Sustainable Canadian Agricultural Partnership

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Resilient Agricultural Landscape Program

New Nouveau Brunswick

Canada

Program Description/ Objectives

Support the environmental resiliency of agricultural landscapes by accelerating the adoption of Ecological Goods and Services (EG&S) Beneficial Management Practices (BMPs). Ecological goods and services are the benefits society derives from healthy functioning ecosystems and include the maintenance and provision of healthy soil and water resources, wildlife habitat and biodiversity, and adapting to the impacts of climate change. Projects must provide incremental ecological goods and services benefits.

The specific outcomes for the program include:

- Greenhouse gas emission reductions
- Improved soil health
- Increased conservation and restoration of critical wildlife habitat
- Strengthened resilience of agricultural lands
- Improved water quality

The Resilient Agricultural Landscape Program (RALP) will primarily use an acreage-based payment approach, and some activities will have multi-year agreements in place.

Application Process:

Applicants must complete the RALP Application form and submit by email:

Sustainable.CAP@gnb.ca

or mail:

Sustainable CAP Program Administrator
Industry Financial Programs
Department of Agriculture, Aquaculture and Fisheries
PO Box 6000
Fredericton, NB E3B 5H1

The RALP coordinator will contact applicants on a first come first serve basis to discuss the project details to confirm eligibility.

Applicants will be contacted by the RALP coordinator to discuss the project details to confirm eligibility.

Pre-approved applicants will complete the official application form provided by the RALP coordinator.

Successful applicants will be required to sign a Letter of Offer that will include, but not limited to: the agreed upon lands and eligible activities for funding, the payment and compensation method and project conditions for the approved time period.

The Department of Agriculture, Aquaculture and Fisheries, reserves the right to modify these guidelines at any time without notice.

Eligibility:

Applicants

- Indigenous Peoples or Indigenous Organizations involved in primary agricultural production.
- All agricultural producers (individuals, partnerships, and incorporated agri-businesses) involved in primary agricultural production in New Brunswick.
- Agricultural producer associations involved in primary agricultural production (e.g., Registered Community Pasture Associations).
- A delivery agent, who is acting on behalf of one or several individual producers who qualify as an eligible applicant within the above section, and who is working on lands listed as eligible lands. Delivery agents will be approved on a case by case basis.

Eligibility Requirements

- Applicants must have a valid Environmental Farm Plan certificate issued within the last five years from date of submission and maintain a valid certification during the approved period indicated within the Letter of Offer.
- Applicants must comply with all regulatory requirements including those related to public health and safety, labour codes and standards, wildlife habitat and environmental protection (e.g., Watercourse and Wetland Alteration Permits, etc.).
- Applicants must submit the program pre-approval form prior to submitting an official project application.

Eligible Land

- Privately owned farmland, including all managed lands for agricultural production (e.g., crop land, grazing, orchards, etc.), as well as associated wetlands, woodlots, yard sites, associated with farm entities/operations.
- Privately owned farmland and, on a case-by-case basis, Crown Land that is accessible to the applicant under a valid, written, long-term lease agreement to manage the land for agricultural production for at least five years. A copy of the agreement will be required.
- Indigenous lands being managed for the purpose of agricultural production.

Project Agreement:

- Applicants will be required to sign a Letter of Offer that will include, but is not limited to, the agreed upon lands and activities eligible for funding, the payment/compensation method and project conditions for the approved period.
- Costs incurred before the project is approved will not be eligible, unless indicated in the Letter of Offer.

Maximum Levels of Assistance:

- Maximum assistance is $100,000 for individual businesses over the life of the program.
- Maximum assistance is $150,000 for agricultural producer associations over the life of the program.
- Higher levels of assistance may be considered for applicants that demonstrate a strong EG&S benefits and outcomes rationale.
- The total level of government funding must not exceed 100% of the approved eligible expenses.

Payment Information:

- Payments for eligible expenses associated with the approved project (e.g., establishment costs) will be issued within the same fiscal year (April 1 – March 31) the expenses occurred and as outlined in the Letter of Offer.
- Payments for opportunity cost losses and maintenance costs will be issued at the beginning of a project and conditional to the terms and signature of the Letter of Offer. Payments will be calculated based on annual opportunity cost losses and/or maintenance costs for the period indicated in the Letter of Offer.
- Additional expenses may be considered on a case-by-case basis and require pre-approval.
- No payment will be made for claims under $200.

Application Dates:

- Pre-approval form intake period is from April 1st, 2024, until funding is exhausted.
- Deadline for claims is February 28th within the fiscal year (April 1 – March 31) for which the project was approved.
- Pre-approval applications will be considered on a first come first-serve basis.

Eligible Activities:

The eligible activities under the program are divided into three categories:

1. Reduced Tillage
2. Ponds and Wetlands
3. Critical and marginal landscapes, trees, pollinator habitat, riparian areas and crop management

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CATEGORY 1:

Reduced Tillage

ELEMENT 1-A:

Reduced Tillage

An agricultural management approach that aims to minimize the frequency or intensity of tillage operations to promote economic and environmental benefits. This includes zero tillage, reduced tillage or strip tillage on annual cropland. The objective of reduced tillage includes the following:

- Improved soil and water quality, carbon sequestration, climate change adaptation, biodiversity, and reduced greenhouse gas emissions.
- Increased crop yield associated with moisture conservation, reduced erosion, improved soil organic matter, and better management of nutrients, crop residue, and pests.
- Reduced labour and equipment costs associated with doing less tillage.

Eligible Expenses

- Purchase of seeding and post seeding implements for low disturbance placement of seed and fertilizer for transition to reduced tillage.
- Soil pH analysis.
- pH adjustments- a one-time payment of up to $40/acre for limestone to a maximum of $4,000 based on soil pH analysis requirements.

Level of Financial Assistance

50% cost share to a maximum of $30,000.

Eligible for up to $4000 towards pH adjustment when purchasing equipment.

Additional requirements

- Applicants must demonstrate incremental change by providing the number of acres with reduced tillage practices and crops to be planted for the upcoming three years.
- Limestone funding contingent on implementing reduced tillage practices and acres reported converted to reduced tillage.
- Equipment or items funded under the On-Farm Climate Action Fund will **not** be eligible.

CATEGORY 2:

Ponds and Wetlands

ELEMENT 2-A:

Ponds

Establishment or expansion of existing reservoirs or ponds to provide benefits for: water retention on the landscape, climate change adaptation, water quality and quantity, and biodiversity.

Eligible Expenses

- Engineered assessment and design.
- New pond construction.
- Expansion of existing reservoir/pond/liner (only the incremental volume).
- Construction costs.
- Pump and mainline for water delivery to beginning of field.
- Pond aeration systems (wind, electric or solar).
- Intake works (e.g., wet wells and intakes for remote pumping and aeration).
- Test sample analysis and consultation costs to determine geology.
- Water quality sampling and testing.

Level of Financial Assistance

75% of eligible expenses to a maximum of $30,000 per project.

ELEMENT 2-B:

Wetlands

Wetlands and salt marshes restoration and for the construction of new wetlands.

Ducks Unlimited Canada (DUC) is the delivery agent for this program element.

Eligible Expenses

- Engineered assessment and design.
- Construction costs.
- Test sample analysis and consultation costs to determine geology.
- Water quality sampling and testing.
- Other expenses recommended by Ducks Unlimited Canada (DUC) will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Level of Financial Assistance

Up to 100% of eligible expenses to a maximum of $30,000 per project.

Additional Requirements

- Applicants must provide consent to have their contact information and project details shared with DUC as part of the pre-approval process.
- Applicants will be required to sign a contract for work and a Land Use Agreement with DUC as part of the approval process for the period indicated in the Letter of Offer.

CATEGORY 3:

Pollinator habitat, critical and marginal landscapes, trees, riparian areas, and crop management

ELEMENT 3-A:

Pollinator Habitat

Promoting pollinator habitat supports climate change adaptation, carbon sequestration, and biodiversity. The objectives of the pollinator habitat element include the following:

- Improved pollination service provided by wild (unmanaged) and managed bees by:
  - Increasing floral diversity and ensuring continuous and diverse bloom.
  - Increasing undisturbed habitat/ground and nesting opportunities for native bees.
  - Providing pollinator refugia (e.g., protection from drought, extreme temperatures, and provision of additional water sources).
- Increased abundance of beneficial insects and host plants important for natural pest management.
- Improved cost efficiency (e.g., removal of marginal crop land from production and/or improvement of produce quality from enhanced pollination).
- Improved wildlife habitat.

Eligible Expenses

- Establishment costs of pollinator strips or other perennial cover for pollinator habitat.
- Eligible pollinator habitat must be at least 0.2 ha (0.5 acres) up to 8 ha (20 acres). Pollinator habitat over 8 ha (20 acres) will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis.
- Purchases of pollinator seed mixes, trees, and shrubs.
- Nutrient and soil pH analysis and modification adjustment expenses as required.

Level of Financial Assistance

- Establishment costs up to $600 per acre.
- Up to $100 per acre per year for the approved period indicated in the Letter of Offer.

Additional Requirements

- Cropland in production or in development to an agricultural commodity for the previous four crop years.
- Seeding mixes should target multiple different non-invasive species of pollinator-friendly flowering plants, including wildflowers, legumes, and/or trees and shrubs with bloom times throughout the season. More than six species is encouraged.
- Mow only 30% of the pollinator habitat per year.
- Pollinator strips should be left season-long before harvest to maximize habitat potential.
- On Crown Land, if permissible by lease.

ELEMENT 3-B:

Conversion of marginal and high-risk annual cropland

For the conversion of annual marginal cropland and high-risk annual cropland (e.g., over 10% slope) to permanent grassland, or trees including the establishment of native or tame forages to support improved soil health and biodiversity, strengthen the resilience of agricultural lands and, improved water quality.

Eligible Expenses

- Nutrient and soil pH analysis and modification adjustment expenses as required.
- Cost of certified or common seed species from registered dealers and native tree species from a nursery.
- Financial assistance levels for contract labour will be based on the quote provided.

Additional Requirements

- Applicants must provide evidence that the cropland is either high-risk (e.g., with slopes exceeding 10%) or of marginal quality.
- Applicants are required to provide a description of the change of land use following project implementation.

Level of Financial Assistance

- 100% of establishment costs to a maximum of $1,500 per acre.
- Up to $500 per acre per year for the approved period indicated in the Letter of Offer.

ELEMENT 3-C:

Creation or Widening of Riparian Buffers in Agricultural Fields Adjacent to Water Bodies

Riparian Buffers are areas of native or planted vegetation adjacent to water bodies. Riparian buffers support climate change adaptation, carbon sequestration, water quality, and biodiversity. The objectives of creating or widening riparian buffers include the following:

- Providing habitat for biodiversity.
- Providing extensive upland ecosystems.
- Improved habitat on highly sensitive areas of the landscape.
- Improved water quality.

Eligible Expenses

- Site preparation including nutrient and soil pH analysis and modification adjustment expenses as required.
- Planting costs for adaptable, hardy and non-invasive species, including the purchase of certified or common seed from registered dealers and native trees from a nursery.
- Temporary fencing.
- Additional expenses may be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Level of Financial Assistance

- 100% of establishment costs to a maximum of $1,500 per acre.
- Up to $500 per acre per year for the approved period indicated in the Letter of Offer.

Additional Requirements

- Buffers must exceed minimum standards setbacks as laid out in current legislation.
- Buffer strip design should be based on the site conditions (e.g., soil type, slope, and the volume of runoff) and consider buffer width. The wider the buffer, the more effective it will be in filtering contaminants, promoting infiltration, erosion control and wildlife habitat creation.
- Expansion of existing buffers will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

ELEMENT 3-D:

Shelterbelts

Shelterbelts are tree plantings that provide protection from wind erosion and landscape beautification but also provide environmental benefits including, snow trapping, microclimate enhancement, and wildlife habitat as well as providing increased carbon sequestration on farm.

Eligible Expenses

- Establishment costs of tree buffers for farmyards, livestock facilities and fields.
- Nutrient and soil pH analysis and modification adjustment expenses as required.
- Weed control.
- Replacement of existing shelterbelt or windbreak where trees are not providing adequate protection.

Level of Financial Assistance

- 100% of establishment costs to a maximum of $1,500 per acre.
- Up to $500 per acre per year for the approved period indicated in the Letter of Offer.

Additional Requirements

- Shelterbelt projects on Crown Lands must exceed the minimum requirements of the lease and management plan to be eligible.

ELEMENT 3-E:

Species at Risk Support

Protecting species at risk and overall biodiversity is a societal responsibility that supports the health and balance of ecosystems.

Eligible Expenses

- Infrastructure establishment.
- Changes in crop management (delayed cuts, or crop termination and removal methods).
- Alternate grazing management (including fencing and livestock waterers to prevent livestock from entering protected areas).

Level of Financial Assistance

- 100% of establishment costs to a maximum of $1,500 per acre.
- Up to $100 per acre per year for the approved period indicated in the Letter of Offer.

Additional Requirements

- Applicants must indicate they are interested in on-farm species at risk stewardship projects.
- The Department of Natural Resources and Energy Development will verify the presence of Species at Risk and biodiversity protection on the PIDs and will recommend appropriate BMPs accordingly.

ELEMENT 3-F:

Strip Planting for Erosion Control

For strip planting of perennial cover to create new grassed waterways within a field, including the creation of new terraces and farmable berms. A grassed waterway is a vegetative filter system, either natural or constructed that is shaped and graded to carry surface water at a non-erosive velocity to a stable outlet. It provides several environmental benefits including erosion mitigation, runoff control and biodiversity support.

Eligible Expenses

- Planting costs for adaptable, hardy, and non-invasive species, including the purchase of certified or common seed from registered dealers.
- Earthwork and seedbed preparation for grassed waterways and associated terraces and farmable berms, erosion control matting, and silt fencing.
- Engineering design work.

Level of Financial Assistance

- 100% of establishment costs to a maximum of $200 per acre.
- Up to $100 per acre per year for the approved period indicated in the Letter of Offer.

ELEMENT 3-G:

Enhanced Riparian Area Grazing Management

Sound grazing management near water bodies involves proper timing and limiting the duration of cattle in a riparian area. The use of alternative watering systems to direct animal access and, in some cases, the use of fencing in the riparian zone are important tools for erosion mitigation, improved water quality and runoff control.

Eligible Expenses

- Livestock fencing to exclude animals from riparian area. Perimeter fencing is not eligible.
- Remote watering installations (installed at same time as riparian area established). May include portable watering systems, well drilling, stock tanks, pumping systems, plumbing materials, power sources (e.g., wind, solar panels and battery storage), and alert systems.

Level of Financial Assistance

- 100% of establishment costs to a maximum of $20,000.
- Up to 15% of annual payment based on establishment cost for the approved period indicated in the Letter of Offer.

Additional Requirements

- Livestock fencing installations must exceed minimum standards setbacks as laid out in current legislation.

ELEMENT 3-H:

Increasing Legumes in Existing Pastures or Hay Fields

Legumes have several environmental benefits, including nitrogen fixation. Legumes fix nitrogen from the atmosphere which contributes toward reducing greenhouse gas emissions and reducing the need for synthetic fertilizers.

Eligible Expenses

- The cost of certified forage legume cultivars adapted to New Brunswick growing conditions.
- Other establishment costs including soil nutrient and pH analysis, soil nutrient and pH adjustment expenses to support legume establishment.

Level of Financial Assistance

- 100% of establishment costs up to $400/acre.
- Up to $100 per acre per year for the approved period indicated in the Letter of Offer.

Additional Requirements

- Soil and manure analyses must be submitted. Must submit soil analysis & a manure analysis, as necessary.
- Incremental increase in the percentage of legumes in plant stand must be demonstrated in a previous cropping plan. Must have an incremental increase in the percentage of legumes in plant stand from previous cropping plan.
- A minimum of 50% legumes in hay fields and of 30% legumes in pasture must be established and maintained. Must establish and maintain a minimum 50% legumes in hay fields and 30% legumes in pasture.

Administrative Guidelines for the Resilient Agricultural Landscape Program

Equipment funded under RALP must not be sold or traded without permission for the period indicated in the Letter of Offer.

Administrative Guidelines

All applicants must be familiar with the administrative guidelines prior to applying. The Administrative Guidelines can be found here: **SCAP Administrative Guidelines**

Reporting

Applicants may be required to report on the impact of the funding received. Reporting requirements will be outlined in the letter of offer.

Other Requirements

It is the applicant's responsibility to ensure that any necessary permits, environmental approvals, or certifications are obtained to complete their project.

Regional Collaboration

Projects that are assessed to demonstrate benefits and impacts to more than one province may be eligible for funding on a regional basis.

How to Apply

Applicants should discuss applications with appropriate Department of Agriculture, Aquaculture and Fisheries staff (Business Growth Officer, Development Officer or Specialist) before applying. A list of departmental contacts can be found at the following link:

Crop Sector Development (Branch) (gnb.ca)

Completed applications may be submitted by e-mail or mail.

E-mail Applications:

Sustainable.CAP@gnb.ca

Mail Applications:

Sustainable CAP Program Administrator
Industry Financial Programs
Department of Agriculture, Aquaculture and Fisheries
PO Box 6000
Fredericton, NB
E3B 5H1