

BushBank private land restoration and protection

Questions and answers for the open call to market to select a delivery partner. Last updated: 21 April 2022

Frequently Asked Questions	Program guideline reference
What is the BushBank program?	
The BushBank program is part of the Growing jobs in land restoration and carbon storage program announced within the 2020-21 Victorian State Budget. The BushBank program is contributing to revegetation and protection targets identified within Protecting Victoria's Environment- Biodiversity 2037, and to the Victorian Government's goal of net zero emissions by 2050, as part of the Land Use, Land Use Change and Forestry (LULUCF) sector emissions reduction pledge.	Section 1
What is the BushBank private land opportunity?	
The BushBank private land opportunity aims to restore and protect private land in target locations that deliver benefits for biodiversity and increase carbon sequestration. The Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP) is seeking a delivery partner(s) to leverage private investment, including from carbon markets, to deliver 20,000 hectares or more of restored and protected habitat on private land.	Section 1.1
What is a BushBank delivery partner?	
A BushBank delivery partner is an organisation appointed by DELWP to deliver a BushBank project in one or more landscapes. A delivery partner can be any organisation or a group of organisations (partnership) but not a private individual.	Section 1.3.3 Section 3.1
I am unable to deliver the specified 20,000 ha but have a substantial (1,000s ha) project proposal. Should I apply?	
Yes, the program preferences a single provider (or partnership) that can deliver 20,000 ha but will consider applications below this threshold that can contribute to the target of 20,000 hectares. For example, an outcome could be that three providers are selected that deliver 10,000 hectares, 7, 000 hectares and 3,000 hectares respectively.	Section 3.1
* Is there a minimum extent of restoration per property?	
Yes, the minimum extent is 10 hectares although 20 hectares would be more cost effective.	Section 2.6.1
Can a partnership apply to become a BushBank delivery partner?	
Yes. A partnership that collectively meets the delivery partner eligibility criteria may apply. The lead applicant will be the main signatory to any funding agreement signed with DELWP and hold primary responsibility for the successful delivery of the proposed project, including all administrative and financial requirements.	Section 3.3.2
How do I apply?	
Apply by completing the EOI submission form available on the BushBank website - https://www.environment.vic.gov.au/bushbank and sending it and supporting document to the BushBank email - bushbank.program@delwp.vic.gov.au by the due date: AEST 9am on 30 May 2022.	Section 3.1.3

BushBank private land restoration and protection

What's the maximum funding I can apply for?

There is no cap on individual submissions but the total funding available is \$30.9 million including any applicable GST.

Section 3.2

* How can \$30.9 million achieve 20,000 hectares of restored and protected land?

This program has been designed with the target of 20,000 hectares based on attracting significant co-funding. The target of 20,000 hectares can only be achieved by delivery partners bringing in co-funding.

Section 3.4

Can I be included in more than one partnership and/or application?

An entity can be included in more than one partnership but can only be included in one application per geographical area (either as a single entity or as a member of a partnership). Check the proposed location of projects when entering discussions about partnering.

Section 3.1

* What type of organisations would be suitable applicants?

Applicants may include a range of entities including NGOs, carbon providers, Landcare, CMAs or a partnership of such organisations that can deliver against the opportunity by bringing co-investment (Section 1.1). The applicant must meet all the eligibility criteria (Section 3.3) and deliver a project in accordance with the program specifications (Section 2).

Section 1.1

Section 2

Section 3.3

How many delivery partners will be selected?

No number has been set. The program preference is to select one delivery partner(ship) but the best applications that contribute to the target of 20,000 hectares of restoration aligned with the priority locations will be selected.

Section 1.1

Section 3.1

How will the delivery partner(s) be selected?

The selection of a delivery partner(s) is via a two staged competitive process using specified assessment criteria.

Section 1.1.1

Section 3.4

Section 4

Stage 1: Expression of Interest

Stage 2: Developing an acceptable Project Implementation Plan

What is the role of a BushBank delivery partner?

Delivery partners will design, plan, manage and deliver a restoration project within agreed landscape(s). Delivery partners will be responsible for identifying and recruiting landowners, desktop and site assessments, prioritisation and selection of project sites, preparation and costing of restoration plans, implementation of works, monitoring and reporting of restoration activities. Delivery partners will be responsible for restoration areas until the vegetation is established.

Section 1.3.3

What is the role of Trust for Nature?

Trust for Nature will have ongoing stewardship responsibility for land restored and protected by this program. They will provide training to delivery partners to ensure sites are suitable for covenanting and that landowners are well informed about their ongoing obligations under the covenant. They will also screen sites and establish the conservation covenants. As required, they can make payments to delivery partners and/or landowners during project implementation.

Section 1.3.2

What is a Trust for Nature conservation covenant?

A conservation covenant is a legally binding agreement between Trust for Nature and a landowner. Its purpose is to permanently conserve and protect the natural, cultural or scientific assets of the land. Once agreed, the covenant is registered on the title and protects habitat forever. More information is available at: <https://trustfornature.org.au/>

BushBank private land restoration and protection

* How are covenant costs to be reflected in an application and is this external to the \$30.9 million?

Applicants must include a project budget, including a line item for permanent protection. This should be represented at \$18,000 per covenant, noting that there may be slight variations for multiple title properties. A covenant is registered per title. The total cost would relate to the estimated number of properties and titles likely to be included to achieve the target restoration extent, noting that multiple title properties will have cost savings when only one assessment and plan is required.

Section 2.4

The covenant costs are included in the \$30.9 million + co-funding amount, there are no additional funds.

Can a project that receives BushBank funding participate in the carbon market?

Yes. BushBank encourages delivery partners and landowners to participate in carbon markets. Carbon schemes usually have additional criteria which will need to be considered in project planning. Applicants wishing to participate in the Emissions Reduction Fund (ERF) should contact the Clean Energy Regulator (CER) to ensure their requirements can be accommodated in a BushBank proposal. Co-funding adds value for money and will be required to achieve the 20,000 hectare target.

Section 1.4
Section 3.4

If the delivery partner proposes a carbon co-funded project, do all sites have to be included in the carbon project?

No, some landowners may not want their land included in a carbon project or it may not quality but is still a valuable restoration site for biodiversity.

Section 1.4.1

* How will BushBank measure the carbon benefits from the restored land?

The exact method is still to be decided but expected carbon benefits from the program will be estimated from the extent, location and vegetation types planted using FullCAM, LOOC-C or similar tools. Any new forest cover achieved will be reported in the Victorian Emissions Inventory, noting that this data comes from the Federal Government assessment from satellite imagery and FullCAM modelling.

Section 1.4.2

* Will this program (or can delivery partners) be part of the new Cambridge 4C initiative?

Program administrators are aware of several schemes developed or developing to match buyers and sellers of carbon and to provide information related to the project delivery and carbon outcomes. There are no plans for the BushBank program to partner with any specific scheme but there is capacity for delivery partners to if they so choose.

Why have the target landscapes been identified?

To achieve program objectives, DELWP has identified locations that can simultaneously deliver biodiversity and carbon benefits. These areas are shown in the target landscape map available at <https://naturekit.biodiversity.vic.gov.au>.

Section 2.1

Must all the restored land be within the moderate to high classes as shown on the target landscapes map?

To achieve program objectives, 80 percent of the restored land must/should be within these categories.

Section 1.1

My project area is not in the moderate to very high classes of the target landscape map. Can I still apply?

Yes. All private land in Victoria is eligible for funding under the BushBank private land stream. Target landscapes scores are a key part of the evaluation criteria.

Section 3.4.2

Can land owned by delivery partners be included within BushBank projects?

Yes, provided it passes land eligibility criteria. The extent of the restoration to be delivered on land owned by delivery partners must be acknowledged and specified within the EOI.

Section A.3

BushBank private land restoration and protection

Can government entity owned land be included?

No, this part of the program is to restore and protect private land and provide financial incentives to landowners to participate. Other funding may be available to restore government entity-owned and public land.

Section 2.3

Is permanent protection mandatory?

Yes. In recognition of the substantial government investment, all land restored under the program must be permanently protected.

Section 2.4

* What are the benefits of covenants being involved in the program?

A covenant provides a guarantee that the outcome of the restoration is sustained and protected in perpetuity.

* Will it be mandatory for delivery partners to pay incentives to landowners?

The amount of payment to landowners will be dependent on their willingness to cost share. The method for determining the required level of incentive payments will be set by delivery partners and can take account of this.

Section 2.4.1

If land restoration does not require woody regeneration, is it eligible for BushBank funding?

The BushBank program has carbon objectives that can only be met if new woody vegetation is restored. A site can include existing remnant vegetation of good quality, and this is strongly encouraged when included with a restoration area that requires new woody vegetation to be planted or assisted to regenerate. The inclusion of some (up to ten per cent) grassland and non-woody wetland vegetation restoration to prevent carbon emissions and deliver good biodiversity outcomes is allowed.

Section 2.3

* Would aerial seeding be an acceptable method of restoration?

The EOI response form includes an area where the methods of restoration are described. If aerial seeding is regarded as suitable and appropriate, this should be explained in the application.

* What level of detail around project outcomes is expected in the EOI?

The EOI should include an informed estimate on what a delivery partner believes can be achieved with the funding requested from BushBank combined with their co-funding and expertise. Further details about project outcomes (such as number of landowners involved) can be verified later during the project implementation plan phase.

How long will delivery partners have to implement the project?

The maximum term of agreement with a delivery partner will be 15 years. Following the delivery partner's commencing the funding agreement, it is expected that within:

Section 2.2

- 3 years of commencing, the delivery partner will have identified all landowners
- 4 years of commencing, on-ground restoration activities will have commenced on all sites
- 5 years of commencing, initial planting will have been completed on all sites.

All plantings should be well established by year 10 of the commencement of on-ground restoration works. Agreements will run until this milestone is achieved.

What if a project fails to meet the extent of restoration required under the funding agreement?

The funding agreement will include provisions for making good and variations. Delivery partners should provide realistic project outcomes and clearly note assumptions and risks in their plans.

Section 4.2.1

BushBank private land restoration and protection

* I have a significant proposal that meets most but not all the program specifications, can I still apply to be a delivery partner?

The program is seeking a delivery partner that can comply with the program specification and bring co-funding to deliver the target of 20,000 hectares. During the assessment process, applicants that meet this will be preferenced over applications that do not. The EOI form provides for the applicant to note where they will not comply or only partially comply with any section(s) and provide reasoning.

Section A.1.5 of the EOI form

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