



Terms of Reference

Evaluation of the Smartcane BMP Program

CANEGROWERS is seeking applications to evaluate the effectiveness of the grower best management practices program, Smartcane BMP.

BACKGROUND

The Smartcane Best Management Practice (BMP) Program emerged from the industry's continuing, and increasing, need to demonstrate stewardship of its farms' natural resources and, by implication, the risk of water leaving farms affecting the health of the Great Barrier Reef (GBR) lagoon. Seven modules cover all aspects of the cane farming business. Three of the modules (Soil health and nutrition; Pests, diseases and weeds; and Irrigation and drainage) are considered core to the Program's focus on stewardship and sustainable production, and accreditation in the Program is defined as meeting the level of 'industry standard', or better, in at least these three core modules.

Participation in the Smartcane BMP program (apart from simple registration) occurs through three stages:

1. Benchmarking through self-assessment (completion is defined as self-assessment in at least the core modules);
2. Working towards accreditation (collating and/or acquiring the required records and other evidence for at least the 3 core modules); and
3. Accreditation through independent audit.

Interaction in the program occurs via district facilitators and a web interface. The BMP database reports participation rates and practice standards for each of the 13 cane-producing districts. As at 4 April 2016, 1,261 businesses had completed benchmarking through self-assessment and 77 businesses had received accreditation. Several hundred more are working towards accreditation.

The Program was developed in 2012-13 and has been available to growers since the beginning of 2014. Development and delivery has been supported by the Queensland Government.

CANEGROWERS Queensland manages the Smartcane Best Management Practices (BMP) Program on behalf of all Queensland cane growers.

PURPOSE

The primary objective of the evaluation is to determine how well the Program is producing its intended effects. These effects are primarily a benchmarking and accreditation process that credibly and pragmatically demonstrates the environmental stewardship of individual growers, the industry's commitment to continuous improvement and, collectively, retains the industry's social licence to operate. Other intended effects include helping growers to identify opportunities for further productivity improvements and guiding extension and training resources. An emerging knock-on effect for growers and industry, is the potential for the program to assist with retention of market options. Many larger customers are signalling increasing demand for 'sustainable' sugar.

The evaluation should also identify opportunities to improve the Program with respect to:

1. Appropriateness and clarity of the program goals
2. Effectiveness of delivery

3. Engagement of growers
4. Engagement of key stakeholders
5. Contribution to improving industry environmental stewardship
6. Adaptability of the Program.

Of relevance to the evaluation are the motivations of those currently involved in the program, to various levels, as well as the reasons why more growers are not yet involved. The evaluation should also provide understanding of what growers believe they have achieved through their various levels of participation.

Data is available on rates of participation to various stages of the program, and there are numerous case studies of accredited growers. Analysis of grower motivations, and on the benefits perceived by participating growers, will require additional data acquisition by survey. In addition, interview of key industry and stakeholder representatives will be required to determine their perception of the program's effectiveness.

Selection criteria and process

Project proposals must be submitted by COB 29 April 2016. Proposals will be assessed on the following criteria:

- Demonstrated understanding of the proposed work and ability to deliver.
- Soundness of the methods proposed.
- Timeframe for project completion and draft milestones by which progress will be measured.
- Experience of the nominated team member(s) in conducting evaluations of this nature.
- Value for money.

Proposal requirements

The proposal should be no longer than 4 pages and include a detailed and fully costed budget (this can be submitted in addition to the 4 pages) covering all resources required to undertake the work. The proposal should also include a work breakdown structure, timeframe for completion, draft milestone achievement criteria and payment schedule. Consultants should include their daily rate for each team member, and an estimate of any expenses.

Timeframe

It is expected the project will be completed within a 10-week timeframe.

Reporting requirements

The successful applicant will report to the BMP Project Manager. The successful applicant will be required to enter into a consultancy agreement with CANEGROWERS and will need to submit a final report.

Confidentiality

All proposals will be treated in strict confidence.

Further information

If you have questions regarding this project, please contact: Mick Quirk
Smartcane BMP project manager
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M 0408748141
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Submission information

Proposals are to be submitted electronically to: Mick Quirk
E: michael_quirk@canegrowers.com.au

Proposal must be received by COB 29 April 2016