

Factsheet: Wastewater treatment projects



The benefits of running a wastewater treatment project

A wastewater treatment project treats household, commercial or industrial wastewater to prevent the release of methane, a potent greenhouse gas, into the atmosphere. This reduction in emissions earns Australian carbon credit units (carbon credits).

Wastewater treatment has a number of benefits:



Diversified revenue
Carbon credits provide another income stream for your business.



Lower electricity bills
Generate renewable electricity for use on-site or to sell to the grid.



Odour control
Wastewater treatment can reduce odour effects on local residents.



Environmental action
Be recognised for your contribution to Australia's emissions reductions.

How wastewater treatment projects work

The decomposing organic matter in wastewater produces biogas including greenhouse gases like methane. When treated in an open wastewater lagoon, these gases are released into the atmosphere.

Wastewater treatment projects involve replacing open lagoons with closed anaerobic digesters. An anaerobic digester is a system that collects biogas and sends it to be burned by a combustion device. You can combust biogas using a flare, or in a generator to heat boilers or generate renewable electricity. This electricity can be used on site or sold back into the electricity grid.

Combusting biogas converts its methane component to carbon dioxide, which is a much less potent greenhouse gas. You earn carbon credits for the reduction in methane emitted (measured in carbon dioxide equivalent).

Wastewater treatment project activities

You run a wastewater treatment project by:

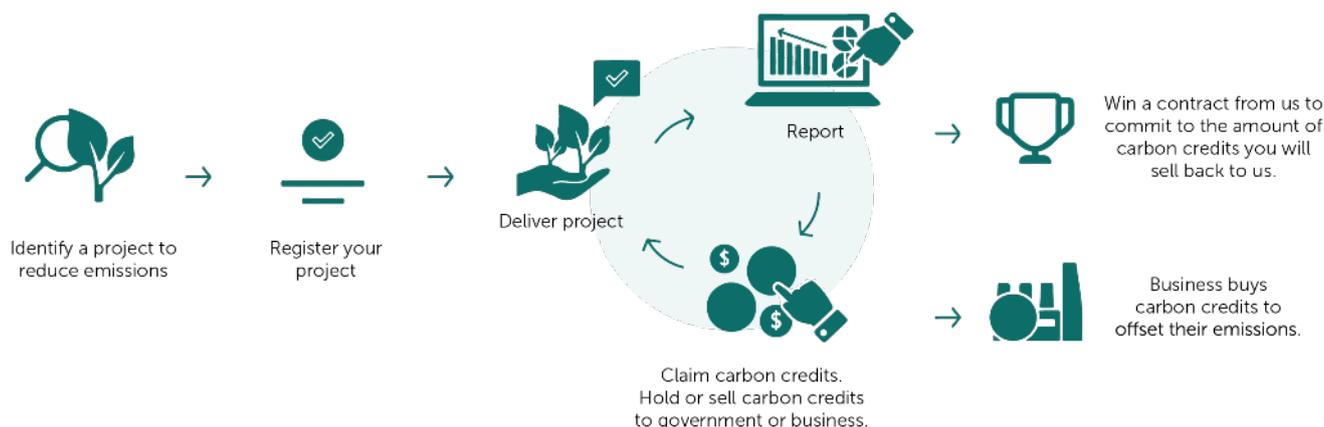
1. Measuring and calculating your current emissions levels.
2. Replacing an open wastewater treatment lagoon with an anaerobic digester (either a covered lagoon or an engineered biodigester).
3. Collecting and combusting captured methane (which can be used to generate useful heat or electricity).
4. Measuring and calculating emissions reductions from the treatment process upgrade.

How the Emissions Reduction Fund works

The Emissions Reduction Fund offers landholders, communities and businesses the opportunity to run new projects that reduce or remove greenhouse gas emissions from the atmosphere.

In running an Emissions Reduction Fund project, you can earn carbon credits and sell them to the Australian Government, or to companies and other private buyers. Each carbon credit represents one tonne of carbon dioxide equivalent greenhouse gas emissions stored or avoided.

How to participate



Emissions Reduction Fund project lifecycle

Make sure you are eligible to participate

To be eligible you must:

- Have been treating domestic, commercial or industrial wastewater in an open lagoon that is at least two metres deep, prior to registering your project. You also need to provide data on the historic sources of your wastewater.
- Establish legal right (the right to run your project and claim carbon credits) – for example, obtain consent from the site owner to undertake the project.
- Obtain regulatory approvals required to run your project and ensure project activities are not required to be carried out under a Commonwealth, state or territory law.
- Make sure your project is new – you cannot start project activities until after we register your project.

Running and reporting on your project

As part of registering a project, you will need to describe your proposed activities and calculate your expected carbon credits.

There are operating, monitoring, reporting and audit obligations in running a wastewater treatment project. You will need to report on your project at least once every two years. You receive carbon credits each time you report over a period of seven years.

Further information

Visit our website www.cleanenergyregulator.gov.au, or contact us on 1300 553 542.