be used, so we can ... so it just really helps you to make sure that you have all the information that we're looking for and enables us to assess your application against the selection criteria. For templates not used where it's provided this makes it really challenging for us and we will be unable to assess that part of your application. So, it's really essential that these templates are used. For the items where there is no template, you are free to use whatever format you choose.

[Note that Community Grants Hub does not have a template for business plans.]

Michele Akeroyd: Just be mindful that there are size limits on attachments. However, the Community Grants Hub can assist if you have issues with these limits or other technical difficulties in terms of submitting your attachments.

David Pembroke: The next question is: What process will be used to assess the applications and what are the timelines for advising successful and unsuccessful applicants?

Michele Akeroyd: The process for assessment is included in the first couple of pages of the guidelines. That really steps through that process. As I've mentioned at the beginning of this presentation, that we will anticipate getting back to applicants February-March next year.

David Pembroke: Is a university fund to invest in commercialising promising drought adoption technologies an eligible contribution? so is a university fund to invest in commercialising promising drought adoption technologies an eligible contribution?

Michele Akeroyd: I think we've been pretty clear in the guidelines that anything other than Commonwealth funding is considered eligible.

David Pembroke: Eligible.

Michele Akeroyd: Eligible.

David Pembroke: Okay. All right. And again, thank you so much for your interest and your attention today and your contribution of these questions. So, to the next question. These Hubs are focused on drought resilience, but clearly, Hubs may be more broadly deployed to address other issues. Do you see that this would be through expanding the roles of the DR Hubs, specifically, i.e., there is only a chance to participate in Hubs or would there be subsequent calls to assemble new Hubs with new missions?

Michele Akeroyd: Okay, the Future Drought Fund very clearly specifies that Future Drought Fund funding can only be expended on activities that relate to drought resilience as specified in the Funding Plan. So, any expansion to Hubs would need to be funded from other sources that are outside Future Drought Fund funding mechanisms.

David Pembroke: Just as a recap, Michele, please those key dates because I think that's very important for people sitting out there so they can plan their application.

Michele Akeroyd: Yeah, absolutely. I'm happy to run through those again. So, in terms of the guidelines, they are open now and they've been open since the 30th of October, this year. Now we do have a question process but because we want to make sure that we answer your questions before applications close, that questions can be submitted up to 5:00 PM Australian Eastern Time on the 16th of December. Then the closing dates for applications is 11:00 PM Australian Eastern Time on the 23rd of December 2020.

Michele Akeroyd: As I've just mentioned, in answering the question, the estimated date of providing advice to all applicants will be February-March 2021. Now we do have information through the Community Grants Hub application process. You'll see the link on this slide that takes you to the details of the grant opportunity. I've also included the details about who you contact for questions. There's a phone number and an email through Community Grants Hub. They will answer all questions and where they need specific advice from us, they will work with us to get a response back to you within a few business days.

David Pembroke: Now, our final question: You refer to a CV for a Knowledge Broker? Does this mean, you intend there only be one per Hub or is Knowledge Broker a group of people?

Michele Akeroyd: Well, I guess that comes back to merit-based application process, we want to function at least have a Knowledge Broker per Hub. Hubs will need to organise and arrange how they manage that. The details are in the guidelines in terms of what we're looking for.

David Pembroke: Okay, and Travis, if you may, what information again, just as a bit of a summary for the audience today. And again, audience, thank you so much. If people want to go back and understand what's available and what's been discussed, what is available to them post this webinar as they go through this process of application?

Travis Bover: So, I refer people again to the Community Grants Hub website, that's where you'll find the grant guidelines, the templates necessary to submit an application. You'll also find answers to FAQs. That document will be updated as we get more questions. If you do have questions following the seminar, this webinar, you can submit them to the Community Grants Hub and we'll make sure that those answers are given as quickly as possible. We'll also post a copy of this webinar session on the department's website.

David Pembroke: Great. So, thank you to everyone who has attended today's session. Your interest is vitally important to the department. We're certainly very grateful also to those who have submitted questions during today's session. So again, those questions will be up on the website, the answers will be up on the website. As Travis has just said, recording of the webinar, transcripts, guidelines. So, there's all of the materials in the world that you need to make a successful application. So again, to Travis and Michele, thank you again for your time, and for going through in such detail to help people with their registration of proposals.

Travis Bover: Thanks David and thanks very much to all our participants for your time and your interest in the program.

David Pembroke: And again, Michele, thank you.

Michele Akeroyd: Thank you and thank you everyone and look forward to seeing your applications fairly soon.

David Pembroke: And again, ladies and gentlemen, thank you on behalf of the Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment for your attendance today, and we look forward and every success in your application. Bye for now.

[Webinar ends]