

Irrigated Farm Water Use Efficiency Assessments (IFWUEA) Information Sheet - Round 8

May 2016

1. Background

The NSW Sustaining the Basin: Irrigated Farm Modernisation (STBIFM) program is an initiative of the Department of Primary Industries (DPI) with funding from the Australian Government's *Sustainable Rural Water Use and Infrastructure* program.

The overall aim of the STBIFM is to improve on farm irrigation water use efficiency and achieve water savings. This is achieved by identifying inefficient parts of a farm's irrigation infrastructure and upgrading these to increase water use efficiency. The water recovered through the upgrade is then shared between irrigators and the environment.

Under STBIFM, funding may be provided to eligible irrigators to assist in meeting the cost of undertaking an Irrigation Farm Water Use Efficiency Assessment (IFWUEA) and on-farm works to improve water use efficiency.

The funding for IFWUEAs will be implemented by DPI under the following guidelines:

- a. DPI will subsidise an eligible irrigator up to 80 per cent, to a maximum of \$2,000 (excluding GST), toward the cash cost of one IFWUEA per farming business (i.e. per ABN number) for the assessment of irrigation water losses.
- b. The eligible irrigator must contribute a minimum of 20 per cent of the cash cost of the IFWUEA.
- c. Where a farm plan already exists that has been created using government funding, IFWUEA funding will be limited to the amount necessary to update the plan to meet the IFWUEA standards set out in this document.
- d. Funding will only be made available for IFWUEAs certified by a suitably certified or accredited irrigation consultant and subsequently verified by DPI.

2. What is an IFWUEA and what does it provide?

IFWUEAs locate and quantify irrigation water losses across an irrigator's Irrigation Management Area. An Irrigation Management Area is a farming unit which may be irrigated from one or multiple water sources and includes the full hydraulic extent of each water source. Hydraulic connectivity across the Irrigation Management Area is not a requirement. For example an Irrigation Management Area may include multiple hydraulically disconnected irrigation units that are managed as a single area. In such cases the IFWUEA should clearly identify the losses associated with each sub-unit. Preparing an IFWUEA is a valuable way of identifying where on-farm productivity improvements can be made. Whether considering

infrastructure upgrades or not, preparing an IFWUEA can help irrigators to manage their irrigation enterprise for improved productivity.

In preparing an IFWUEA, DPI recommends irrigators engage a suitably certified and/or accredited irrigation consultant to assist with analysis, interpretation and communication of information. IFWUEAs **must be certified by a suitably skilled irrigation consultant** before submission to DPI.

An IFWUEA is a **prerequisite** to applying for infrastructure funding under STBIFM and will be used by DPI during the assessment of funding applications. Proposed infrastructure projects must address irrigation water losses identified in the IFWUEA. Water sources must be accurately identified in the IFWUEA to enable compliant funding applications.

IFWUEAs provide information relating to:

- current irrigation system performance including on-farm irrigation water losses
- current irrigation management

An example of an IFWUEA report is available on the STBIFM website at:
www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/info/sustainingthebasin

Further information on the benefits that IFWUEAs have provided to local irrigators can be found in the 'Irrigation Farm Water Use Efficiency Assessments – the benefits' fact sheet on the STBIFM website:
www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/info/sustainingthebasin.

3. How to apply for IFWUEA funding

IFWUEA Forms are available from the STBIFM [website](#) or by contacting your local STBIFM Project Officer. The form includes a template to assist with the preparation of your IFWUEA. The IFWUEA Form should be read carefully in conjunction with this information sheet and the STBIFM Guidelines.

The IFWUEA Form must be completed correctly and identify the legal entity, property, eligible water resources, current irrigation system and assessment of on-farm losses. The certified IFWUEA and IFWUEA Form must be returned to DPI by 3 June 2016 for Round 8. It is strongly advised that IFWUEAs be submitted as soon as they have been certified so DPI verification can be completed as soon as possible. Completing the IFWUEA as soon as possible provides the greatest amount of time for the those eligible to apply for infrastructure funding to prepare an application.

Previous participants in STBIFM who have prepared an IFWUEA that has **not** been verified by DPI must submit the certified IFWUEA along with a completed IFWUEA Form for DPI verification. The certified IFWUEA submitted **must** meet the standards set out in IFWUEA Information Sheet and these Guidelines

STBIFM participants who have a DPI verified IFWUEA may choose to complete the IFWUEA Form to page 6 only before returning it to DPI.

IFWUEA Forms and the accompanying IFWUEA should be submitted as a hard copy together with any supporting information to DPI. These will be accepted by registered post or in person at Wagga Wagga. Applications must be received in Wagga Wagga, or have a registered post lodgement date and/or postmark on or before, 3 June 2016.

Forms should be posted or delivered to:

NSW Sustaining the Basin: Irrigated Farm Modernisation Project
NSW Department of Primary Industries
Private Mail Bag, Wagga Wagga NSW 2650

Reimbursement will be initiated once the IFWUEA has been verified and DPI has the associated information to process the payment. Please see Section 7 for more information.

4. Verification of IFWUEAs

IFWUEAs are verified by DPI against DPI's IFWUEA Reporting Standards (Section 6) to ensure they meet industry standards.

DPI may request additional information or clarification from the applicant regarding the IFWUEA before verification is granted.

The verified IFWUEA is held by DPI in accordance with its privacy obligations and becomes a component of any future infrastructure modernisation application that an applicant submits.

5. Irrigation Consultants

5.1 Who is a suitable irrigation consultant?

Irrigation consultants must be certified and/or accredited by an irrigation related independent body which has an appeals or review process and a code of conduct.

It is expected that a suitable irrigation consultant will have:

- **Skills** in assessing irrigation water losses such as from water storages, field application systems, distribution systems and irrigation management practices.
- **Membership** to an organisation which provides accreditation for members based on an agreed code of conduct and has an appeals process for the consideration of the quality of advice provided.
- **Access** to methods of water loss assessment such as using recognised computer aided modelling products and/or mapping to quantify losses to an industry standard.
- **Experience** in conducting water loss assessment calculations on a relevant irrigation system and its parts for example storages, flood/surface, spray and drip irrigation system components.

It is expected that a suitable irrigation consultant will:

- Provide experienced and qualified IFWUEA services to eligible irrigators on request and in a timely manner
- Provide an IFWUEA containing the information outlined in the IFWUEA Reporting Standards (Section 6) to an eligible irrigator within **three months** of the date of notification of eligibility and prior to the advertised dates for the funding round.
- Agree on a cost of service with an eligible irrigator and receive payment from them for IFWUEA services and provide written invoices and receipts to them without delay.

Examples of suitable accrediting bodies include (but are not limited to):

- Irrigation Australia Limited, Certified Irrigation Designers with relevant speciality,
- Irrigation Australia Limited, Certified Irrigation Agronomist,
- Irrigation Surveyors and Designers Group corporate member,
- Ag Credited with Ag Institute Australia,
- A Professional Consultant of Crop Consultants Australia Inc.
- Engineers Australia

This list is not exhaustive. DPI reserves the right to request evidence of relevant skills and experience.

If unsure of the suitability of an Irrigation Consultants credentials, please refer to DPI for clarification.

5.2 Who is not a suitable irrigation consultant?

The following are not eligible to conduct IFWUEA services for STBIFM:

1. Any person who is not a member of a suitable organisation.
2. Any person who cannot demonstrate an understanding of actual farm water loss.
3. Employees of DPI.

6. IFWUEA Verification

6.1 IFWUEA reporting standards

IFWUEAs must include, as a minimum, information and/or discussion on the following:

Part 1: Applicant details

- Legal entity contact details
- Australian Business Number (ABN)

Part 2: Property Description

- Property details
- Property description
- Total irrigated area (ha)
- Description of current irrigation systems, crops and their management
- Current irrigation layout (i.e. map outlining fields, channels, pumps, storages, pipes, systems, property boundary, north arrow, topography, etc.)

Water Resources

- Water Access Licence information (regulated, unregulated, supplementary, Harvestable Right, Floodplain Harvesting and groundwater)

Part 3: Assessment of on-farm losses

Whole farm water balance including:

- Industry comparison of farm water use efficiency (i.e. irrigation water use efficiency – IWUI, and gross production water use efficiency – GPWUI)
- Assessment of component losses (where applicable) including:
 - Distribution systems losses (surface and pressure)
 - Storage losses
 - Application systems losses
 - Production losses

Attachments

- IFWUEA Verification Checklist (signed by suitable irrigation consultant and irrigator)
- Consultant's evidence of certification

6.2 Maintenance of industry standards

Where DPI perceives that an irrigation consultant is not meeting relevant industry standards, DPI will lodge a submission to the relevant certifying body accompanied by de-personalised evidence (subject to

irrigator consent for release of this information). Where a submission is made to a certifying body, DPI will provide a copy of the submission to both the irrigation consultant and the associated irrigator.

7. Additional information

To facilitate payment for the preparation of an IFWUEA, applicants should provide DPI with the following:

- Electronic Funds Transfer authorisation form,
- Tax invoice(s) and receipt(s) from consultant,
- Tax invoice from irrigator to NSW Trade & Investment.

8. Confidentiality

IFWUEAs submitted to DPI will remain 'commercial-in-confidence'. However, submitted IFWUEAs become the property of DPI and are held as a component of any subsequent infrastructure funding applications. DPI recommends irrigators keep a copy for their own records.

The IFWUEA will be used by DPI during the assessment of realistic water savings in any subsequent infrastructure funding application and to satisfy project reporting requirements (project reporting may use aggregated anonymous data).

All personal information provided in the IFWUEA is subject to the Privacy & Personal Information Protection Act 1998.

9. Complaints procedure

Should any individual or entity feel that it has been unfairly excluded from the IFWUEA process or unfairly disadvantaged they are invited to write to:

Director Water and Irrigation
NSW Sustaining the Basin: Irrigated Farm Modernisation
Tocal Agricultural Centre
Tocal Road
Paterson NSW 2421

Depending on the nature of the complaint, it may be referred to an independent probity advisor for review and recommendation.

DPI Contact Person:

Name:	Robert Hoogers	
Telephone Numbers:	T: 02 6951 2628	M: 0427 208 613
Email:	robert.hoogers@dpi.nsw.gov.au	

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Disclaimer: The information contained in this publication is based on knowledge and understanding at the time of writing (May 2016). However, because of advances in knowledge, users are reminded of the need to ensure that information upon which they rely is up to date and to check currency of the information with the appropriate officer of the Department of Primary Industries or the user's independent adviser.

Published by the Department of Primary Industries, a part of the Department of Industry, Skills and Regional Development.

INT16/39381