

Biodiversity Response Planning: Project Proposals

Guidance Note and Project Criteria for Working Groups

1. Context

Protecting Victoria's Environment – Biodiversity 2037 is Victoria's 20-year plan to protect our natural environment. The Plan was released in April 2017, supported by \$86.3 million in state budget funding over four years to implement the plan. This funding includes \$65.4 million to deliver targeted biodiversity on-ground actions and \$20 million ongoing.

Biodiversity 2037 highlighted that Victoria's approach to biodiversity conservation needs to be modernised, with more structured collaboration between stakeholders to strengthen alignment, accountability and measurable improvement. While the work of thousands of people and groups contributes to biodiversity conservation, more effective, collaborative arrangements are needed.

From 2018 Biodiversity Response Planning (BRP) will be the primary investment mechanism for on-ground biodiversity; transitioning from current funding streams (e.g. Community and Volunteer Action Grants). As part of this transition to Biodiversity Response Planning, a final round of community grants will be announced in early 2018.

The BRP model (which was co-designed with over 100 stakeholders), functions via new geographic areas for biodiversity planning, new roles and responsibilities for the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP), partners and stakeholders, and a program of community and stakeholder engagement to reach collaborative biodiversity decisions. Over time, BRP seeks to enhance and modernise biodiversity conservation in Victoria in the areas outlined above, to ultimately achieve the targets in Biodiversity 2037.

In its first year, Biodiversity Response Planning will focus on collaborative project planning. This will commit approximately \$36 million, for on-ground biodiversity actions and \$2.5 million for marine targeted actions that will be delivered across three years, commencing in the 2018-19 financial year to 2021.

Projects will be developed by interested stakeholders, including community members, within priority landscapes or themes determined by area-based Working Groups. Each Working Group will be provided with an indicative allocation of funding and will be asked to recommend a package of projects to be funded within that area. Working Groups can also put forward additional projects as part of the state-wide funding pool to be assessed competitively by an independent panel. All project actions will be strategic, collaborative, respond to the state-wide targets and area priorities, and will be informed by the decision-support tool Strategic Management Prospects (SMP).

2. This guidance note

The BRP process outlined in this document is not intended to be prescriptive, but rather provide guidance to Area Leads, Partnerships Facilitators and Working Group members in Phase I of BRP. DELWP and partners are committed to iteratively refining the process to ensure collaboration is achieved and biodiversity outcomes are improved. If deviations from this guidance note are proposed, please inform DELWP via your Area Lead and contact the Manager, Biodiversity Policy and Participation Adam Muir via Biodiversity.Strategy@DELWP.vic.gov.au

3. Delivering Statewide and Contributing Targets

This BRP funding will be used to deliver against the goal 'Victoria's natural environment is healthy', including;

Statewide Targets:

- A net improvement in the outlook across all species by 2037, as measured by Change in Suitable Habitat, with the expected outcomes being:
- That no vulnerable or near-threatened species will have become endangered.

- That all critically endangered and endangered species will have at least one option available for being conserved ex situ or re-established in the wild (where feasible under climate change) should they need it.
- A net gain of the overall extent and condition of habitats across terrestrial, waterway and marine environments.

Contributing Targets:

- 4 million hectares of control of pest herbivores (e.g. deer, rabbits, goats, feral horses) in priority locations.
- 1.5 million hectares of control of pest predators (e.g. foxes, feral cats) in priority locations.
- 1.5 million hectares of weed control in priority locations.
- 200,000 hectares of revegetation in priority areas for connectivity between habitats.
- 200,000 hectares of new permanently protected areas on private land.

4. Strategic Management Prospects (SMP)

SMP is a modelling tool that provides maps, reports and supporting information to help biodiversity managers decide which actions will provide the most cost-effective biodiversity benefits for the most species and in so doing make the greatest contribution to the targets in Biodiversity 2037. It brings together many different sources of information to allow comparisons of management options across the state. This includes spatial models on species distributions, information on key biodiversity threats, and cost information for key management actions which address those threats. The state-wide analysis calculates the relative cost-effective benefits expected from management actions, and uses a new measure, “change in suitable habitat”.

STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT PROSPECTS

Strategic Management Prospects analysis describes and ranks locations across terrestrial land in Victoria according to the relative contribution that actions will make to improving biodiversity conservation outcomes over the next few decades. Two ideas drive this analysis:

- **BEST ACTIONS:** identifying which actions that could make the most cost-effective difference at each location, given the species and threats likely to be present, the amount of change in suitable habitat response estimated by experts, and indicative costs
 - **SPATIAL PRIORITY:** looking across all available options and identifying a configuration that maximises the net benefits (i.e. that results in the greatest good for the greatest number of species).

The SMP approach is statewide, on-ground action-oriented and spatially explicit. In the BRP process, SMP is used to guide both strategic allocation across the on-ground management investment program, and the selection of actions at locations for specific projects.

The Strategic Management Prospects approach was developed to give Victoria a long-term, strategic approach to deliver an improved outlook for as many species as possible. Funding for biodiversity conservation activities is limited, so it is important to prioritise activities based on greatest benefit at least cost.

SMP is designed to guide investment choices by identifying cost effective conservation actions that maximize benefits to biodiversity. SMP helps to identify which management actions to do, and where, are likely to achieve the most effective outcomes for terrestrial biodiversity. For more information see [NaturePrint](#).

- The Co-design process, using information from SMP, identified the 11 Geographic Planning Areas. These are outlined in the Co-design Overview Report. SMP maps and information are available on [NatureKit](#) to assist project planning in each Geographic Area.

- SMP was also used to guide the indicative budget for each Geographic Area (Section 8). This is based on the relative amount of high ranking SMP options in the Area. The ranking takes account of Best Actions and Spatial Priority (see above) when determining cost-effectiveness.
- SMP cost-effective action maps show the cost-effective actions at a location, ranked according to their priority. For the purpose of BRP, projects should, where feasible, be targeted at the relevant landscape-scale multi-species actions within the top 20% priority ranking across the State. Where alternative projects are proposed, they should focus on specific threat management to meet the needs of one or a few similar species (often in a localised situation), with cost-effective outcomes comparable to the top 20%, or projects in the top 40% with high levels of existing capability and capacity.

5. Strategic Direction

Biodiversity 2037 signals a move away from only planning for species one at a time. It emphasises a better balance of prevention and crisis care. Coordinated threat management over broader landscapes to secure the greatest benefit for the most species will prevent the most extinctions over the longer term. The use of the SMP decision-support tool in relevant parts of the Biodiversity Response Planning process will assist participants to consider biodiversity actions that are focussed on the key directions of Biodiversity 2037.

6. BRP core-components

The core elements of the BRP process are:

- Biodiversity planning, and an assessment of SMP outputs, threats and opportunities, occurs within 11 new **Geographic Areas**
- Area Leads** coordinate the planning (one for each Geographic Area). In the first year of BRP, DELWP Forest, Fire and Regions will be the Area Lead for each Geographic Area.
- Partnerships Facilitators** drive engagement and collaboration in each Area, and provide overarching coordination, engagement and information sharing support within each geographic area, including supporting the Working Group.
- Working Groups** (10-15 people), in each area, drive technical input, collaboration and project development. Working Group members are selected by the Area Lead based on their ability to collectively determine strategic biodiversity priorities for the development of projects across a Geographic Area.
- Projects** for on-ground action will be developed through broader engagement and collaboration with stakeholders and community beyond the Working Group members. This engagement is a core role of Working Group members and Partnerships Facilitators, and the Terms of References for these roles requires Working Group members to share information and collaborate with broader networks.
- Strategic Management Prospects** Cost-Effective Action maps will assist Working Groups to identify potential priority project locations and the cost-effective actions at those locations. Working Groups will consider this information along with other local priorities for the Geographic Area and decide on priority themes and landscapes for on-ground action. Working Groups will then assess and rank prospective projects against SMP and broader local considerations.

7. Working Groups

Each Working Group will include up to 15 people who have extensive experience and knowledge of biodiversity strategies and projects across the whole of the Geographical Area. Working Group members are to represent their geographic area, and will include a mix of government and non-government organisations that reflects the range of stakeholders active in biodiversity planning and management across the area. Working group members will need to have:

- Experience designing and delivering on-ground biodiversity projects in Victoria.

- Knowledge of Biodiversity 2037 and other strategies relevant to biodiversity management in Victoria, strong knowledge of other organisations' strategic plans is valuable.
- Ability to share knowledge of new and emerging tools and to assist decision making and investment opportunities.
- Understanding and ability to consider the whole geographical area including the biophysical characteristics and organisational dynamics.
- Experience working with a range of stakeholders and contractors in the biodiversity sector.
- Ability to respectfully share a range of interests and viewpoints on biodiversity and the challenges in an area.

The purpose of the Working Group is to:

- Provide strategic direction in responding to the targets provided in the Biodiversity Plan 2037
- Build and support collaboration between groups operating within the Geographic Area and coordinate and improve the alignment of on-ground biodiversity actions and projects
- Be a conduit of information for potential biodiversity investment opportunities within the Geographic Area.

The Working Group members are responsible for:

- Identifying priority themes or landscapes within the Geographic Area, and providing strategic direction for those involved in biodiversity planning and on-ground action
- Using best endeavours to align their portfolio of proposed projects with key criteria to ensure projects are driving investment towards the Bio Plan targets e.g. alignment with SMP priority landscapes and effective actions
- Collaboratively determining strategic biodiversity priorities, across the whole geographic area and collaborate and engage with a wide range of stakeholders to develop priority projects (working to an indicative funding allocation) as well as additional projects for a Statewide Competitive Pool
- Acting as a conduit of information and a key contact group for DELWP and other agencies regarding biodiversity planning and investment considerations in the Geographic Area and advising on potential co-investment opportunities
- Advocating for projects that result from coordinated planning and co-design processes
- Taking a lead role in supporting cultural rights and obligations in relation to BRP.
- Assisting the development of collaborative projects that meet defined investment criteria
- Participating in the evaluation of the BRP process following the first round of project bids

8. Geographic Area Projects and funding

Each Working Group is asked to identify for investment, a range of projects to be undertaken between 2018-2021, based on the indicative budget and phasing identified in table 1. It is expected that a minimum of 5 and no more than 15 projects would typically be put forward from each Geographic Area (Attachment A).

Working Groups will also be asked to review and submit projects to be progressed and assessed as part of the Statewide Competitive funding pool.

If a Working Group does not propose projects up to the value of its indicative budget (Area allocation), or, if the projects proposed do not sufficiently meet the criteria, any remaining funds (i.e. not allocated to projects as they don't meet the criteria or were not proposed) will be redistributed to the competitive pool

Project Criteria is outlined in Attachment B.

The Area funding outlined below is based on the relative amount of high ranking SMP options in the Area (section 4). Cost can be influenced by, for example: management materials; how easy it is to get to areas (particularly away from tracks) to undertake management actions; the opportunity costs of land use/management change (which may influence uptake or level of required financial incentive); how much effort is required for developing partnerships/projects and for negotiating delivery of actions etc. In addition to using a cost-benefit perspective, it is recognised that BRP is a new approach that is seeking broader collaboration, and there needs to be a reasonable level of incentive for participation. For this purpose, a minimum level of budget has been set for Areas at the lower end of the ranking

Table 1 – Geographic Area Indicative budget and phasing

Area	2018/2019	2019/2020	2020/2021	Total indicative budget
1. Murray River	\$ 414,000	\$ 498,000	\$ 560,000	\$ 1,472,000
2. Mallee	\$ 1,249,000	\$ 1,501,000	\$ 1,689,000	\$ 4,439,000
3. Wimmera	\$ 491,000	\$ 590,000	\$ 664,000	\$ 1,745,000
4. Glenelg/Grampians	\$ 603,000	\$ 725,000	\$ 816,000	\$ 2,144,000
5. Volcanic Plains/Otways	\$ 743,000	\$ 894,000	\$ 1,006,000	\$ 2,643,000
6. Port Phillip/Westernport	\$ 414,000	\$ 498,000	\$ 560,000	\$ 1,472,000
7. Gippsland and inlets/islands	\$ 414,000	\$ 498,000	\$ 560,000	\$ 1,472,000
8. Eastern Forests	\$ 1,108,000	\$ 1,332,000	\$ 1,500,000	\$ 3,940,000
9. North East Forests and Alps	\$ 421,000	\$ 506,000	\$ 569,000	\$ 1,496,000
10. Box-Ironbark, Northern Plains, Inland Slopes	\$ 1,157,000	\$ 1,392,000	\$ 1,566,000	\$ 4,115,000
11. Marine and Coastal				\$2,500,000*
Total pre-allocation to Areas	\$ 7,014,000	\$ 8,434,000	\$ 9,490,000	\$ 24,938,000
Total allocation to competitive pool (30%)	\$ 3,006,000	\$ 3,614,000	\$ 4,063,000	\$ 10,683,000

* Note: Marine and Coastal geographic area indicative budget is for Marine and Coastal Targeted Actions and will be subject to different criteria than outlined in this document.

9. Statewide Competitive Funding

In addition to the Geographic Area indicative budget allocations, approximately \$10.8 million dollars will be available as part of a 'Statewide Competitive Pool'.

Working Group should also provide a list of projects to be assessed for funding via the Statewide 'competitive pool' in addition to a recommended list of projects that fit within their Geographic Area indicative budget. An independent assessment panel will assess projects put forward by the working groups for the Statewide "competitive pool".

10. Project criteria

Project Criteria is at Attachment B.

11. Developing projects

Projects for on-ground action will be developed through broader engagement and collaboration with stakeholders and community beyond the Working Group members. This engagement is a core role of Working Group members and Partnerships Facilitators, and the Terms of References for these roles requires Working Group members to share information and collaborate with broader networks.

Strategic Management Prospects will be used to guide Working Groups in identifying project location and actions. SMP Cost-Effective Action maps identify high ranking cost-effective actions at priority locations within Geographic Areas. These maps are available on NatureKit along with additional SMP information to assist project planning. Working Groups will consider this information along with other local priorities for the Geographic Area and decide on priority themes and landscapes for on-ground action. Working Groups will then assess and rank prospective projects against SMP information and broader local considerations.

For a situation where the current SMP analysis does not cover a proposed action (i.e. an action that is primarily only relevant to one location and/or one or a few species e.g. translocation), DELWP will facilitate an approach to assessing cost-effectiveness that is comparable to the above (referred to as 'specific needs'). Working Groups should identify where a specific needs assessment may be needed as early as possible in the process so the Area Lead can advise the DELWP NaturePrint team.

An indicative process is provided below as guidance for Area Leads, Partnerships Facilitators and Working Group Members. Please note, this is intended as a guide and not prescriptive.

	WG # and Aim	Inputs	Outputs
March	WG 1: Define Priority landscapes or themes Identify current investment Identify other Geographic Area priorities and	SMP cost-effective action maps SMP indicative action profile data Local knowledge, existing investment and actions Project criteria and guidance Short form project template Area \$ and spend over time	Priority landscapes and themes for action within a geographic area (to be developed via the short form project template) Definition of any sub-groups Understanding of targeted broader engagement
April	WG2: Review and assess short form project templates. Use SMP and other considerations to prioritise 10-15 projects to progress to more detailed scoping. Identify where synergies occur and projects can be combined	Prior to WG 1, engagement and consultation conducted Completed short form project templates, providing evidence of broader consultation and engagement Project assessment guidance (incl. indicative action profile data & cost-effective action maps)	Prioritised list of approximately 10-15 projects to progress to Smarty Grants template Identified specific needs analysis required Polygons of projects if available for SMP analysis
April/May	WG3: Review detailed Smarty Grants applications (e.g. proposed actions in locations, methods of delivery, project	Completed Smarty Grants templates for 10 – 15 projects Project assessment guidance (incl. indicative action profile data & cost-effective action maps)	Recommended list of projects for funding within Geographic Area allocation (~5-10) and justification (Due by 16 May 2018) Recommended list of projects for competitive pool (Due by 16 May)

	partners). Rank and prioritise projects for Geographic Area allocation and identify projects for competitive pool.	SMP analysis of projects provided after WG 2 if available	2018) List of projects for Investment Prospectus Polygons of relevant projects if available for SMP package and individual analysis Final Completed Smarty Grants application templates for all projects Where relevant, SMP analysis of individual and package of projects per Geographic Area
~June/July	Approval by Executive Director DELWP Biodiversity and Independent Panel	Recommended list of projects for funding within Geographic Area allocation (5-10) and justification (Due by 16 May 2018) Recommended list of projects for competitive pool (Due by 16 May 2018)	List of proposed projects for funding for each Geographic Area and Statewide competitive pool) Investment prospectus projects Further detailed development of project plans will occur for funded projects through consultation with the Working Group.

12. Support and expectations

Assistance will be provided through tools such as Strategic Management Prospects to understand the relative benefit of action/location combinations to enable design of cost-effective threat management projects.

For a situation where the current SMP analysis does not cover a proposed action (i.e. an action that is primarily only relevant to one location and/or one or a few species e.g. translocation), DELWP will facilitate an approach to assessing cost-effectiveness that is comparable to the above.

13. Prioritising projects

Organisations should be aware of other complementary investment to ensure that there is no overlap with the funding requested.

Since it is likely that the total cost of Geographic Area projects developed across the state will exceed the available funds, the number and value of projects put forward will need to be limited. It is expected that projects will be prioritised within each Geographic Area in accordance with the Indicative Budget and through collaborative discussion with relevant stakeholders before finalising projects in Smarty Grants.

SMP maps and reports will be provided for the Working Group to help them determine the best options for projects for their area. SMP can provide a perspective on how current and proposed projects align with: the most significant landscapes in their area; the most effective management actions in those places; and provides an estimate of the change in suitable habitat the projects could create.

SMP information is intended to guide Working Group members in their decisions, not to make the decisions. In most cases they will have local knowledge that will also be very important to consider when reviewing projects. It is important to note, however, that when determining what projects to fund, DELWP will want to see evidence that SMP information has been considered in the design of a project.

Projects which are not within the recommended package for funding as part of the Geographic Area projects, subject to Working Group approval, will be directed to the Statewide Competitive Pool for independent assessment.

14. Group decision-making

Decisions made by the Working Group will be made:

- through collaboration and, wherever possible, by consensus (i.e. members are satisfied that they have been heard and support/are accepting of the decision even though it may not be their first choice)
- where consensus is not possible, through a two thirds majority
- where agreement cannot be reached, the Partnership Facilitator and Area Lead will make final decisions for time sensitive items that need to be progressed by DELWP.

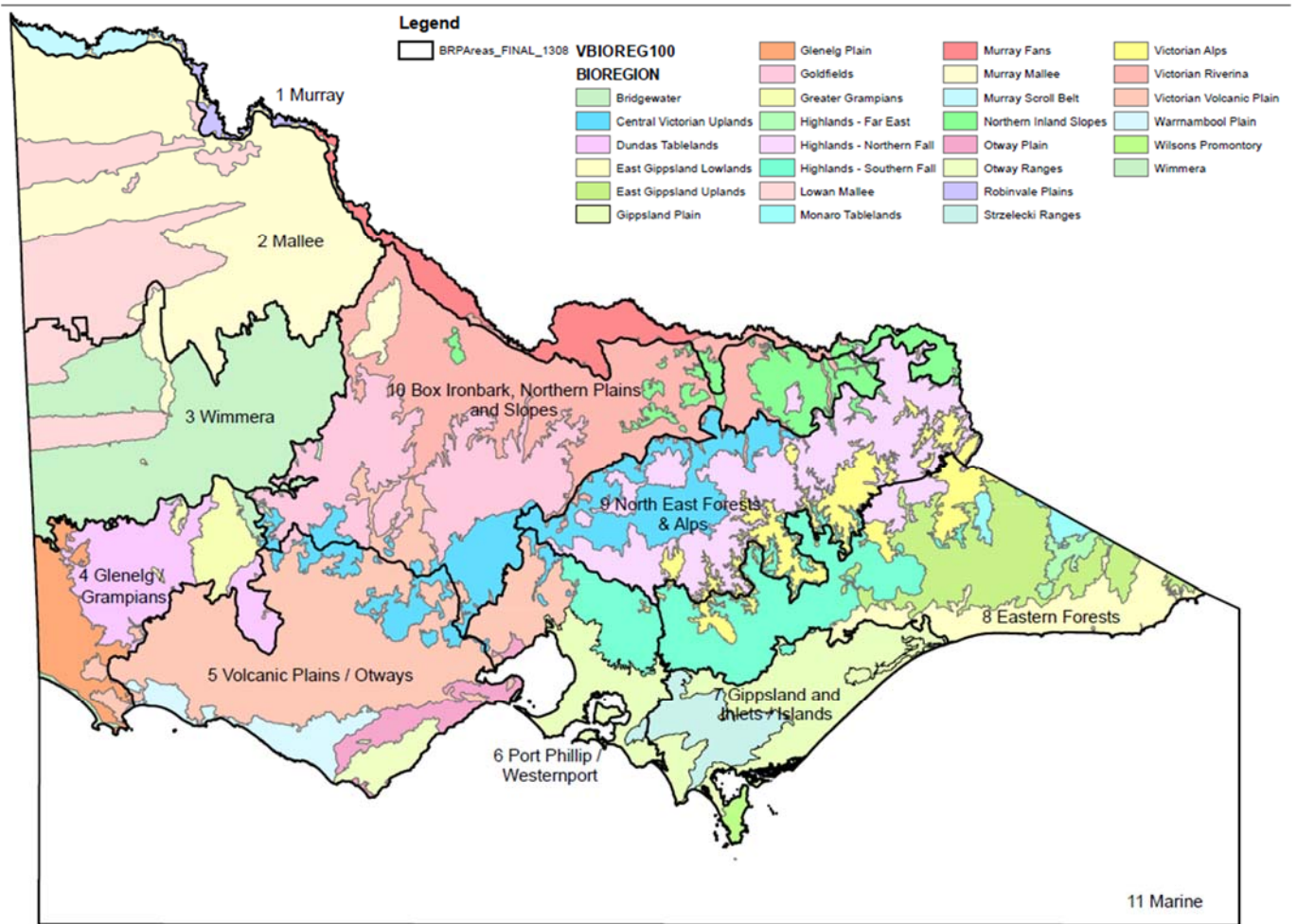
The Area Lead will keep a record of all decisions and the level of consensus for group transparency and accountability purposes. Members may take points of decisions back to their internal stakeholders for consultation and to inform decision making offline or at subsequent meetings.

The group will acknowledge when time, information or knowledge is not fully available on a subject.

15. Probity

Specific Probity requirements will be provided at Working Group 1 and at subsequent working group meetings as required. All Working Group Members will be expected to complete Confidentiality and Conflict of Interest forms. Probity training will be provided for all Working group members.

Attachment A:



Attachment B: Project Criteria

	Criteria	Explanatory notes
Biodiversity Outcomes	The key driver of this investment opportunity is maximising net outcomes for biodiversity.	<p>Biodiversity 2037 two goals of <i>Victorians Value Nature</i> and <i>Victoria's Natural Environment is Healthy</i> are being supported by a range of activities and funding streams both within and beyond agencies. This investment pool is primarily focused on direct on-ground actions for the second goal, although projects will often also facilitate engagement and participation relevant to the first goal.</p> <p>Biodiversity 2037 indicates that Biodiversity Outcomes will be progressively assessed using the Change in Suitable Habitat measure. For this investment, this will be either by reference to data layers in NatureKit or by individual assessment of Specific Needs.</p>
Selecting actions & locations	<p>For landscape-scale threats affecting multiple species</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - actions within projects and the location of projects should be based on achieving the most cost-effective net outcomes (i.e. by using Change in Suitable Habitat/cost and alignment to the ranking of Strategic Management Prospects). <p>For specific threat management to meet the needs of one or a few similar species, often in localised situations projects should be based on achieving cost-effective outcomes comparable to the above</p>	<p>Working Groups should use Strategic Management Prospects (SMP) information to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • guide the location of proposed projects • consider the most cost-effective actions to pursue, where possible • consider strategic ranking scores to assist in prioritisation • assess whether the package of projects will reasonably reflect the spread of targets in Biodiversity 2037. <p>SMP provides valuable information and context to support decision-making, but is not intended to make decisions in isolation. There are a range of other practicalities, for example the capability and capacity of managers to undertake an action and the feasibility of the action in a particular situation, that will influence final choices.</p> <p>Best endeavours should be made to align landscape-scale multi-species projects with the SMP analysis (i.e. predominantly focused on the top 20% in the strategic ranking, and the actions identified as most cost-effective in those locations).</p> <p>For a situation where the current SMP analysis does not cover a proposed action (i.e. an action that is primarily only relevant to one location and/or one or a few species e.g. translocation, grazing exclusion), DELWP will facilitate an approach to assessing cost-effectiveness that is comparable to the above.</p>
Selecting the package of projects	<p>The expected net outcomes from the package of projects proposed for a Geographic Area should reflect the spread of the most strategic actions and the balance of public and private land options across this Area.</p> <p>A minimum proportion of investment effort for new permanent protection will be required to ensure the longer-term security of a proportion of the investment</p>	<p>Indicative profiles of the most strategic actions for each Area will be provided for guidance, including a specific minimum proportion of investment effort for new permanent protection. These will link back to the targets of Biodiversity 2037. Indicative profiles for an appropriate balance of public & private land funding/management effort will also be provided.</p> <p>A specific minimum proportion of investment effort for new permanent protection will be provided as part of indicative profiles for each area. For new permanent protection agreements on private land, best endeavours should be made to secure the biodiversity outcomes of this program by focusing on areas of on-ground management that are receiving relatively high levels of investment. Trust for Nature focal landscapes may also provide additional guidance on where permanent protection is most feasible and desirable.</p>

Collaboration and Engagement	<p>Projects should provide evidence that projects have, where relevant:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • recognised and responded to cultural heritage • strengthen partnerships and collaboration between stakeholders and the community • build capacity and address the aspirations of stakeholders and the community • provide evidence of community engagement and support from the relevant group of stakeholders • build on existing successful biodiversity management projects where relevant and clear alignment with SMP 	Working Groups will review responses within the Smartygrant project application to determine if the project proposal adequately demonstrates that the project will deliver a collaborative approach
Traditional Owner engagement	The process to develop a project must provide evidence of Traditional Owner engagement and participation at the level they want to, and the extent they are relevant, given the available resources	Working Groups will review responses within the Smartygrant project application to determine if the project proposal adequately demonstrates evidence of Traditional Owner engagement and participation at the level they want to, given the available resources.
Project delivery	The proponent must have the capacity to manage and deliver the project.	Working Groups will review responses within the Smartygrant project application to determine if the project proposal adequately demonstrates evidence of adequate capacity to deliver the project.
Eligible activities	<p>On-ground management actions, including permanent protection.</p> <p>Primarily terrestrial, however other actions can be considered subject to boundaries with other funding streams</p>	<p>Permanent protection includes covenants (covenants under s.3A the Victorian Conservation Trust Act 1972 or s.69 agreements under the Conservation, Forests and Land Act 1987) and other equivalent forms of agreement and permanent protection.</p> <p>MER projects are not eligible, this will be progressed via the MER framework and associated investment. (Baseline data collection is not eligible under this funding).</p> <p>There are separate funding streams for Marine and Healthy Waterways. Healthy Waterways invests in habitat protection and there are other processes to guide environmental water allocations. Direct actions for threatened aquatic species that are outside the guidelines of these other programs will be eligible.</p>
Project management	Project management costs are capped at 10% unless exceptional circumstances apply.	Proponents would need to make any exceptional circumstances case based on specific demands of a project. Where the investor determines this would make a significant impact on the cost-effectiveness of the project, it will be directed to the competitive pool (see below).
Length, number and priority ranking of projects	<p>Projects should be 3-years in length.</p> <p>There should be a sufficient number of proposed projects to provide for: a spread of themes, locations and groups; and the ability to rank projects. There</p>	<p>There is strong support from stakeholders and agency staff for sustained investment in medium term, landscape-scale projects. This investment pool is facilitating this transition however the current program allocation requires projects to be limited to the next three years.</p> <p>Additionally, the program allocation is phased across these years – individual projects may have their own phasing profile, but each BRP Area package of projects will need to fit within the overall program</p>

should not be too many projects so that effort in preparation and assessment of proposals is minimised. It is expected that a minimum of 5 and no more than 15 projects would typically be put forward from each Geographic Area.

Working Groups should rank their proposed projects and recommend those within their allocation to the ED Biodiversity.

Other proposed projects (ranked below their allocation) should be forwarded to the independent panel for a competitive pool assessment.

phasing.

Individual projects may be phased evenly, or for example, may have a focus on capacity building in Year 1 followed by more active management and expenditure in the later years.

Working Groups should consider setting a maximum amount per project (based on a percentage of their allocation, for example 30%) to set expectations while developing the minimum number of projects.

Seventy percent of the total investment pool will be allocated across ten BRP Areas, based the proportion of high SMP prospects compared to all other Areas.

Thirty percent will be used in a competitive pool open to project proposals that do not fit within these allocations.

An additional criterion, on-ground management capability and feasibility, will be used for the competitive pool. These projects will develop and test management options for addressing key threats where there are not yet practical, appropriate scale approaches established. These projects would be expected to lead to management standards that could be applied more broadly. The focus is on testing management actions and outputs, rather than biodiversity outcomes, which are being addressed through the Biodiversity 2037 MER Framework. Examples could include: implementing cat control; total grazing pressure control; assisting natural regeneration in previously cleared areas; application of ecological fire regimes in high risk settings.

As part of the probity process, projects will be checked by DELWP Biodiversity Division to confirm that the criteria are adequately met.

If a Working Group does not propose projects up to the value of its indicative budget (Area allocation), or, if the projects proposed do not sufficiently meet the criteria, any remaining funds (i.e. not allocated to projects as they don't meet the criteria or were not proposed) will be redistributed to the competitive pool

Co-funding	Co-funding of NLP2 (or other) projects will be limited to their proportionate contribution to Biodiversity 2037 outcome targets in each Area	Working Groups will review responses within the Smartygrant project application to determine if project proposal reflect 'other investment' (such as core business funding, pledged funding (not yet secured), and in-kind contributions). Working Group members will need to work with their networks to understand current investment and ensure that this is reflected in project proposals and how BRP funding is profiled.
Boundaries with existing responsibilities	Funding is not intended for actions that are generally part of public land managers duty of care Funding is not intended for actions that are part of private land managers specific duty of care e.g. control of specified invasive plant species	