



Department of Planning and Environment

# Biodiversity Offsets Scheme Update No. 7

15 August 2022

**Welcome to Issue No. 7** 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. The NSW Government remains committed to improving and refining the scheme. You can keep up to date with the latest improvements, news and latest information [via our website](#).

This monthly newsletter is one of the ways in which we communicate and help support the implementation of the scheme. We welcome your feedback on how we might improve our communication. Please submit your suggestions [here](#). You can also check out past newsletters [here](#).

The Biodiversity Conservation Trust's (BCT) twice-yearly newsletter is another source of information, you can find it at the BCT's [Publication website](#).

For other enquiries on the scheme, contact the dedicated scheme 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](mailto:BOS.helpdesk@environment.nsw.gov.au), monitored Monday to Friday from 9:00 am to 5:00 pm.

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## Initiatives to increase credits supply and market participation

Recently there has been a series of announcements from the NSW Government and the department on key initiatives to increase the overall supply of biodiversity credits and improve the credits market into the future. These include the new [Biodiversity Credits Supply Fund](#) as well as the release of the [Sales Dashboard](#) and the [Plain-English Credit Pricing Guide](#) to help Scheme participants better estimate the likely price of credits in the open market.

## Credits Supply Taskforce – now in operation

The [Credits Supply Taskforce](#) (the Taskforce) is now in operation and taking on responsibility for Biodiversity Stewardship Agreements (BSAs) from the Biodiversity Conservation Trust (BCT). The Taskforce will also be operating the [Credits Supply Fund](#) (the Fund).

The Taskforce and the Fund have been created to make biodiversity credits easier to secure and more efficiently priced. This will reduce unnecessary project delays and costs without compromising environmental outcomes, resulting in greater economic benefits.

The Taskforce's Credits Supply Fund will:

- buy credits upfront at competitive market prices based on forecast demand from major projects and infrastructure development
- sell credits at purchase price plus a small mark up (cost recovery) to public or private proponents who need to offset biodiversity impacts
- re-invest proceeds to buy more credits (as a revolving fund), enabling the initial investment to be used to buy and sell \$200 million credits over 3 years.

You can learn more about the Taskforce and the Fund here: [About the Biodiversity Credits Supply Fund and Taskforce](#).

## Demand Expressions of Interest (EOI)

Private and public proponents can now submit an EOI to the Taskforce to seek support in sourcing biodiversity credits they need to offset their development.

If you are a proponent interested in this, please email [supplyfund@environment.nsw.gov.au](mailto:supplyfund@environment.nsw.gov.au) to request an EOI form.

## Stewardship Expressions of Interest (EOI)

The Taskforce is seeking EOIs from regional landowners interested in receiving funding to manage their land to benefit native plants and animals.

By entering a BSA, a landholder can generate biodiversity credits from conservation-centred land management actions. In addition to receiving funding to manage weeds, pests, fire and ecological restoration on this land, landholders can then sell the credits generated by their land through the NSW biodiversity market.

Do you have land that might be suitable? The Taskforce is making it easier and faster for landowners to set up a BSA. If you are interested in getting help to do this, please email [stewardship@environment.nsw.gov.au](mailto:stewardship@environment.nsw.gov.au) to request an EOI form.

Find out more about the benefits and options available to landowners here: [Generating and selling biodiversity credits](#). You can find more information on BSAs through the [BCT website](#).

## New discount rate for Biodiversity Stewardship Agreements (BSAs) – effective Monday 15 August

From **15 August 2022**, the discount rate for calculating the Total Fund Deposit (TFD) for BSAs will increase from 2.6% to 3.2%.

Under the new discount rate, landholders who enter a BSA from 15 August will pay materially lower TFD amounts when they sell their credits. The new discount rate has been determined considering long-term return forecasts for the Biodiversity Stewardship Payments Fund, management costs and risk tolerance. Find out more about TFDs and the updated discount rate [via the BOS website](#).

If you have already submitted an application for a BSA you will have been contacted directly by the Taskforce. If you have questions about your current application, please contact the Taskforce via [stewardship@environment.nsw.gov.au](mailto:stewardship@environment.nsw.gov.au).

## Revised Plant Community Types (PCTs) for eastern NSW are not yet operational in BAM

A major update to vegetation classification and mapping was publicly released in BioNet applications on **24 June 2022** as part of the Integrated BioNet Vegetation Data (IBVD) program.

For more information, read the latest [BioNet Newsletter](#) or visit the [IBVD webpage](#).

However, the updated vegetation classification PCTs are not available in the BAM-Calculator (BAM-C) and will not apply to the Biodiversity Offsets Scheme for at least 6 months.

The introduction of the revised PCTs into the BAM-C will be managed with transitional arrangements. These will allow assessors with in-progress assessments (those that have commenced a BAM-C case before the import of the revised PCT data into the BAM-C) to continue and finalise a BDAR and credit report using the legacy data or choose to apply revised PCTs and associated data.

The BAM-C transitional arrangements are proposed to remain in place for up to 12–24 months for the assessment of stewardship sites, biodiversity certification and major projects and up to 6 months for local development. A final decision on transition timeframes will be made later in the year based on a review of stakeholder feedback.

The department invites Scheme participants to provide feedback on the proposed transitional timeframes or ask questions about the transition via [BOS.helpdesk@environment.nsw.gov.au](mailto:BOS.helpdesk@environment.nsw.gov.au).

For information, please visit the [Introduction of revised PCTs into the Biodiversity Offsets Scheme](#) webpage. The webpage will be continually updated with further information as it becomes available.

## Updated High Threat Weeds list

The High Threat Weeds (HTW) list has recently been revised, updated, and added to the BioNet *Species Names* database. It will also be made available on the BAM-C landing page in the coming weeks. The updated list identifies certain manageable high threat weeds that, if managed on a stewardship site can generate additional gain.

To access the BioNet *Species Names* database, log into BioNet > click on *Species names* tab > Search for a species > Click *Review*.

The screenshot shows the 'Species Maintenance' page in the BioNet system. The 'Species names' tab is selected in the top navigation bar. The search interface includes fields for 'Scientific Name' (containing 'asparagus'), 'Species Code', and 'Common Name'. The 'Species Type' is set to 'Flora'. Below the search form, a table displays results for 'Asparagus' species. The 'Review' button for the first result is highlighted with a red box.

Species code	Scientific name	Common name	
11784	Asparagus aethiopicus	Asparagus Fern	<a href="#">Review</a>
12136	Asparagus africanus		<a href="#">Review</a>
3519	Asparagus asparagoides	Bridal Creeper	<a href="#">Review</a>

Species code	<input type="text" value="11784"/>	Scientific Name	<input type="text" value="Asparagus aethiopicus"/>
Taxon Code	<input type="text" value="11784"/>	Taxon Name	<input type="text" value="Asparagus aethiopicus"/> <input type="button" value="Search"/>
Latest Taxon Code	<input type="text" value="11784"/>	Latest Taxon	<input type="text" value="Asparagus aethiopicus"/>
External SpeciesID	<input type="text"/>	PATN Label	<input type="text" value="Aspaaeth"/>
<hr/>			
Genus Name	<input type="text" value="Asparagus"/>	Species Name	<input type="text" value="aethiopicus"/>
Subspecies Rank	<input type="text" value=""/>	Subspecies Name	<input type="text"/>
Is Hybrid	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No	Hybrid Rank	<input type="text"/>
Is Cultivar	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No	Cultivar Name	<input type="text"/>
Authority	<input type="text" value="L."/>	Family Name	<input type="text" value="Asparagaceae"/>
Order	<input type="text" value="Flora"/>	Class	<input type="text" value="Flora"/>
Synonyms	<input type="text" value="Protasparagus aethiopicus; Protasparagus densiflorus"/>		
Taxonomy	<input type="text" value="PlantNet"/>		
Common Name	<input type="text" value="Asparagus Fern"/>	Other Common Names	<input type="text"/>
<hr/>			
Bio Status Name	<input type="text" value="Introduced"/>	General Type	<input type="text"/>
TSC Act	<input type="text"/>	Date Listed	<input type="text"/>
Commonwealth Status	<input type="text"/>	CITES Status	<input type="text"/>
High Threat Weed	<input type="text" value="High Threat Weed - not manageat"/>	Widely Cultivated Native Species	<input type="text"/>

Alternatively, you can export the BioNet *Species Names* database using [web services](#), then filter by the High Threat Weed column.

## Register for BOS Support Webinar #29

It's not too late to register for our upcoming August Webinar to catch up on the latest news about the scheme. The next webinar will be held on 16 August at 1 pm.

Topics covered will include our newly published market information tools as well as an overview of the [Biodiversity Credits Supply Fund](#) and the work of the Taskforce.

[Register your attendance here.](#)

[Click here to find out more about the BOS webinars and view previous events.](#)

## New features in BMAT tool

The Biodiversity Values Map and Threshold (BMAT) tool has recently been updated with new features to improve user experience:

### Upload polygons feature

All users can now upload polygons saved as a KML or shapefile (created in ArcGIS or Google Earth) into the BMAT tool using the 'Upload Polygon' feature in the tools ribbon.

The tool will automatically zoom to the uploaded polygon, and the polygon can also be edited in the BMAT tool if required. You can then use the uploaded polygon to check if a proposed development footprint will trigger the Scheme.

[Create, save, edit and share a project in the BMAT tool.](#)

You can now create, save, edit or share a project in the BMAT tool. This upgrade can assist consultants or assessors that need to share projects or re-create multiple areas for evaluation or report extraction. It will also reduce time spent searching for properties.

To use this feature, you must have an account. Please send an email to [map.review@environment.nsw.gov.au](mailto:map.review@environment.nsw.gov.au) with your name and contact details to create an account.

The [BMAT user guide](#) has also been updated to show the step-by-step process of uploading polygons for **including the development footprint into the BMAT** and **Managing Projects in the BMAT tool**.

## Advice for calculating the area clearing threshold in partially exotic groundcover

The department has released advice on the calculation of native vegetation extent in partially exotic ground cover vegetation that is part of a heavily degraded, derived plant community. For example, heavily disturbed groundcover vegetation that would previously have had trees or shrubs present.

For more information, please visit the assessor questions and answers [webpage](#) under the *Triggering the Biodiversity Offset Scheme threshold* tab or under the *BOS threshold* tab of the local government questions and answers [webpage](#).



## August Top Tip: Accessing BAM-C assessments for Government reviewers

Accessing BAM-C assessments is an important part of providing a detailed review of any BAR.

Reviewing BAM-C assessments requires logging into BOAMs and the BAM-C to view a read-only version of the entered data and calculations.

To do this, the reviewer must have a BOAMs account and may request access by contacting the assessor to be added as a case party (if they haven't already done so) as described [here: Instructions and screenshots for reviewer access and sending back to assessors \(PDF 505KB\)](#).

Refer to [Assessor Update 43](#) for more detail if required.