

Biodiversity Offsets Scheme Update No. 5

27 June 2022

Welcome to Issue No. 5 of the Biodiversity Offsets Scheme Update.

The Biodiversity Offsets Scheme (the scheme) enables the impacts of development on biodiversity to be avoided, minimised, and offset. The scheme provides a consistent, transparent, and scientifically credible way for development to proceed while still protecting our environment, with requirements set out under the *Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016* (BC Act). The Government remains committed to improving and refining the scheme. You can read more about the [Improvements to the Biodiversity Offsets Scheme](#) on our website.

This monthly newsletter is one of the ways in which we communicate and help support the implementation of the scheme. Your feedback on how we can improve our communication is encouraged. Please submit your feedback [here](#). See past newsletters [here](#).

You can also find the Biodiversity Conservation Trust's (BCT) twice-yearly newsletter on the BCT's [Publication website](#).

For enquiries on the scheme, contact the dedicated BOS Help Desk team:

- Hotline 1800 931 717, staffed Tuesday to Thursday from 9:30 am to 4:00 pm
- Help Desk mailbox, BOS.helpdesk@environment.nsw.gov.au, monitored Monday to Friday from 9:00 am to 5:00 pm

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Boost to environmental conservation through Biodiversity Credits Supply Fund

Biodiversity credits will be easier to secure and more efficiently priced thanks to a \$106.7 million investment through the NSW Budget to establish a strategic new Biodiversity Credits Supply Fund.

The new Biodiversity Credits Supply Fund will increase the supply of 'in-demand' biodiversity credits, supporting economic activity, creating opportunities for landholders and increasing land under private conservation.

The Fund will:

- buy credits from landholders based on forecast demand for credits
- re-sell these credits to public or private proponents required to offset the biodiversity impacts of their project
- use the proceeds from the sale of these credits to buy more credits for other proponents.

The Fund is expected to be operating by early 2023. For more information, visit our [webpage](#) or email us at creditssupplyfund@environment.nsw.gov.au.

New credit pricing tools

The Department has released new tools to help landholders, proponents and other Biodiversity Offsets Scheme participants estimate the fair price of credits in the open market including:

- a plain-English [Credit Pricing Guide](#) that outlines how stakeholders should properly price credits.
- an interactive, [Biodiversity Credit Market Sales Dashboard](#) that provides information about historical credit sales and trends.

Assumed presence

As part of our ongoing improvements to the scheme, the department is currently investigating the application of various policy and assessment provisions. Recent analysis indicates over 70% of assessments applying the Biodiversity Assessment Method (BAM) assume presence of at least one species credit species, with over 40% of some assessment types using this provision for all candidate species credit species i.e., with no survey or expert reports in the Biodiversity Development Assessment Report (BDAR). Future BDAR audits will be used to confirm these data.

Assuming presence of species credit species is designed to provide a proponent with flexibility in meeting deadlines external to the biodiversity assessment component of a development proposal. When applied, it results in the maximum credit obligation for the target species, an additional cost to proponents. Proponents should be weighing this cost against waiting for appropriate seasons to survey target species or securing an expert report.

To better support proponents in understanding these and other options to minimise impacts on biodiversity from a development proposal, the department will be developing more tailored communications. Watch this space for further updates.

BAM-C, TBDC, and SAIL list to be updated

The department recently updated the BAM-Calculator, Threatened Biodiversity Data Collection (TBDC), and the candidate list of Serious and Irreversible Impacts (SAIL). The updates include:

- amendments to survey months for some threatened species,
- changes to some PCTs
- changes to some threatened species PCT associations
- changes to Interim Biogeographic Regionalisation for Australia (IBRA) subregion associations for a range of entities and,
- the ability to assess *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act* (EPBC Act) Threatened Ecological Communities (TECs) independently from BC Act TEC.
- Credit class of Koala (*Phascolarctos cinereus*) has been changed from dual credit to **species credit**.

The updates may change assessment requirements and credit generation for some threatened entities. Changes to entities at risk of an SAIL have the potential to change credit generation. Additions to the list of entities at risk of an SAIL may also change assessment requirements, e.g. for newly added species. For more information, please see the BAM-C release notes attached.

The Plant Community Type (PCT) to Offset Trading Group (OTG) lookup tool

The department has released the PCT to Offset Trading Group (OTG) Lookup Tool, it is now available on the [BCD website](#). The PCT to OTG tool allows users to search a PCT and identify how the like-for-like offset rules apply to ecosystem credits. For credit holders, the lookup tool shows how the like-for-like rules apply to trading options for ecosystem credits. This information can be used to interpret [indicative demand forecasting](#) information or tender requests for developer offset obligations.

For proponents, the lookup tool shows how the like-for-like rules apply to credit retirement options for ecosystem credit obligations. The tool can also be used to search for which PCTs are associated with a Threatened Ecological Communities (TECs) ecosystem credit in an OTG under the like-for-like offset rules. For enquires about the lookup tool please contact the [BOS Helpdesk](#).

Offset Trading Group remediation of data published on public registers

In 2021, enhancements to the credit supply and transactions register to include the offset trading group resulted in “?” appearing instead of apostrophes or the PCT that comprised an offset trading group. See the example below.

The fix prevented the creation of new errors in the offset trading group display, but existing errors were not addressed. The department is currently remediating legacy errors and will contact affected credit owners.

Example of display error:

Offset Trading Group

Threatened Ecological Community (NSW)

PCT's 75, 266, 276, 277, 282, 283, 312, 483,
654, 705, 847, 1099, 1330, 1332, 1334,
169874, 83, 267, 274, 275, 278, 280, 286, 298,
341, 350, 352, 367, 433, 437, 509, 510, 571,
589, 590, 599, 618, 703, 704, 710, 921, 1103,
1303, 1304, 1329, 1383, 1512, 1601, 1691,
16952, 268, 279, 281, 284, 302, 342, 347, 356,
403, 421, 434, 435, 488, 496, 508, 528, 544,
567, 597, 622, 840, 1331, 1401, 1608, 1693

White Box Yellow Box Blakely's Red Gum
Woodland

Eastern NSW PCT data release

The revised PCT classification will be released in BioNet applications and web services on 24 June 2022. The revised classification is for the eastern NSW coast and tablelands IBRA bioregions with further work underway in the central west bioregions.

The revised PCTs will not apply to the scheme for at least six months following the BioNet release. This is to allow time for scheme participants to become familiar with the data, understand the changes and provide feedback on proposed transitional arrangements to stage the integration of the revised PCTs into the scheme. Once commenced, the transitional arrangements will allow in-progress assessments to proceed unchanged unless participants choose to apply the revised PCTs. Existing scheme approvals and associated biodiversity credits will remain valid and continue to operate under the scheme's offset rules. The PCT to OTG Tool described above will be updated to include revised PCTs in the relevant OTGs to support users in understanding the composition of OTGs after commencement.

For more information about the new data and IBVD, visit the [Integrated BioNet Vegetation Data for NSW webpage](#).

For information about changes to the scheme including transitional arrangements for eastern NSW PCTs, visit the [Introduction of revised Plant Community Types in eastern NSW to the Biodiversity Offsets Scheme webpage](#).

New BAM Survey Guide available – Koala (*Phascolarctos cinereus*)

The [Koala \(*Phascolarctos cinereus*\): Biodiversity Assessment Method Survey Guide](#) is now available on the [Assessor resources](#) webpage.

Threatened taxa survey guides support consistent application of the BAM across the state by establishing a minimum assessment effort, using standardised methods. Survey guides are developed based on the best available knowledge and techniques. Please note, the:

- Credit class of Koala (*Phascolarctos cinereus*) has been changed to **species credit**. This change aligns with the interim advice provided for koala assessments.
- Koala-use tree lists (as per Appendix C of the guide) are available on the BAM Calculator landing page in Excel format.

Further advice on requirements when a survey guide is introduced is available in the [BAM Assessor Update 36 – 1 June 2020 \(Topic 4\)](#).

Update to BAM Operational Manual – Stage 1

Minor updates have been made to the [BAM Operational Manual – Stage 1](#) (Appendix C). These changes support improved clarity of the of the assessment process for threatened species with Important Mapped Areas (IMA).

Renewal training for accredited assessors

Assessors are now able to register for renewal training courses. To register **contact Green Cap** via their website [Biodiversity Offset Scheme Training](#) or bos.training@greencap.com.au

The department has contacted all assessors whose accreditation expiry date is approaching or has recently passed. These assessors will have a modified renewal process that will allow them to continue their work as assessors. If you have not heard from us or have any concerns about your accreditation, please email BAM_accreditation@environment.nsw.gov.au.

As an interim arrangement, we have split the renewal training requirements into two parts. The two parts of the training are:

- Part 1: E-learning modules and
- Part 2: Face to face content.

Payments for training will be split for the two parts. You will only be required to pay for Part 1 at this stage. The department will provide more information about the availability of Part 2 soon.

Upcoming Ecological Monitoring Module field training days

The Biodiversity Conservation Trust will run additional Ecological Monitoring Module (EMM) field training days in August. The sessions will cover plan development and training in monitoring methods required by the EMM, particularly those not covered in the BAM. It has been a requirement since March 2021, that all new BSA applications must incorporate a monitoring plan within BSA Management Plans and costed in associated Total Fund Deposits.

All accredited assessors will be invited to register for specific sessions in the coming weeks. The following sessions are being held:

- Wagga Wagga, Wednesday 10th August 2022 (location TBD)
- Tuggerah, Wednesday 17th August 2022 (location TBD)
- Central West NSW (location and date TBD)

Emailing ZIP files to the department

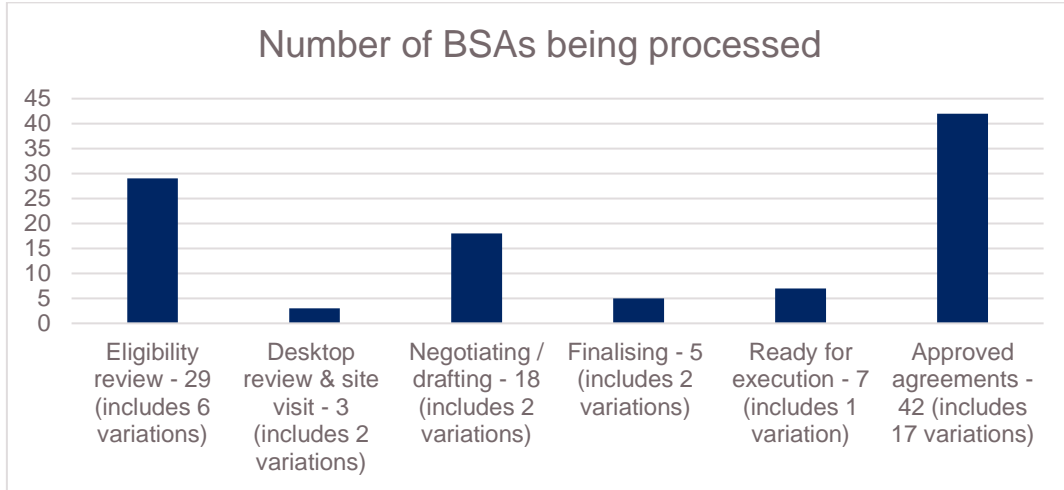
Assessors are requested not to encrypt (password protect) zip files sent to the department.

Fee update

The scheme fees have been updated for the financial year 2022-23 to reflect the Consumer Price Index. Please see [Biodiversity Offsets Scheme fees](#). The new fees will apply from 1 July 2022. The Total Fund Deposit sheet has also been updated to include the change in fees and will be published on the following webpage by 1 July 2022: [Total fund deposit and discount rate](#).

BCT update on BSA applications

The Biodiversity Conservation Trust (BCT) continually receive and process biodiversity stewardship applications (BSA) from landholders across the state. The below statistics outline the number of BSAs and BSA variations received and their status in the review process.



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