

Rural and Regional Adjustment (Agribusiness Digital Solutions Grants Scheme) Amendment Regulation 2023

Explanatory Notes for SL 2023 No. 86

made under the

Rural and Regional Adjustment Act 1994

General Outline

Short title

Rural and Regional Adjustment (Agribusiness Digital Solutions Grants Scheme) Amendment Regulation 2023

Authorising law

Sections 3, 10, 11 and 44 of the *Rural and Regional Adjustment Act 1994* (the RRA Act).

Policy objectives and the reasons for them

As part of the Queensland Government COVID-19 Economic Recovery Plan, \$5.5 million was provided for the Digital Transformation in Agribusiness Initiative. Through this initiative, the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries delivered Round One of the Agribusiness Digital Solutions Grants Scheme (the Scheme) to support industry organisations to implement technologies and digital systems that are transformative in nature, allow for industry wide learning and promote agribusiness resilience to future disruptions.

The second round of the grants will see \$1.45 million made available and delivered through the establishment of the Scheme.

The intent of the amendment regulation is to establish the Scheme as an approved assistance scheme under the RRA Act. This will enable the Queensland Rural and Industry Development Authority (QRIDA) to administer the Scheme.

Achievement of policy objectives

The amendment regulation will achieve the policy objective by establishing the Scheme as an approved assistance scheme as a new schedule 51 of the *Rural and Regional Adjustment Regulation 2011*.

The Scheme will help eligible entities carry out projects that will encourage the adoption of digital technologies or systems in supply chains that are transformative in nature, allow for industry wide learning, and improve the resilience and responsiveness to potential disruptions in the agribusiness sector or primary production industries in Queensland. By adopting digital technologies or systems, these industries will increase preparedness for risks related to biosecurity, climate and food safety.

The amount of assistance available under the Scheme will be for an amount of up to half the total eligible project costs to a maximum amount of \$100,000 (excluding GST).

Applications will be considered in order of priority based on providing the greatest benefit to the agribusiness sector in line with the objective of the Scheme. Other factors that will be considered include the extent to which the project may create or support employment of economic growth, represents value for money and viability of the eligible project.

To be eligible for assistance under the Scheme, applicants must demonstrate they meet the eligibility criteria for the Scheme, including that the applicant:

- is a registered industry organisation, or an entity that is established to advance or promote the economic development of the agribusiness sector, a primary production industry or part of a primary production industry in Queensland;
- has its headquarters in Queensland;
- is registered for GST; and
- holds an Australian Business Number.

Applications for funding under the scheme will open as notified on QRIDA's website.

Consistency with policy objectives of authorising law

The amendment regulation is consistent with the objectives of the RRA Act, which establishes QRIDA to 'administer assistance schemes that foster the development of a more productive and sustainable rural and regional sector in Queensland.

Inconsistency with policy objectives of other legislation

This amendment regulation is not inconsistent with the policy objectives of any other legislation.

Alternative ways of achieving policy objectives

An alternative way to achieve the policy objective would be to have an entity other than QRIDA provide the assistance. However, QRIDA was established to provide assistance and support to the State's economy and has significant experience and expertise in administering grant funding. Given QRIDA's expertise, QRIDA is the most appropriate entity to administer the grants scheme.

Benefits and costs of implementation

QRIDA has extensive experience in administering grant, loan and rebate and payment schemes for government and is well placed to administer the Scheme.

The Queensland Government has committed \$1.45 million to deliver the Scheme which will support agribusiness digital solutions to increase industry organisations help prepare for risks related to biosecurity, climate and food safety, improving the sectors resilience and responsiveness to potential disruptions.

Consistency with fundamental legislative principles

The amendment regulation has been drafted with regard to, and is consistent with, the fundamental legislative principles as defined in section 4 of the *Legislative Standards Act 1992*.

Consultation

The DAF Agriculture Blueprint Working Group, which includes AgForce Queensland, Australian Meat Industry Council, Australian Sugar Milling Council, CANEGROWERS, Consolidated Pastoral Company, Cotton Australia, Food Industry Association of Queensland, Growcom, Kalfresh, Melons Australia, Mulgowie Farming Company, Nursery and Garden Industry Queensland, Queensland Farmers' Federation, Queensland Seafood Industry Association, Queensland United Egg Producers/Pork Queensland Inc./Egg Farmers of Australia, was consulted in the development of the Scheme as part of the Queensland Government's response to industry's call for advancements in digital platforms as part of the COVID-19 recovery. Consultation helped to identify key projects to enhance the development, trialling, and adoption of digital solutions across the agriculture and food supply chains.

The DAF Agriculture Blueprint Working Group is supportive of the amendment regulation.

The Office of Best Practice Regulation (OBPR), within Queensland Treasury, was consulted regarding Regulatory Impact Assessment requirements. The OBPR assessed that the amendment is excluded from further analysis under category (k) – regulatory proposals designed to reduce the burden of regulation, or that clearly do not add to the burden, and it is reasonably clear there are no significant adverse impacts.