Feasibility assessment information

The BCT recommends that a feasibility assessment is the first in a three-step process to assess the biodiversity values of your site for a Biodiversity Stewardship Agreement (BSA):

a. Feasibility assessment

b. Business case

c. Full assessment under the Biodiversity Assessment Method (BAM), including preparation of a Biodiversity Stewardship Site Assessment Report and management plan.

A feasibility assessment and a business case are optional steps. You can choose to proceed directly to a full assessment under the BAM (step c), however it may be prudent to take a staged approach and cost-effectively gather information that will help you make an informed decision about whether to proceed to a full assessment.

Each of these steps can be conducted by an accredited assessor and they will charge you for this work. The steps are nested, so the work completed through steps a and b should contribute to, and therefore reduce the cost of, the full assessment conducted under step c. It is mandatory for an accredited assessor to undertake step c, a full assessment under the BAM. It is not mandatory for an accredited assessor to be engaged to undertake a feasibility assessment or business case, but as these feed into the full BAM assessment, the BCT recommends that an appropriately skilled and experienced person, such as an accredited assessor, be engaged to undertake these.

Feasibility assessment requirements

The feasibility study can generally be carried out by undertaking a desktop assessment (i.e. based on existing information and mapping for the site and locality). However, it may also include a brief site visit ('walkover') of key areas of the site by the accredited assessor with the landholder. The BCT recommends that a feasibility assessment should typically include:

- A high-level description of the site, including size (area), location, and position in the landscape.
- A summary description of the biodiversity values of the site, including:
    - Estimated extent of native vegetation
    - Preliminary mapping of plant community types and vegetation zones

- Estimated or potential extent of threatened communities
- Any threatened species known or expected on site

- The likely type of biodiversity credits to be generated and an estimate (possibly a range) of the number of each credit type that may be generated.
- Indicative costs (e.g. estimated cost per hectare) of managing the site based on knowledge and experience of the accredited assessor.
- Information on potential demand and supply for the types of credits that could be generated on your site, i.e. the prevailing market conditions and whether there may be potential buyers for the credits generated from your site.

NOTE: In some circumstances, a lack of available information for the site and surrounding locality will preclude a purely desktop-based assessment, and a brief site visit ('walkover') of key areas of the site by the accredited assessor may be required. In all cases the onus is on the landholder, in consultation with the accredited assessor, to determine the precise scope of the feasibility assessment, including the need for a site assessment, taking into consideration the level of certainty required by the landholder, and budgetary constraints.

In all cases it is important that any limitations and assumptions of the feasibility study are clearly stated by the accredited assessor. This will allow the landholder, other accredited assessors (should you wish to contract an alternative accredited assessor to complete the full assessment) or other stakeholders (e.g. the BCT) to determine the comprehensiveness and accuracy of the information presented.