Restore with ZFPA Grant Program

Administered by
Zero Foodprint Asia, a Hong Kong limited, non-profit organization

Application Period June 12 - July 17, 2023

Restore Grant Application Overview:

Funding:

1. The annual maximum grant is HKD150,000.
2. The minimum grant request is HKD20,000.
3. The Technical Assistance Provider (TAP) budget is in addition to the grant amount, and is capped at 20% of the grant amount. (For example, a HKD$100,000 grant may receive up to an additional HKD$20,000 for Technical Assistance).

Applicants who have received HKD$150,000 within a grant season will have to wait until the following grant season to be eligible.

Eligibility:

1. All managers and owners of agricultural operations in Hong Kong are eligible to apply.
2. Applications must include at least 1 approved management practice (see: Appendix B). Based on previous experience, we recommend applicants to include compost application, mulching and nutrient management for successful transition.
3. Applicants must commit to implement Regenerative Farming principles of using Integrated Pest Management (IPM) and nutrient management to cope with biotic and/or abiotic stress on the approved farm site, and work towards the goal of pesticide-free (including the organic-certified pesticides).
4. The applicant farm grows products for human consumption as food or beverage.
5. A TAP and estimate for services are a required part of the grant application.
6. Property owner approval or proof of right to manage the land is required.

Selection Process:

The Restore with ZFPA Fund supports a wide range of projects that contributes to building up healthy soil, more nutrient-rich food for humans and increasing knowledge about regenerative farming methods in Asia. We assess the project scope holistically and grants will be awarded primarily on the basis of:

1. the degree of soil health improvement,
2. the opportunity for enhancing both belowground and aboveground biodiversity,
3. the readiness for implementation, and
4. the possibility for increasing soil carbon sequestration potentials.

Timeline:

1. The application period is June 12, 2023 until July 17, 2023.
2. Shortlisted project applications will be contacted between August 1 - August 28 for follow up interviews.
3. All applicants will receive a notice of award status by Sept 11, 2023.
4. All Restore grants are for single year practice implementation, including practices that have a multi-year lifespan.
5. Implementation and use of funds must be completed within twelve (12) months of signing the contract.
6. Soil monitoring to take place over a three (3) year period from project start date.

Verification:

1. Restore is focused on verification of practices/land management. TAPs are required to document and confirm practices are completed in accordance with the practice goals and considerations in Appendix B.
2. Soil testing will be required at different stages of implementation and will last up to three (3) years, for data collection and modeling purposes.

The purpose of collecting data for Asian regions helps shed light on the impact regenerative farming and production methods have on the soil health, biodiversity and the change in soil carbon content in the context of small-holder farmers and the local conditions.

Restore Grant Application Guidelines

Purpose and Funding

Restore with ZFPA is a program of Zero Foodprint Asia, supported by Zero Foodprint headquarters, the Soil Science Society of China and Homeland Green Hong Kong. The Restore program serves as a catalyst for city, national, and regional efforts to increase the beneficial ecosystem services provided by agriculture and specifically to advance climate change goals by restoring soil biodiversity, improving soil health and sequestering atmospheric carbon. In doing so, the program also aims to engage the public in supporting the resilience and carbon benefit potential of the agricultural economy and land holdings.

The primary goals of the program are to distribute funds in a manner that reflects the following values:

1. spurring broader adoption of regenerative agricultural practices;
2. increasing awareness of and demand for ingredients produced through regenerative agriculture; and,
3. distributing Restore with ZFPA funds equitably.

The secondary goal of the program is to sequester atmospheric carbon in the form of soil organic carbon, resulting in myriad co-benefits for the public ranging from climate resilience to improved nutrient density.

The financial incentives made available through the Restore program enable farmers and ranchers to adopt soil health practices and, in exchange, businesses and consumers gain the opportunity to directly improve regional food systems and take regionalized climate action. The soil health practices funded through Restore with ZFPA will accrue value to the agricultural operation as well, improving water and nutrient management, among other benefits.

Property Owner Approval

A proof of right to manage the land is required if grant funds are awarded in one of two ways:

1. The property owner will be required to sign the "Grant Owner Consent" form at the end of Appendix A
2. A lease agreement with a term of no less than 36 months beginning from the anticipated project start date

Technical Assistance

A Technical Assistance Provider (TAP) is an agricultural consultant with experience in regenerative practices that promotes soil health. Coordination with a TAP will be required for grant selection. The TAP provides technical assistance to the farmer/rancher and monitors the improvements on the ground to ensure a successful 12 month transition.

An estimated cost of Technical Assistance must be included in the application and will be factored into the total cost estimate. The cost for TAP will be capped at 20% in addition to the funds for the practice(s).

At the existing scale, ZFPA will designate a TAP to you unless pre-suggested otherwise. This is currently executed via regional regenerative farming researchers via Homeland Green Hong Kong, the Mushroom Initiative and Soil Science Society of China.

Application Steps

Step 1

Complete Project Application Form (Appendix A)

Step 2

Record a 3-5 minute video outlining:

- Show & Tell: What is a typical day like for you on your farm?
- What is your farming philosophy? Please describe your current practices.
- What kind of challenges do you face?
- What kind of improvements would you like to see?
- What inspired you to learn more about regenerative farming?

Step 3: If approved - Execution of Grant Agreement

After award of the grant and prior to disbursement of funds, the grantee will execute Zero Foodprint Asia's grant funding agreement, which includes:

- "Grant Owner Consent" form at the end of Appendix A and/or a lease agreement with a term of no less than 36 months beginning from the anticipated project start date
- Final Project Scope & Implementation Timeline, *Project Start Date* and *Project Area* to be determined
- Technical assistance provider approval of project scope and intent to verify
- Refer to Timeline for Funding & Project Completion below

If the agreement has not been executed within 30 days of the agreed *Project Start Date* and *Project Area* decided during Step 3, Zero Foodprint Asia reserves the right to transfer the grant to the next eligible project.

Final Project Scope & Implementation Timeline

The applicant will work with the assigned TAP to produce a detailed Final Project Scope to include the farm layout that clearly indicates the *Project Area* and the practices to be adopted, and the detailed plan for implementation of the different practices listed in the project application form.

Timeline for Funding and Project Completion

Projects that consist of annual practices must be completed within twelve (12) months beginning from the agreed on *Project Start Date.*

Grants awarded for recurring annual practices will cover the first year implementation only. Subsequent year practices will require a new application and are encouraged, given the improved cost effectiveness of recurring annual practices.

Funding for practices will be provided following execution of the grant agreement in installments:

- ZFPA will release up to 50% of the grant amount on/before the *Project Start Date* for the implementations described in the application.

- Upon demonstration that the project is underway, ZFPA will release the second grant payment of not less than 25% within 90 days.
- The third and final payment, not to exceed 25%, will be made upon verification from the TAP. This payment will be made upon the final soil sample collection in the first year.
- Compost: In the event that the project involves the purchase of compost from a compost producer (not on farm produced), Zero Foodprint Asia reserves the right to appoint a specific high-quality compost source.

If the project cannot be completed within the required timeframe in the agreement, the grantee may be required to return any unexpended funds to the Zero Foodprint Asia and may become ineligible for future applications. Unforeseen/unpreventable circumstances, such as wildfire, flooding or drought, may permit additional flexibility in project implementation.

Outcome Evaluation and Storytelling

At no additional cost to the grantee, TAPs may conduct check-ins to help Zero Foodprint Asia better understand and quantify the positive impact of the project. Grantee agrees to a good faith effort to cooperate with efforts to provide pictures and brief descriptions of the farm and/or project for the purposes of restaurant marketing and fundraising. The grantee may be asked to disclose information related to the actual cost of practice implementation.

Application Reservations

Zero Foodprint Asia reserves the right to make changes to this application process without liability, obligation or requirement to pay any costs incurred by any applicant in applying for grant funding, including but not limited to:

1. reject all applications without any reason for the rejection,
2. ask the applicant to revise or modify their application,
3. modify, in the final grant funding agreement, any terms and/or conditions described in this guide,
4. terminate this process at any time, and/or

5. change any of the procedures or processes described in this guide.

Attachments:

Appendix A—Project Application Form

Appendix B—Approved Management Practices

APPENDIX A: Project Application Form

Please submit all application materials to: hello@zerofoodprintasia.org with the subject line "Restore with ZFPA Application".

Farmer Applicant

Name:	
Phone:	
Email:	
Address:	
Mailing Address (if different from above):	

About Your Farm

Name of Farm:			
Address:			
Property Owner Name:			
Owner's Email:			
Owner's Phone:			
Total Operation Size*:	Sq. ft/mǔ/DC	Years in Operation:	
Certificate/Farm Business			

Registration Number:			
Number of Employees:		Annual Production:	
Social media (if available):			
Webpage:		Facebook:	
Instagram:		Weixin:	

* 1 mǔ(畝) = 7173.33 sq. ft(平方呎);
  1 DC(斗種) = 7260.00 sq. ft(平方呎);
  6 DC(斗種) = 1 acres(英畝) = 43560.00 sq. ft(平方呎)

Primary Crops on Site(s):

_____

_____

_____

Where do you sell your produce? Write names of the restaurants, cafes, wholesalers you sell to:

_____

_____

Do you raise animals for human consumption purposes on your farm? (❒ Yes) (❒No)

If yes, how many production animals do you have on your farm?

_____

What is the amount of animal products produced per year?

_____

Prior soil health promoting practices implemented (if any):

_____

_____

Project Scope

To better understand the types of regenerative practices you would like to incorporate on your farm, please fill out the below table as best as you can.
*Refer to Appendix B for a list of the different types of practices.

Management Practice	Square Footage & Equivalent DC/Mŭ	Total Practice Cost Estimate
TOTAL		$

Total Cost Estimate $ _____

Technical Assistance Estimate (for official administrative staff) $ _____

TOTAL $ _____

Anticipated Project Start Date: _____ (dd/mm/yyyy)

Technical Assistance Provider (TAP) if available: (❒ Yes) (❒No)

If yes, please provide TAP Point of Contact:

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Email: _____

❒ By checking this box, I represent and warrant that this Application accurately describes the intended use of the requested grant to complete the management practices listed above and if such grant is awarded I shall comply with all terms and conditions guided by Homeland Green Hong Kong, the Mushroom Initiative and the Soil Science Society of China.

I understand that this application may be shared with Zero Foodprint Asia staff, representatives, and partners for review and scoring.I certify that I am the authorized representative of the farm to submit this Application and that the above statements are true and correct to the best of my knowledge. I understand that a false statement may disqualify me from the grant program.

_____ _____

Signature of Farmer Applicant Date

_____

Printed Name of Farmer Applicant

PROPERTY OWNER CONSENT

I hereby certify that I am the property owner referenced in the Application. I acknowledge that the Farmer Applicant has the legal right to occupy the property. I consent to the filing of the Applicant and the Management Practices proposed for the property in this Application.

_____ _____

Signature of Property Owner Date

_____

Printed Name of Property Owner

APPENDIX B: Approved Management Practices

There are currently 28 shortlisted practices for annual and perennial agricultural land that suit the context of Hong Kong production farms. Depending on the level of management intensity, different practices can be implemented in different areas of a farm. Some practices can be implemented concurrently to improve the crop quality and the soil synergistically. **Recommendations and estimated costs based on previous experience with local farmers are also included for your reference.**

Additional information on these practices can be found on the The US Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) website listing Conservation Practices Standards (CPS) and supporting documents, and the Healthy Soils Program Implementation Guidelines. For global research, please refer to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations' six part manual: Recarbonizing Global Soils: A technical manual of recommended management practices published in 2021. Recommendation and considerations of practice adoption for smallholder farmers can be found on FAO TECA.

NRCS COMET-Planner online tool is used for the purpose of estimating soil carbon sequestration potentials in relation to the different types of management practices. It's a tool that is currently designed **for the California state only**. As such, it will be used as a guide for our **internal assessment only** as the models used to evaluate potential carbon sequestration and greenhouse gas reductions will require additional data and research in Asia.

NRCS CPS #	Practice Name	NRCS CPS #	Practice Name
Practices recommended for frequently managed/ annual farmland			
336	Compost Application (Soil Carbon Amendment) Applying compost to cropland using appropriate methods.	484	Mulching Applying plant residues or other suitable materials to the land surface.
340	Conservation Crop Rotation A planned sequence of crops grown on the same ground over a period of time	590	Nutrient Management Manage rate, source, placement, and timing of plant nutrients and soil amendments while

NRCS CPS #	Practice Name	NRCS CPS #	Practice Name
	(i.e. the rotation cycle).		reducing environmental impacts, most of which release nutrients gradually through the action of soil organisms.
345	Reduced-Till Managing the amount, orientation, and distribution of crop and other plant residue on the soil surface year-round while limiting soil-disturbing activities used to grow and harvest crops in systems where the field surface is tilled prior to planting.	329	No-Till Limiting soil disturbance to manage the amount, orientation and distribution of crop and plant residue on the soil surface year around.
340	Cover Crop Grasses, legumes, and forbs planted for seasonal vegetative cover.	585	Stripcropping Growing planned rotations of erosion-resistant and erosion-susceptible crops in a systematic arrangement of strips across a field.
311	Alley Cropping Trees or shrubs are planted in sets of single or multiple rows with agronomic, horticultural crops or forages produced in the alleys between the sets of woody plants that produce additional products.	603	Herbaceous Wind Barrier Herbaceous vegetation established in narrow strips within the field to reduce wind speed and wind erosion.
Practices recommended for less managed/perennial farmland			
386	Field Border A strip of permanent vegetation established at the edge or around the perimeter of a field	422	Hedgerow Planting Establishment of dense vegetation in a linear design to achieve a natural resource conservation purpose.
612	Tree/Shrub Establishment Establishing woody plants by planting seedlings or cuttings, by direct seeding, and/or through natural regeneration.	660	Tree-shrub Pruning The removal of all or parts of selected branches, leaders, or roots from trees and shrubs.
512	Pasture and Hay Planting Establishing adapted and compatible species, varieties, or cultivars of perennial	327	Conservation Cover Establishing and maintaining permanent vegetative cover.

NRCS CPS #	Practice Name	NRCS CPS #	Practice Name
	herbaceous plants suitable for pasture or hay production.		
379	Forest Farming Managing or establishing stands of trees or shrubs in coordination with the management and/or cultivation of understory plants or non-timber forest products.	380	Windbreak/Shelterbelt Establishment and Renovation Establishing, enhancing, or renovating windbreaks, also known as shelterbelts, which are single or multiple rows of trees and/or shrubs in linear or curvilinear configurations.
Practices for water courses or environmental sensitive area			
393	Filter Strip A strip or area of herbaceous vegetation that removes contaminants from overland flow.	390	Riparian Herbaceous Cover Grasses, sedges, rushes, ferns, legumes, and forbs tolerant of intermittent flooding or saturated soils, established or managed as the dominant vegetation in the transitional zone between upland and aquatic habitats.
391	Riparian Forest Buffer An area predominantly covered by trees and/or shrubs located adjacent to and up-gradient from a watercourse or water body.	421	Grassed Waterway A shaped or graded channel that is established with suitable vegetation to convey surface water at a non-erosive velocity using a broad and shallow cross section to a stable outlet.
Practices for sloping cropland			
332	Contour Buffer Strips Narrow strips of permanent, herbaceous vegetative cover established around the hill slope, and alternated down the slope with wider cropped strips that are farmed on the contour.	601	Vegetative Barrier Permanent strips of stiff, dense vegetation established along the general contour of slopes or across concentrated flow areas.

*Based on the NRCS National Handbook of Conservation Practices, unless marked with an asterisk. Those practices marked with an asterisk do not currently have a published NRCS Practice Lifespan and scientific consensus regarding the lifespan of the practice may not be available; for the purposes of the Restore Program, Practice Lifespan was determined using various sources including A Lifecycle Model to Evaluate Carbon Sequestration Potential and Greenhouse Gas Dynamics of Managed Grasslands and Long-term climate change mitigation potential with organic matter management on grasslands.