

# Sustainability Loans Guidelines Commercial Fishers

## 1. About the program

Sustainability Loans are aimed at helping secure the future sustainability of your Queensland based commercial wild-catch fishing business by providing concessional finance towards projects which enhance your:

- a) **natural resource sustainability** by minimising adverse impacts of fishing activities on ecosystems
- b) **fishing system sustainability** by adopting systems and practices to mitigate the effects of climate, biosecurity and market risks
- c) **financial sustainability** by increasing productivity and long-term viability of your commercial wild-catch fishing business

The maximum loan available under the program is **\$1.3 million**.

## 2. How loans may be used

2.1 See guide to eligible activities in the appendix to this guideline on page four.

## 3. Eligibility

3.1 To be eligible for a Sustainability Loan at least one person in your commercial wild-catch fishing business needs to be a commercial wild-catch fisher.

3.2 You are also required to:

- (a) have operated your Queensland based commercial wild-catch fishing business for at least two years
- (b) have sound prospects for commercial viability and the ability to service the loan in the long term

3.3 For purposes related to **financial sustainability** you are required to demonstrate:

- (a) concessional finance is needed to secure sound prospects for success in the long term; and
- (b) the proposal is not simply expanding an already financially sound commercial wild-catch fishing business.

3.4 For purposes related to **natural resource sustainability** or **fishing system sustainability**:

- (a) you should demonstrate the commercial wild-catch fishing business is not in a financial position to readily support the proposal from cash resources, or a ready capability to service increased commercial lending.

## 4. Loan terms and interest rates and repayments

4.1 The maximum term for Sustainability Loans is 20 years. We will work with you to determine the most appropriate term for your loan proposal.

4.2 You may access interest only periods up to a maximum of five years if needed, for instance in periods of cash flow stress, at any time over the loan term.

4.3 You may fix interest rates initially for periods of one, three or five years. (Current interest rates are available on QRIDA's website at: [www.qrida.qld.gov.au](http://www.qrida.qld.gov.au)). We will discuss interest rate structures with you when we assess your loan.

4.4 Loans will be repaid via direct debit from your nominated bank account.

## 5. Loan security

5.1 Sustainability Loans need to be adequately secured by a mortgage over business assets. (We will discuss security arrangements with you in detail when we assess your application).

## 6. How to apply

6.1 To apply for a Sustainability Loan:

- (a) read this guideline and discuss your proposal with us. (You may consider discussing your application with, or seeking assistance from your business adviser/s); and
- (b) complete an application form, project or business plan, cashflow forecast and projected catch which are located on QRIDA's website. Instructions for completion are included in these forms. Please contact us should you require any assistance; and
- (c) submit your application and supporting documents to us by post, email or fax.

6.2 Sustainability Loans are subject to the availability of funds.

6.3 Penalties apply for providing false and misleading information.

## 7. How loans are assessed and decided

7.1 Upon receiving your application, we will acknowledge receipt by email or mail and let you know if any further information is required to commence assessing your application.

7.2 Complete applications will be allocated to an assessor who will contact you to discuss your application and ensure we fully understand your proposal. Our assessor will also liaise with your business advisers or financiers as necessary.

7.3 We assess applications in date order of receipt and incomplete applications will not enter the assessment queue until all required information is received.

7.4 QRIDA will decide Sustainability Loan applications and make a loan offer in writing to approved applicants.

7.5 If offered a loan you will be required to enter into a loan agreement with QRIDA which will be prepared in conjunction with loan security documentation. This agreement will include details of loan terms and conditions, repayment details and interest rates.

## 8. Other requirements

8.1 Sustainability Loans are subject to an annual review and recipients are required to provide the necessary financial information when requested each year.

8.2 The interest rate on your Sustainability Loan may be increased to commercial rates if for example your financial capacity improves during the term of the loan to the point where the concessional rate is no longer required.

8.3 You will be required to report annually on the outcomes achieved with the loan funds relative to the agreed activities outlined in the loan agreement.

8.4 You will also be required to:

- (a) demonstrate any proposals for rationalising partnerships are not simply refinance arrangements
- (b) demonstrate for any proposals to upgrade, replace or purchase plant and machinery, that the plant and machinery will be used predominately for the commercial fishing business
- (c) provide QRIDA with copies of licences, permits, approvals or other authorisations under an Act required for proposed activities.

## 9. More information

If you would like more information about Sustainability Loans, QRIDA is happy to answer any questions you may have. We can be contacted on **Freecall 1800 623 946** or visit [www.qrida.qld.gov.au](http://www.qrida.qld.gov.au).

Regional Area Managers located in Brisbane, Bundaberg, Townsville, Cloncurry, Innisfail, Kingaroy, Emerald (with an office in Longreach), Mackay, Rockhampton, Roma and Toowoomba are also available to assist you.

## 10. Definitions

**Commercial wild-catch fisher** means:

- (a) a sole trader who spends the majority of his or her labour on, and derives the majority of his or her income from a commercial wild-catch fishing business; or
- (b) in relation to a partnership, proprietary company or trust that carries on a commercial fishing enterprise, any partner in the partnership, shareholder in the company or trustees of the trust who spends the majority of their labour on, and derives the majority of their income from, the commercial fishing business.

**Commercial wild-catch fishing** means the fishing and harvesting for commercial purposes of marine and freshwater species from a wild population that are caught in their natural environment.

**Commercial wild-catch fishing business** means a business that:

- (a) is carried on by a sole trader, trust, partnership or proprietary company that involves aquacultural and commercial wild-catch fishing
- (b) holds an Australian Business Number (ABN).

**Sharefisher** means a person who

- (a) works in a business in the commercial wild-catch fishing industry and
- (b) shares the proceeds of the business with the owner of the business.

## Appendix – Guide to eligible activities

### Eligible activities to enhance natural resource sustainability may include:

- controlling and dispersing effluent and waste
- installation of equipment to improve environmental outcomes
  - turtle exclusion devices
  - by-catch reduction devices
  - hopper
  - net acoustic alarms (pingers)
  - on-board effluent treatment facilities

### Eligible activities to enhance fishing system sustainability may include:

- projects to minimise impacts of climate change and market risk on the *commercial wild-catch fishing* industry
- improve and maintain water supplies and water use efficiency
- alternative systems of energy generation for example solar energy.
- upgrade vessel and equipment
  - purchase of selective fishing gear, modified or equip to minimise by-catch
  - motor replacement/upgrade
  - new propeller systems for fuel efficiency improvements
  - new monitoring devices

### Eligible activities to enhance financial sustainability may include:

- acquiring a new vessel
- buying fishing quota or other authorities to increase fishing effort
- installation or modification of equipment for example, new electronic sea floor mapping echo-sounding equipment
- purpose or upgrade of processing machinery/systems
  - value adding
  - catch waste minimisation
  - catch waste/by product conversion
  - prawn grading machines
  - fish filleting machines scallop sorting machines
  - upgraded refrigeration
  - wet or dry ice rooms and ice makers for keeping fresh fish
  - wet tanks for live fish
- improving operational efficiency
  - motor replacement/upgrade
  - new propeller systems for fuel efficiency improvements
  - new monitoring devices
- fisheries development
  - proving a developmental fishery (observer, monitoring, stock assessment costs)

**Note: QRIDA will consider other activities where it is demonstrated they will enhance your natural resource, fishing system or financial sustainability.**