



WA Agricultural Research Collaboration

Innovation • Transformation • Growth

WAARC Polyphagous Shot-hole Borer Fusarium Dieback (PSHB-FD) Research Program

Program Guidelines for Applicants

Updated January 2025

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1. Program overview

Program overview

The WAARC Polyphagous Shot-hole Borer Fusarium Dieback Research Program is an initiative of the State Government-backed WA Agricultural Research Collaboration (WAARC), which aims to bolster the existing national eradication response through targeted research and development to help future-proof the State's agriculture and food sector.

WAARC brings together the research strengths of its members Curtin University, Murdoch University, University of Western Australia, CSIRO, Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development (DPIRD) and Grower Group Alliance (GGA), to build additional research capacity and respond to new challenges within primary industries.

The WAARC is seeking applications from researchers, institutions, and industry groups to develop collaborative projects addressing the significant threat posed by the Polyphagous Shot-Hole Borer Fusarium Dieback pest-disease complex (PSHB-FD). WAARC's focus is on agricultural impacts, but it recognises the broader biosecurity challenges involved. The intent is to drive innovative research and development (R&D) solutions aimed at eradicating and controlling PSHB-FD in Western Australia.

To be eligible to apply for funding, applicants must demonstrate their research project aligns with one or more of the three identified WAARC PSHB-FD priority research themes (outlined more fully in an accompanying document):

- a. Host, Pathogen, Pest, Environment and their interactions
- b. Innovative Control Strategies- chemical and biological control strategies
- c. New approaches to improve detection and surveillance efficiency and success

Other eligibility requirements also apply and are outlined elsewhere in this document.

Program objectives

The objective of the program is to assist the development and selection of collaborative research projects aimed at bolstering the State's PSHB-FD eradication response and to fund research that aligns with the priorities of WAARC and the WA agriculture sector.

Building research capability in WA is strongly supported by the WAARC and opportunities to engage postgraduate students in research opportunities is encouraged.

2. Information for applicants

Program information and support for applicants

To be eligible for assessment, applicants need to complete and **submit an application via the DPIRD SmartyGrants platform**. For this round, opening and closing dates for applications are found in the table below. Late submissions will not be accepted.

It is important that applicants submit a clear and well-developed application that answers all eligibility questions, addresses the criteria, identifies a Chief Investigator belonging to a WAARC member organisation and provides the documentary evidence required.

To enable potential applicants to submit quality applications, please refer to the additional information available at:

- WA Agricultural Research Collaboration website: www.waarc.org.au
- The following contact email, for those who require additional information about the program and application process: info@waarc.org.au

Applicants who have questions or require support in completing the online application are encouraged to contact WAARC well before the closing date.

Opening and closing dates for applications

Round 1 Dates*	Date
EOI - Applications Open	20 November 2024 (9.00am AWST)
EOI - Applications Close	18 December 2024 (5.00pm AWST)
EOI - Notification of application results	22 January 2025
Full Proposal - Applications Open	22 January 2025
Full Proposal - Applications Close	12 February 2025 (5.00pm AWST)
Full Proposal - Notification of application results	28 February 2025 (tbc)

*Subsequent rounds are yet to be determined

Who can apply for funding

- A suitable Chief Investigator employed by a WAARC member organisation must lead the chosen research project.
- All Chief Investigators must have capacity to oversee the research project and be qualified in the area of proposed research. Other researchers involved must be appropriately qualified.
- A proposed Chief Investigator must complete the application for a WAARC funded PSHB-FD project. During the assessment process, we will contact the Chief Investigator, as the authorised contact person.

- Non-WAARC members can participate in research projects as partners but cannot serve as the Chief Investigator (primary applicant). They may receive project funding through a subcontract arranged by the lead organisation (WAARC member).

Activities that can be funded

- WAARC member salaries
- Research operational funding
- Post-doctoral salaries- directly related to the research project
- Post-graduate student operating
- Travel within the quarantine zone or within WA for research purposes
- Travel inter-state or internationally will be considered for specific PSHB-FD research opportunities, to gain experience not available in Western Australia. The travel must be fully justified and explicitly agreed by the WAARC Director prior to booking.

Activities that CAN NOT be funded

- Activities that are not directly related to the WA PSHB-FD eradication response
- Salaries of non-WAARC members
- Conference costs
- Purchase of capital items

Applicant funding contribution

The Chief Investigator must ensure that the total in-kind contributions from WAARC members, project partners, and all project participants are equal to or exceed the amount of WAARC cash funding, maintaining a 1:1 ratio.

External cash and member cash funding contributions will be taken into consideration, but is not a pre-requisite.

Payment arrangements

The payment policy for this program is as follows:

- Payments will be made in accordance with milestones as outlined in individual contracts for each research project.
- Each contract will name an appropriate Chief Investigator, who must be employed by a WAARC member organisation, who will be the authorised point of contact for the project.

Subcontracting arrangements can be established between the lead organisation (WAARC member) and its collaborators or other partners.

Program funding limits and timelines

Timelines

Applications will first be assessed for their eligibility. Those that meet the eligibility criteria and have received endorsement by their selected Chief Investigator will progress to the assessment stage. Following the initial evaluation of EOIs, shortlisted applicants will be invited to submit a full application, which will then be evaluated by an assessment panel. Once the WAARC Steering Committee approves the list of potential Program participants, successful applicants will progress to the contracting phase.

Funding

WAARC has allocated up to \$2 million towards this funding round, with individual projects eligible to receive up to \$1 million in WAARC funding.

Payments will be made to the project Chief Investigator's host organisation as per contract milestones. There will be a contract between the Western Australian Agricultural Authority (WAAA), representing WAARC, and the Chief Investigator's host organisation.

Existing and Proposed Intellectual Property and Possible Restrictions on Freedom to Operate

WAARC will seek to ensure beneficial interest in all IP generated as a result of project funding, protecting stakeholder access and promoting equitable outcomes. Failure to disclose this information may impact project approval or funding decisions.

Applicants are required to identify and flag any existing or potentially registerable intellectual property (IP) that may arise from the proposed project at this application stage, as well as throughout the project's duration. This includes, but is not limited to:

1. **Patentable Technologies:** Innovations such as chemical formulations, traps, attractants, or control methods that may be eligible for patent protection.
2. **Trademarks:** Any brand names, logos, or identifiers associated with the project that may require trademark registration.
3. **Design Patents:** Novel designs or configurations for physical items such as traps or attractants that may qualify for design protection.
4. **Plans for Commercialisation:** If there are intentions to commercialise any project outcomes, such as new pest control products or detection tools, these plans should be outlined, including any preliminary steps taken toward licensing or market introduction.
5. **Existing IP Restrictions:** Applicants should disclose any pre-existing IP or licensing agreements that could impose restrictions on the project's freedom to operate or limit accessibility of project outcomes.
6. **Private Entity Involvement:** Where private companies are involved, applicants must clearly outline any expected ownership rights, agreements, or access limitations related to IP generated through the project.

Applicant Assessment criteria

PROJECT TITLE:
CHIEF INVESTIGATOR: <i>(identify the Chief Investigator- must be an employee of a WAARC member organisation)</i>
LEAD INSTITUTION (WAARC member):
ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA (all criteria must be met)
1. Theme and alignment to theme objectives: Identify which WAARC PSHB-FD priority theme your research project is aligned with and how it addresses the theme objectives
2. Collaborators – institutions and identified researchers Which of WAARC’s members will be involved in your project? (A minimum of three WAARC members are required for each project. Please indicate the specific members and their roles. The extent and quality of collaboration is important)
3. How will this project directly support the PSHB-FD eradication process/strategy? Outline how your proposed research objectives and design align with the eradication goals and potentially contribute to the PSHB-FD response.
4. How does your project aim to protect agricultural industries from PSHB-FD? Specify the expected impact of your research on safeguarding WA’s agricultural sector from PSHB-FD and any associated benefits.
5. Are logistical requirements from PSHB-FD response team able to be accommodated? Specify any logistical support or coordination with the response team that would be necessary for your project to proceed and provide evidence of agreement from the response team/ DPIRD plant biosecurity (e.g. specific resources such as trees left standing or permits).
SELECTION CRITERIA
Delivery
Project plan /Methods: <i>Outline your project plan (use the WAARC template provided)</i>
Project Timeline and Milestones: What is the proposed timeline for your project? (expected to be 3 years or less) Include key milestones and expected completion dates, ensuring alignment with the urgency of the eradication response.

<p>Risk Management and Contingency Planning:</p> <p>What risks could impact the successful delivery of your project, and how do you plan to mitigate them?</p>
<p>Budget: Use the WAARC budget template provided. Include salaries and operational budget- particularly any high-cost items. Identify:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Researchers involved and their organisation (outline in-kind and cash contributions separately)</i> • <i>Cash requested from WAARC and what it will be used for</i> • <i>Co-investor cash contribution (if applicable)</i>
<p>Identify possible co-investors:</p>
<p>Scientific Merit</p>
<p>How will your work assist in decision-making for the PSHB-FD eradication response?</p> <p>Explain how the outcomes of your project will provide actionable insights or data to help inform key decisions for the PSHB-FD response.</p>
<p>Outline key resources or infrastructure needed (e.g. research facilities, equipment, field sites, permits) ensuring they are consistent with your stated outcomes and objectives.</p> <p>Identify any specific requirements, including facilities or regulatory approvals, and provide evidence of agreement from the response team/ DPIRD plant biosecurity (e.g. specific resources such as trees left standing or permits).</p>
<p>Adoption and Impact</p>
<p>Scalability and Broader Implications:</p> <p>Does your project have the potential to be scaled or applied more broadly beyond the immediate eradication response?</p> <p>Consider the wider implications of your research in protecting other sectors or regions.</p>
<p>Sustainability of Impact:</p> <p>How will the results of your project continue to support the agricultural sector or biosecurity efforts after completion? That is, how will the research contribute long-term benefits which will assist with informing future decisions.</p>
<p>Capability building</p> <p>Describe how your project supports research capability building for WA? (PhDs, post-doctoral, honours, support for young researchers)</p>
<p>Knowledge Sharing and Communication:</p> <p>How will you disseminate the findings from your research?</p> <p>Explain how the project's results will be communicated to key stakeholders, including WAARC members, DPIRD, and industry groups, to maximise impact.</p>

Assessment process

An objective assessment process will identify eligible applicants to whom funding can be awarded. WAARC is seeking to develop a balanced portfolio of research projects across WAARC members, and identified priority program areas and will consider equity and inclusion.

The assessment will be carried out in the following manner:

1. All EOI applications will be assessed by the EOI Assessment Panel to ascertain eligibility. Applications that do not meet the eligibility criteria will not progress to assessment.
2. EOI applications assessed as eligible will progress to being assessed against the Selection Criteria
3. Shortlisted EOI applications that have progressed through the first stage of assessment will be invited to submit a full application.
4. Full applications will be assessed by the full project application Assessment Panel.
5. A Recommendations Report will be developed by the Chair of the Assessment Panel and presented to the WAARC Steering Committee for final approval of Program Participants and funding allocation.

Notification of application outcomes

Notification of the outcomes of applications (both successful and unsuccessful) will take place as soon as practicable following assessment, in the form of an email.

Notices of Successful Application will contain an invitation to applicants to begin negotiating the terms of their contract. To be accepted into the WAARC PSHB-FD Program, the successful applicant will be required to contract with the Western Australian Agriculture Authority (representing WAARC and as administrator of WAARC funds).

Decision-making

The WAARC Steering Committee will make all final decisions for this program, based on the recommendations provided by the Chair of the PSHB-FD Research Assessment Panel. There will not be an appeal process, but applications are welcome to request feedback.

Conflict of interest

All persons involved in assessing applications and/or providing recommendations will complete a conflict of interest declaration. An assessor will not participate in the assessment of applications where there is a perceived or actual conflict of interest that cannot be appropriately managed. The Assessment Team Chair will be responsible for making judgements regarding conflicts of interest.

Contract arrangements

Agreement Terms

Successful applicants will be required to enter into a contract with the Western Australian Agriculture Authority (WAAA as administrator of WAARC funds) to participate in the program and for funds to be dispersed to the WAARC member organisation.

Some terms of the contract, including operational funding and commencement date, will be negotiable, and others will be a requirement for participating in the program. The latter includes obligations such as attending regular research updates. At this event, each program participant will be required to deliver a presentation on their research project. Upon completion, all program participants will also be required to give a presentation outlining the insights and results of their research, and their implications for industry.

Program participants will need to complete milestone reports demonstrating satisfactory progress towards the completion of their project to remain a participant in the program. The schedule of reporting and payments will be detailed in the contract. This report is in addition to any reporting required by their host organisation. Program participants may also be asked to present or represent WAARC at other WAARC or industry events, or to provide a statement or update for communication, reporting or promotion purposes.

Acknowledgement of WAARC as the funder must be made in any media, presentations and publications about the research. A WAARC logo should be used wherever possible. WAARC will provide the research team with their communications protocol.

Communications on the research must be mindful of the eradication response that is underway.

Breach of Agreement Terms

While funding recipients are expected to complete the research over the term agreed in the contract, where there are extenuating circumstances, recipients can request a variation to their contract.

3. Glossary of terms

Applicant – the individual who makes the application for funding.

Application – a submission made to the WA Agricultural Research Collaboration under the WAARC PSHB-FD Research program, via the online platform SmartyGrants.

AWST – Australian Western Standard Time.

Chief Investigator – an employee of a WAARC member organisation, with appropriate skills and experience, who takes primary responsibility for the oversight and delivery of the research project and ensuring that all administrative and reporting requirements of the project are met. This person will be the authorised contact person for the research project.

CSIRO – The Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation

Decision Maker – the WAARC Steering Committee, comprised of senior representatives of each of the WAARC member organisations, who are responsible for making the final funding decision.

DPIRD – Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development.

GGA – The Grower Group Alliance

Key Contact – the contact person if there are any queries or more information is required about the program.

Program – WA Agricultural Research Collaboration – Polyphagous Shot-hole Borer- Fusarium Dieback Research Program (WAARC PSHB-FD Research program).

Program Governance and Operational Framework – this document, which aims to provide clear and concise details of program management processes, administration, and governance.

Program Manager – the person responsible for managing the grant program.

Program Owner – the person responsible for implementation of the program on behalf of WAARC (the funding provider).

Program Participant – a successful applicant that has been accepted into the WAARC PSHB-FD research Program and entered into a contract with WAAA (representing WAARC).

Contract – a participant's agreement with WAAA (representing WAARC) that outlines the terms of their project funding.

SmartyGrants – the online grant management software tool used by this program.

Successful Applicant – an applicant who has been assessed and has progressed to the contracting phase. Once they have signed their contract, they become a 'Program Participant'.

UWA – The University of Western Australia

WAARC – the WA Agricultural Research Collaboration.

WAARC Executive Team – a management team comprised of WAARC Director Kelly Pearce, the WAARC Chief Operating Officer, and the appointed Program Leads.

WAARC Program Leads – the persons appointed to lead each of WAARC's six Programs.

Approval

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0.2	Kelly Pearce	15 January 2025
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