



# Engaging an accredited assessor

An accredited assessor is a suitably qualified professional who can help you understand the suitability of your site for a biodiversity stewardship agreement (BSA) and who will either prepare or oversee the various requirements of a BSA application. They charge a fee for service.

The responsibility of the accredited assessor is to ensure that the BSA application is prepared in accordance with the biodiversity assessment methodology (BAM). They may undertake or oversee the following application components:

- vegetation and threatened species assessments in accordance with the BAM
- a biodiversity stewardship site assessment report (BSSAR)
- correct calculation of the credits generated at the site using the BAM calculator (BAM-C)
- production of maps that accurately indicate the site boundary, credit-generating areas and management zones
- costing management actions and completing the total fund deposit (TFD)
- submission of an eligible application including all supporting documents.

## How to find an accredited assessor

- Engaging an accredited assessor is like contracting any private consultant. You should consider it a business arrangement and undertake the usual checks and balances.
- Speak to people in your local area who are involved in the Biodiversity Offsets Scheme to find out which accredited assessors or ecological consultants have previous local experience. You could talk to larger state-wide consultancies or smaller local businesses. Ask the assessor what locations they've worked in, if they've previously submitted BSA applications to the BCT and if they'd be comfortable to provide contact details for landholders who've engaged them previously (see [www.environment.nsw.gov.au/topics/animals-and-plants/biodiversity-offsets-scheme/accredited-assessors](http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/topics/animals-and-plants/biodiversity-offsets-scheme/accredited-assessors)).

## What are you engaging the accredited assessor to do?

- Consider engaging an accredited assessor to prepare a [feasibility assessment](#) or BSA [business case](#) as an initial step to assess your site's suitability and whether it is likely to be financially viable as a BSA. For example, is there demand for the type of biodiversity credits that will be created? Is the value of the biodiversity credits greater than the likely management costs?
- Decide whether you want an accredited assessor to prepare a full BSA application or whether you are prepared to complete some steps yourself. The assistance of other suitably qualified professionals may be required. A BSA application comprises a BSSAR, management costings and various supporting documents as outlined in the Guide to Submitting a BSA (available at [www.bct.nsw.gov.au/general-resources](http://www.bct.nsw.gov.au/general-resources)). Preparing your BSA application is a significant undertaking and should be planned and resourced carefully. Submitting an incomplete application will mean your application goes on hold until all outstanding documents are submitted together at one time. See Section 4.5 of the BSA landholder guide for more information.
- Speak to your accredited assessor about the potential presence of threatened species, and whether creating credits for these species is likely to be financially beneficial. It's best to do this before committing to pay for threatened species surveys.



- Be aware that there may be additional assessment costs for you if the financial arrangement you have with your accredited assessor only covers the preparation and submission of the BSA application. Following a review of the application, the BCT will provide written feedback to the landowner and accredited assessor on the application's completeness and whether the Biodiversity Assessment Method (BAM) has been appropriately applied. Further work may be required to be undertaken by the accredited assessor to address issues raised in the BCT's feedback. The BCT strongly recommends the accredited assessor attends the BAM review site visit and allocates time to respond appropriately to BCT feedback and to making any required amendments.

### Additional information

- Ensure that you and your land are eligible for the establishment of a BSA prior to engaging an accredited assessor to prepare a BSSAR. This is a significant financial commitment. See Section 4.1 of the BSA landholder guide for more information.
  - The BCT will include the landholder and accredited assessor in all communications during the application review process unless otherwise instructed.
  - Ensure that the accredited assessor provides you with a copy of all documentation used to prepare the BSSAR once your finalised application is approved. These documents, which will include vegetation survey data and threatened species survey results, could be useful if you, or future landholders decide to expand the existing stewardship site.
- Use the [biodiversity offsets scheme enquiry form](#) if you have a question about any aspect of the NSW Biodiversity Offsets Scheme.
  - Go online to access comprehensive resources on the [NSW Biodiversity Offset Scheme](#).
  - Find an [accredited assessor](#) who can assist you to get involved in the NSW Biodiversity Offset Scheme by applying the biodiversity assessment method.

### Please note:

- A BSA application must be prepared in accordance with BAM 2020, Operational Manuals 1 and 3 and any relevant BCT guidelines (see BCT website), relevant Department of Planning, Industry and Environment (DPIE) threatened species survey guidelines and BAM assessor updates (see accredited assessor resources on the [DPIE website](#)).
- This document should be read in consultation with the Guide to Submitting a BSA (available at [www.bct.nsw.gov.au/general-resources](http://www.bct.nsw.gov.au/general-resources)).
- The accredited assessor should refer to all BCT guidance and use the most up to date templates available on the BCT website.
- Accredited assessors have access to BOAMS as part of their accreditation.
- Accredited assessors are accredited under the Biodiversity Offsets Scheme to apply the BAM. Tasks such as the preparation of business cases, feasibility assessments and the costing of management actions are beyond the scope of the BAM accreditation.
- Accredited assessors are bound by a code of conduct and DPIE has a complaints handling process in relation to the conduct of accredited assessors.