



CARING  
FOR  
OUR  
COUNTRY

# Caring for our Country

## 2009-10 Investment Merit Assessment Tool

Version 2 April 2009

# 1. Introduction

The Australian Government has invited proposals to deliver against the targets set out in the Caring for our Country annual business plan. For 2009-10, these proposals are due to be submitted by 3 April 2009 and will be assessed against a range of criteria, including:

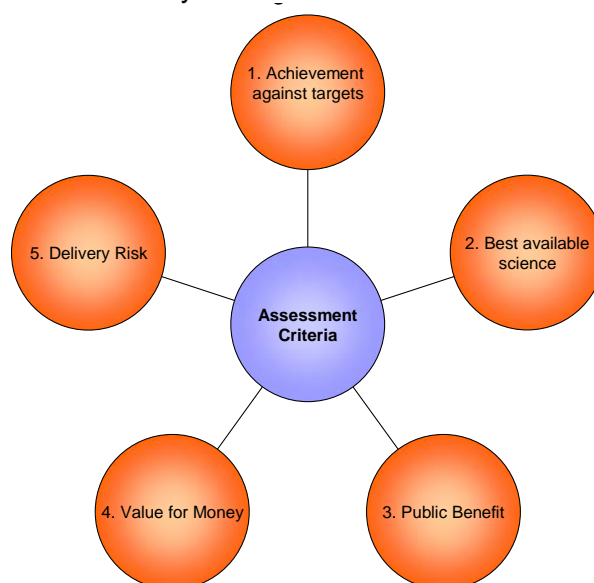
- o demonstrated clear and measureable achievements against at least one of the Caring for our Country targets
- o public benefit – proposals that achieve the greatest public benefits for every dollar invested will receive a higher priority
- o value for money
- o the project is based on the best available science at the time and builds on the collective knowledge of what works best
- o the risk of projects not being able to proceed as planned and the risk mitigation plan in place.

The assessment approach for the Caring for our Country proposals has been designed to be simple to use, robust and able to produce defensible and repeatable assessment outcomes. This will enable the departments to be in a position to:

- o provide decision-makers with advice on preferred investments that is clear, easy to understand, supported by evidence; and
- o provide proponents with objective feedback.

This assessment tool provides an overall methodology and a guide to assessing investment proposals. The tool is to be read in conjunction with the overall 'Proposal Processing and Assessment Plan' and is intended to be used at two levels: by assessors and by the administration team collating the results of the assessment. Assessors will score the proposals and produce a weighted ranking. The administration team will collate information for each of the proposals and will generate reporting information.

The investment decision will be based on the five key criteria shown in the figure below, as published in the 2009-10 business plan (pp 38-39). Each of these criteria will form part of the assessment of each investment proposal received. Each criterion receives a score of 50 (prior to weighting). Although all criteria are highly important, some criteria will be weighted to reflect the overall aim of the Caring for our Country initiative.



## 2. Quantifying and Qualifying the Assessment Criteria




Detailed information on the key assessment criteria is provided in the Caring for our Country business plan and *Instructions for preparing a Caring for our Country proposal*.

Through the assessment process, each of the five criteria will receive a score to allow comparisons to be readily drawn between proposals. Additional information for each proposal will also be captured, but this will predominantly be used as supporting information in reporting to senior executive and decision makers and in providing feedback to proponents. Ultimately, proposals will be scored, ranked and compared in terms of the five key criteria.

### 2.1 Scoring

Assessors will score proposals using an electronic scoring sheet. Assessors will be required to use the scoring sheet and must comply with the approved scoring guidelines in this Investment Merit Assessment Tool. Assessors must only use the nominated scores and are not to use an additional or different score. Assessors will also be asked to complete an eligibility review and provide key comments and recommendations about projects, such as suggested conditions of funding. Please note assessors are only to use one score per sub-criterion, if the proposal has different considerations across the different targets – choose the score that best addresses the proposal as a whole, unless otherwise directed in this guide.

Additional risk and preference information will also be gathered. This information will be used to highlight risks or exceptional outcomes of note. Additional information gathering will be represented by green, red, or amber flags. These are to be used cautiously, in order to retain their significance and add a level of ‘common-sense indicators’ to the process.

	Green flags will highlight projects with exceptional or outstanding contributions to one or more of the assessment criteria. For example, delivering a substantial proportion of a target.
	Red flags will highlight significant risks or concerns. For example, a red flag may highlight that a proposal is a very high risk, or is substantially for private benefit.
	An amber flag is used only at section 4.1.2 and will highlight proposals intending to conduct activities on sites which, although not deemed a priority site in the business plan, may warrant further or equal consideration.

At the conclusion of scoring, weighting will occur automatically (electronic programming) with scores summed to produce an overall rank. The total will combine to become a benefits index. Weighting is as follows:

Assessment Criteria	Score	Multiplier	Weighted Score
Achievement against targets	50	2	100
Best available science	50	1	50
Public benefit	50	1	50
Value for money	50	1.25	62.5
Delivery risk	50	1.25	62.5
<b>Maximum Weighted Score</b>			<b>325</b>

At the conclusion of the scoring process each proposal will have a score against each criterion, an overall ranking and exceptional issues (green, red and amber flags) will be highlighted. To ensure fairness, the scores of similar scaled projects will be compared with each other through the

external and executive panels, for example, small-scale projects will only be compared against other small-scale projects.

## 2.2 Summary of Assessment Criteria and the relevant sub-criteria

Assessment Criteria	Sub-criteria	Score
Achievement against targets	Delivery against multiple targets	5-10
	Priority sites	0-10
	Investment scope	-15-10
Best available science	Contribution to achievement of targets	0-20
	Technical feasibility	0-25
Public Benefit	On ground achievement of targets	0-25
	Level of public benefit	-5-25
Value for money	Lasting project benefits	5-20
	Indigenous partnerships	-5-5
	Budget appropriateness	-5-20
Delivery risk	Leveraging of other funds	0-25
	Identification of significant risks	-5-5
	Risk mitigation strategies identified	-5-5
	Risk assessment of proposal	-35-35

## 3. Additional Analysis of the Data

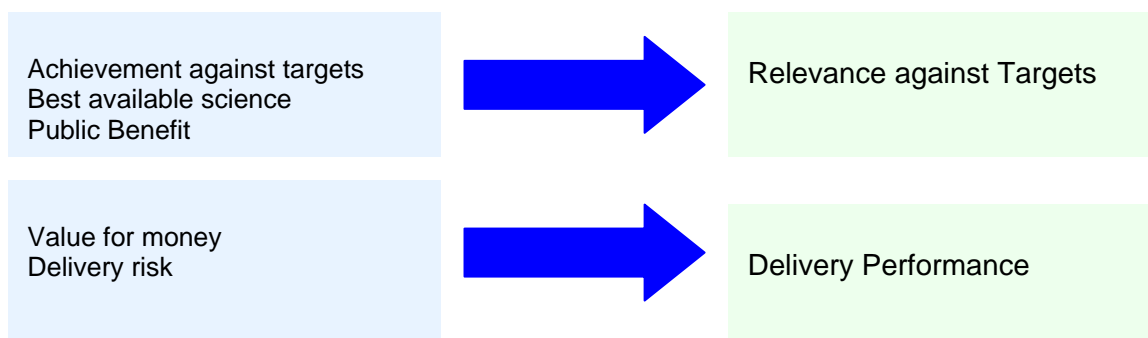
There are a number of additional analyses or examinations of the scores and information in the proposals that will be undertaken in order to provide guidance for the Executive Evaluation Panel and decision makers. These will be calculated following the merit assessment process and may result in the moderation and adjustment of scores. They include:

- Relevance against targets and delivery performance
- Cost per benefit unit
- Risk assessment for projects over \$3 million
- Analyses of target achievement within budget profiles

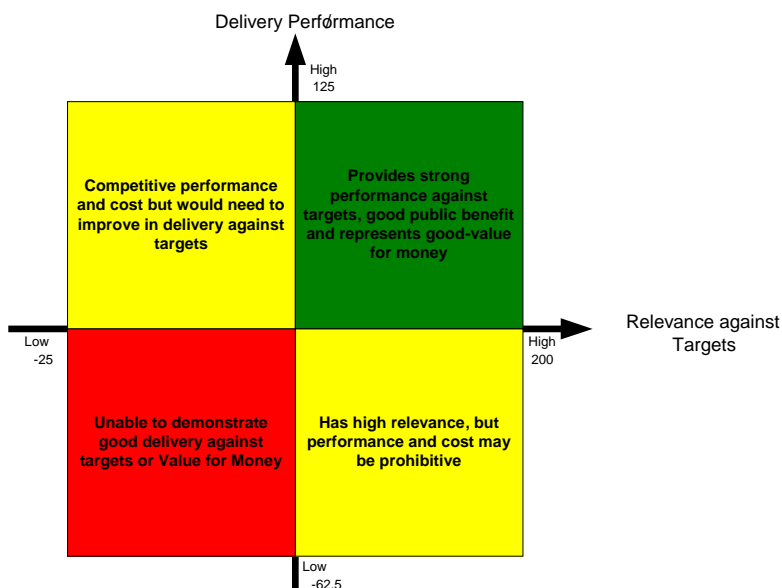
### 3.1 Relevance against Targets and Delivery Performance

An individual proposal's scores will be divided into two subcategories: Relevance against Targets and Delivery Performance and grouped into a Performance/Relevance quadrant (Figure 2.1). It provides a pictorial representation to aid the overall decision making and reporting process. Ideally, it is expected that the majority of recommended projects will deliver a high relevance at a high level of delivery performance (green quadrant). However, some projects that fall into the yellow quadrant may be recommended where there are limited projects to deliver specific targets. In these instances it is expected that there would be conditions of funding identified.

The **Relevance against Targets** category will incorporate the following criteria: achievement against targets, best available science and public benefit. **Delivery performance** will incorporate the value for money, and delivery risk criteria.



**Figure 3.1 Relevance/Performance Quadrant**



### 3.2 Cost per Benefit Unit

The assessment of whether the project represents good value for money will predominantly be based on the score and recommendation from the panels. A cost per benefit unit will be ascertained by dividing the total score (total benefits score) by the total funding sought. This will allow similar projects to be compared in terms of value for money. For example, a project (project 1) receives a total or benefits score of 235. The total funding sought for project 1 is \$20 500. Therefore  $235/20500 = 0.011$ . Project 2 receives a benefits score of 235. The total funding sought for the project is \$35 000. Therefore,  $235/35000 = 0.007$ . Consequently, as both projects are similar (weed removal) some consideration can be given as to what 'value for money' each project represents.

### 3.3 Risk Assessment of projects above \$3 million

The merit assessment panels will complete a risk assessment of each proposal using the Australian Risk Management Standard (AS/NZS 4360:2004) and the risk management framework outlined in the *Instructions for preparing a Caring for our Country proposal*. This will be used in the scoring of the key assessment criteria *Delivery Risk*.

In addition to this, all eligible projects over a value of \$3 million will undergo an external risk evaluation which will be used as additional information in the recommendation process undertaken by the senior executive evaluation panel.

### 3.4 Analysis of target achievement within budget profiles

An analysis will be undertaken following the ranking resulting from the merit assessment and external panel advice. This will identify, in recommended ranked order, the proportions of targets that can be achieved within the existing budget profiles and notional allocations.

## 4. Guide for Assessors

Assessors are required to critically assess proposals against the criteria outlined in this 2009-10 Investment Merit Assessment Tool. This involves using the information supplied by the proponent, the assessors own individual expertise and experience, the target information supplied in the business plan and the Assessment Advice Kit. In addition, assessors will also have access to national technical advisors who will be available to provide advice on queries relating to their expertise. All responses must be justifiable.

### 4.1 Achievement against Targets

The assessment of a proposal's contribution to the achievement of Caring for our Country targets will give consideration to three areas:

- the extent to which the proposal contributes to the targets identified in the business plan
- the extent to which the activities will take place in a priority site identified in the business plan
- the level of intervention proposed

A total score of 50 will be assigned to this criterion, the weighting will result in 30% of the total score being derived from this criterion.

#### 4.1.1 Delivery against multiple targets

Proposals must contribute to at least one of the Caring for our Country targets identified in the business plan. Where the proposal does not address any Caring for our Country target – the proposal should be marked as ineligible, and the assessment process halted. Once the Primary Assessment Panel has agreed to this, the Director of Business Planning must be notified.

Scores are based on the number of targets and outcomes (pp 9-14 in business plan) the proposal is addressing. The scoring matrix combines targets and outcomes and allows assessors to determine a score of up to 10 for this sub-criterion. An example on using the matrix is below. Assessors must only use the nominated scores and must not use an additional or different score.

#### *Relevant sections of the proposal*

Section 2.2 of the proposal form asks the proponent to outline the target/s the proposal is addressing. A list of targets and outcomes are outlined in the business plan. Assessors are asked to critically examine the targets listed, particularly in terms of the methodology the proponent intends to achieve these targets, including budget and milestones table. Where a proponent has listed they will be addressing six targets, but have only developed a methodology to achieve two, the assessor must use their judgement, and in this case score the proposal for addressing two targets and add a note on this in the comments section.

Outcomes	Targets			
	0	1-2	3-4	5+
0	Ineligible	N/A	N/A	N/A
1	Ineligible	2	5	N/A
2	Ineligible	5	7	10
3 +	Ineligible	N/A	10	10

**Example:**

The proponent has submitted an application that will contribute to the target of engaging Indigenous communities and increasing Indigenous best management practice. In accordance with the business plan, these two targets achieve the one outcome - ensure the continued use, support, and reinvigoration of traditional ecological knowledge to underpin biodiversity conservation. Using the matrix (below) the proponent would be scored as follows: Number of targets = 2; number of outcomes = 1 therefore the application gets a score of 2 out of 10.

Outcomes	Targets			
	0	1-2	3-4	5+
0	Ineligible	N/A	N/A	N/A
1	Ineligible	2	5	N/A
2	Ineligible	5	7	10
3 +	Ineligible	N/A	10	10

#### 4.1.2 Will the activities take place in a priority site?

Priority sites or locations have been identified for many of the Caring for our Country targets in the 2009-10 business plan. Preference will be given to activities undertaken in these sites, although other sites may be considered if there is a good justification.

Scoring is based on whether the activities take place in a priority site, or, if not, whether there is a reasonable justification for undertaking the activities in a different location. Where a target does not have priority sites, the proposal is given the maximum score.

Assessors will use the scoring matrix to determine a score of up to 10 for this sub-criterion. An example on using the matrix is shown below. Assessors must only use the nominated scores and must not use an additional or different score.

##### *Relevant sections of the proposal*

Section 6 of the proposal requests proponents to supply the nearest town or locality to the proposal. Assessors will confirm from a detailed listing of priority sites (business plan maps and data to be supplied to the assessment panels) as to whether the proposed site is considered a priority site by the Australian Government.

If the proposed site is NOT considered to be a priority site, then assessors will use Section 2.3/3.3 (Target Justification) to determine whether there is adequate justification for the activities to operate outside a nominated priority site. This score will also be used if there is not enough information to identify if the project is in a priority site or not.


Where there are multiple targets with differing possible scores, then the lowest score is used (eg: some activities are inside the priority locations, and some are outside them – hence the score chosen is: 0

Justified	Priority Site	
	No or Unsure	Yes or N/A
Yes	5	10
No	0	N/A

**Example:**

The proponent has submitted an application under the sustainable farm practices priority area. However, the proponent wishes to undertake the proposed activities in a location that has not been identified as a priority site. The proponent has indicated (Section 3.3) that the site they have nominated has been the subject of recent peer reviewed research indicating that the site may be affected by high levels of wind or hill slope erosion. The information they have provided suggests that there is justification for undertaking the activities in the locality nominated. Using the matrix (below) the proponent should be scored as follows: Priority Site = No; Justified = Yes this results in the proposal getting a score of 5/10 for this question.

	Priority Site	
Justified	No or Unsure	Yes or N/A
Yes	5	10
No	0	N/A

	<b>The justification for activities occurring in a non-priority site is very strong - consideration should be given to equal preference with proposals conducting activities in priority sites.</b>	<b>Y/N</b>
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**4.1.3 Are the activities in line with the investment scope?**

The *Investment Scope* has been identified for the Caring for our Country targets in the 2009-10 business plan. Preference will be given to activities that adhere to these Investment Scope instructions. Consideration should also be given to the projects alignment with the National Strategy where one exists.

Where the activities are in violation of a preferred requirement (score is a minor or medium variation), a condition of funding should be recommended. Where the project violates a strict requirement (score is a No), these projects must also be given a red flag.

Assessors will use the scoring matrix to determine a score of up to 10 for this sub-criterion. Assessors must only use the nominated scores and must not use an additional or different score.

**Relevant sections of the proposal**

Section 2.1/3.1 and 2.6/3.6 of the proposal will assist assessors address this sub-criterion. Please note – do not consider the location of the project in this sub-criterion, it is addressed in 4.1.2

No	Medium Variation	Minor Variation	Yes
-15	0	5	10

**Descriptors:**

No	Some activities are not in line with investment scope. Eg 'funding is not available for' or 'proposals should not be submitted for' identified in the business plan, or incorrect activities in a priority site eg: water quality projects in a Ramsar wetland [in addition to the relevant score, the assessor is required to add a red flag].
Medium variation	Some activities are missing a key requirement for delivery of the selected targets eg: was not developed with the knowledge of the land owner/manager or agency managing the WHA [in addition to the relevant score, the assessor is required to add a recommended condition of funding]



Minor variation	Most activities are in line with the investment scope, there is only very small variation from the outlined 'preference' in the investment scope
Yes	All activities are in line with the priorities and preferences outlined in the Investment Scope outlined in the business plan.

#### 4.1.4 Contribution to achievement of targets

The extent to which a project contributes to the achievement of individual targets is highly relevant in comparing projects. By their nature, large and medium-scale projects should address multiple targets across several geographic regions or contribute substantially to targets. Conversely, small-scale projects are likely to be delivered on a relatively small geographic scale and contribute less to targets than larger or medium scale targets.

Assessors are asked to critically examine the targets listed, particularly in terms of the methodology the proponent intends to achieve these targets, including budget and milestones table. Where a proponent has listed they will be addressing e.g. six targets, but have only developed a methodology to achieve two, the assessor must use their judgement, and in this case score the proposal for addressing two targets and add a note on this in the comments section.

Assessors are to base their scores on funding sought and level of contribution where possible. Where a target is not quantifiable such as the Community Skills, Knowledge and Engagement – increasing participation in natural resource management – assessors are to score using the scoring matrix provided. Where a proposal does not complete the level of contribution to the target in the table – they are to score a 0. If a mix of quantifiable and non-quantifiable targets – score should be based on the quantifiable targets.

An example on using the matrices is below. Assessors must determine a score of up to 20 for this sub criterion and only use the nominated scores.

To identify the contribution to a target, the quantity listed at Section 2.2 should be converted to a percentage (i.e. if the target is to increase native habitat by 400 000 hectares and the proposal expects to contribute to this by 10 000 hectares the percentage is 2.5 % -  $10\,000/400\,000 \times 100 = 2.5\%$ ). Please identify the target(s) and the percentage in the comments section where it is contributing more than 10%.

#### **Relevant sections of the proposal**

Assessors will use:

- o Section 2.2/3.2 (Targets addressed by proposal) of the application to identify the number of targets
- o Section 2.7/3.7 (Budget for proposal) to identify the funding sought per annum.

<b>Proposals seeking funding greater than \$3 million</b>				
<b>Targets</b>	<b>Level of contribution to target</b>			
	<b>&lt;10 %</b>	<b>10-20%</b>	<b>&gt;20%</b>	<b>Not provided</b>
<b>1</b>	5	7	10	0
<b>2</b>	7	10	15	0
<b>3+</b>	10	15	20	0
<b>Proposals seeking funding between \$100 000 and \$3 million</b>				
<b>Targets</b>	<b>Level of contribution to target (generally)</b>			
	<b>&lt;5 %</b>	<b>5-10%</b>	<b>&gt;10%</b>	<b>Not provided</b>
<b>1</b>	5	7	10	0
<b>2</b>	7	10	15	0
<b>3+</b>	10	15	20	0
<b>Proposals seeking funding up to \$100 000</b>				
<b>Targets</b>	<b>Level of contribution to target (generally)</b>			
	<b>&lt;2 %</b>	<b>2-10%</b>	<b>&gt;10%</b>	<b>Not provided</b>

1	5	7	10	0
2	7	10	15	0
3+	10	15	20	0
<b>For proposals with only targets that are not quantifiable</b>				
<b>Good/High Contribution</b>		<b>Low Contribution</b>		<b>Not provided</b>
10		5		0

**Descriptors for non-quantifiable targets:**

Not provided	Proposal does not complete the level of contribution to the target in the table
Low	There is a low contribution to the targets, at a local or regional level
Good/High	There is substantial contribution to the targets at statewide or national level.

**Example 1**

The proponent submits a proposal seeking funding of \$80 000 to increase sustainable farm practices. The proponent plans to help 1000 farmers improve their land management practices to reduce wind erosion risk. The national target is to increase sustainable farming practices to 42 000 farmers. Therefore the proponent is planning to deliver around 2.4% of the target. As a result the proponent would be scored as follows: Level of contribution 2-10% Targets = 1. According to the matrix (below) the proposal gets a score of 7/20.

**Proposals seeking funding up to \$100 000**

Targets	Level of contribution to target (generally)			
	<2 %	2-10%	>10%	Not Provided
1	5	7	10	0
2	7	10	15	0
3+	10	15	20	0

**Example 2**

Where different targets score different percentages, take the average of the percentages.

Four targets in a \$7 million project:


target 1 = 1%

target 2 = 11%

target 3 = 3%

target 4 = non quantifiable

Score should be 10, as there are 3+ targets of < 10% - as the average is less than 10%. Remember to give this project a green flag and list in the comments the target that can be addressed by more than 10% - and its percentage that can be achieved.

	<b>Is the proposal expected to deliver more than 10% of a particular quantifiable target or an outstanding contribution to a non-quantifiable target?</b>	<b>Y/N</b>
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**4.2 Best Available Science**

The assessment criteria of whether a project is 'based on the best available science at the time and builds on the collective knowledge of what works best' will primarily focus on the proposal's

feasibility in regards to its delivery and approach. This criterion has been assigned a score of 50 and will result in 15% of the total score being derived from this criterion.

It will be assessed in two parts:

- Demonstrated technical feasibility
- On-ground achievement of targets

#### 4.2.1 Is the proposal technically feasibility?

Assessors are required to use their knowledge, skills and experience to make a judgement on the appropriateness and feasibility of the methods chosen by the proponent to deliver the targets. Assessors should consider the use of best practice, best available science and the collective knowledge of what works best. Assessors also need to take into consideration whether the budget and timeframes are appropriate to deliver these outcomes, and experience of the proponent in delivering these types of activities. In addition to scoring, please note in the comments section of the form, any suggested conditions of funding that would be required should the proposal be successful (e.g. if the proponent has under budgeted \$ or time or materials, please list what would be required).

Assessors will use the matrix to determine a score of up to 25 for this sub-criterion. Assessors must only use the nominated scores and must not use an additional score.

##### *Relevant sections of the proposal*

Assessors should use Sections 2.1 and 2.6 of the proposal (and any other relevant information) to determine the extent to which the proposal is feasible. When scoring, assessors should consider the proponents knowledge of current practice, the availability of qualified staff/people to undertake the activities and the capacity of the activities to meet expectations.

Nil	Low	Medium	High
0	5	10	25

##### **Descriptors:**

Nil	Not enough information to judge technical feasibility or the proposal is not feasible and realistic.
Low	The proposal has a number of issues with regard to feasibility, but these can be managed with advice and conditions placed on the project (please list)
Medium	The proposal is, in the main, a feasible approach with only very minor inconsistencies.
High	Proposal methodology appears highly feasible and logic demonstrates how it will lead to the achievement of targets

#### 4.2.2 Is there a significant on-ground achievement of the targets?

It is expected that all projects will contribute to the on-ground achievement of the relevant targets in the timeframe identified in the business plan. Assessors should consider the proportion of the project that is research, science, capacity building, monitoring and evaluation, etc compared to the component that will actually deliver reportable results against the target.

##### *Relevant sections of the proposal*

Assessors should use Section 2.1 and 2.6 of the proposal.

No	Medium	High
0	10	25

##### **Descriptors:**

No	No on-ground achievement of the targets from this project within the life of the first five years of Caring for our Country (by June 2013)
Medium	This proposal appears that it <u>may</u> lead to the delivery of a component of the targets within the next four years.
High	This proposal will directly deliver a component of the targets within timeframe identified for that target (1-4 yrs).

### 4.3 Public Benefit

For the purpose of this assessment process, public benefit is defined as the benefits to the public good and the ecosystem services as a result of the proposed changes in land management. Private benefits refer to benefits to a private land manager as a result of the proposed changes.

The assessment of the level of public benefit derived will give consideration to two areas:

- o The level of public benefit
- o Whether the project will deliver lasting benefits without additional funding

This criterion has been assigned a score of 50 and will result in 15% of the total score being derived from this criterion.

#### 4.3.1 What is the level of public benefit?

Assessors will use the matrix to determine a score of up to 25 for this sub-criterion. Investment proposals relating to private farm and other private land will frequently entail a private benefit to land holders. A primary consideration in assessing these applications is to form a judgement about whether there would also be a significant public benefit derived from investment in these proposals. The net public benefit should exceed the private benefit gained from the Caring for our Country investment (Assessors are asked to refer to the Sustainable Farm Practices Information Sheet supplied in the training package for further information).

#### *Relevant sections of the proposal*

Assessors should use Section 4.5 (as well as any other relevant information) of the proposal to assist in determining whether the proposal delivers a substantial public benefit.

Very low	Low	Medium	High
-5	5	15	25

#### Descriptors

Very low	Proposal delivers mainly private benefit, possible public benefit is questionable
Low	Proposal delivers clear private benefit, but results in some public benefit
Medium	Proposal delivers a reasonable balance of public and private benefit
High	Proposal delivers high level of clear, unambiguous and demonstrated public benefit

#### 4.3.2 Will the project deliver lasting benefits

It is expected that projects that receive Caring for our Country funding will be planned and managed in such a way as to not require further funding for routine maintenance, or even completely re-funding these same activities in the future.

By way of definition, lasting benefit means the time period before further investment is required. Assessors will use the scoring matrix to determine a score of up to 20 for this sub-criterion.


### Relevant sections of the proposal

Assessors should use Section 4.5 (as well as any other relevant information) of the proposal to assist in determining whether the proposal delivers a lasting public benefit.

Timeframe of project	Timeframe of outcomes - 5 years	Timeframe of vision - up to 20 years
5	10	20

### Descriptors

Timeframe of project	On balance the proposal will only deliver benefits for the life of the project
5 years	On balance the proposal will deliver lasting benefits for a maximum of 5 years
5 to 20 years	On balance the proposal will deliver lasting benefits for between 5 to 20 years

 <b>Is this proposal substantially for private benefit?</b>	<b>Y/N</b>
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### 4.3.3 What is the level of Indigenous Engagement?

The Australian Government has stated in the 2009-10 business plan that preference will also be given to proposals which include active engagement with Indigenous people. Assessors will use the matrix to determine a score of up to 5 for this sub-criterion.

### Relevant sections of the proposal

Assessors should use Section 4 and Section 5 of the proposal application to assist in answering.

Indigenous Engagement		
Nil	Low	High
-5	2	5

### Descriptor

Nil	No Indigenous engagement has been identified for a proposal that requires it.
Low	General communication with Indigenous stakeholders has been planned/undertaken with regard to this project – or Indigenous engagement is not required for this project or in this area
High	Specific engagement and involvement of Indigenous stakeholders has been incorporated into the project

## 4 Value for Money

The assessment of whether the project represents good value for money will predominantly be based on budget justification and funding leveraged by the project. This part of the value for money assessment will focus on an analysis of three areas:

- is the budget appropriate for the desired outcome
- whether the proponent has leveraged other sources of funding
- the level of funding sought

This criterion has been assigned a score of 50 with an additional weighting and will result in nearly 20% of the total score being derived from this criterion.

### 4.4.1 Is the budget appropriate and realistic for the activities identified?

Assessors are required to use their knowledge, skills and experience to make a judgement on the project budget and whether it is appropriate and realistic for the outcome the proposal seeks to achieve. Assessors should take into consideration the expected unit cost and the location of the project (e.g. remoteness). In addition to scoring, please note in the comments section of the form, any suggested budget adjustments that would be recommended as conditions of funding should the proposal be successful. This may include removal of certain budget items that are not appropriate or are not linked to the delivery of the targets, or adjustments to specific line items that are considerably over or under priced by your estimation. Assessors will use the scoring matrix to determine a score of up to 25 for this sub-criterion.

#### Relevant sections of the proposal

Assessors should use Section 2.7/3.7 of the proposal to determine the details of the funding sought.

No	Average	Yes
-5	10	25

#### Descriptors

No	The proposal budget is inappropriate and not realistic and is not justified for what it is seeking to achieve - or there is insufficient information to suggest the budget is appropriate.
Average	The proposal budget requires some minor adjustments to ensure it is realistic and appropriate for the scale, methods, targets and location.
Yes	The proposal budget is realistic and appropriate for the scale and methods of the project, the targets it is seeking to achieve, and its location.

 <p><b>This proposal requests funding that does not contribute to the targets?</b> *This does not include 'core operating costs' of regional bodies (maximum 10%)</p>	Y/N
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### 4.4.2 Does the proposal leverage other funds?

Has the proponent obtained other sources of funding for the investment proposal? If so, what value, as a percentage of the Caring for our Country funding sought, is the other source of funding? For example, if a proponent is applying for \$20 500 in funding and has leveraged \$5000 from another organisation the value of funding sought is 24% ( $5000/20500 \times 100 = 24.3\%$ ). Please note: Caring for our Country funds are not to be counted in determining these scores. Assessors will use the matrix to determine a score of up to 25 for this sub-criterion.

#### Relevant sections of the proposal

Assessors should use Section 2.7 / 3.7 (as well as any other relevant information) to assist with scoring

	Value of other funds (% of budget sought)				
	0	<10%	10-50%	50-75%	>75%
Secured	0	5	15	20	25
Not Secured	0	2	5	10	15

### Descriptors

Secured	In hand or committed
Not Secured	Dependent on fundraising, application submitted

## 4.5 Delivery Risk

Assessors should consider the proposal as a whole including Section 4.2 of the proposal and any other relevant information to determine delivery risk. This criterion has been assigned a score of 50 with an additional weighting and will result in nearly 20% of the total score being derived from this criterion.

### 4.5.1 Has the proponent outlined the significant risks to the successful delivery of the project?

Risk management is a methodology to manage uncertainty; it deals with the possibility of future events and the strategies to prevent those events from happening or managing their impact if they do. As part of the application the proponent has been asked to identify significant risks and mitigation strategies to the proposal.

Assessors should consider whether the proponent has outlined risks to resources such as inputs, finances, staff and implementation delays. Assessors should also consider whether the proponent has considered legal and planning requirements. Assessors will use the scoring matrix to determine a score of up to 5 for this sub-criterion.

#### *Relevant sections of the proposal*

A proposal's overall risk is listed in Section 4.4 (Risk Management).

No	Variable	Yes
-5	2	5

### Descriptors

No	The proponent has not identified any risks to the proposal – or has outlined risks but not completed the matrix to give a risk rating
Variable	The proponent has outlined some significant risks but there are other significant risks that have not been identified
Yes	The proponent has listed all significant risks

### 4.5.2 Has the proponent outlined feasible strategies to mitigate any risks identified?

A proposal's residual risk is the risk remaining after any mitigation strategies have been put in place. If the mitigation strategy is considered effective and reduces the risk to an acceptable level,

or the benefit of proceeding with the activity outweighs an adverse consequence, the risk is considered acceptable.

Assessors will use the matrix to determine a score of up to 5 for this sub-criterion.

### **Relevant sections of the proposal**

The mitigation strategy to counter the identified risk is at Section 4.4.

Nil	Poor	Good
-5	2	5

### **Descriptors**

Nil	No mitigation strategies identified
Poor	There are some mitigation strategies identified, but the risks are still significant.
Good	On balance there are detailed mitigation strategies outlined, ensuring that the risk to this projects success is minimal

### **4.5.3 Risk Assessment of Proposal**

The assessment of risk will adopt an approach that is consistent with the Australian Risk Management Standard (AS/NZS 4360:2004) and the risk management framework outlined in the Instructions for preparing a Caring for our Country proposal. Assessors must complete the following risk assessment to determine the overall risk of the proposal and identify a score.

- Step 1: For each Risk Category, identify the 'Likelihood' and 'Consequence' using the Risk Rating Matrix (consequence descriptors are provided for guidance)
- Step 2: For each rating of high or above, provide a comment on what the risk is and recommend any additional actions that should be undertaken to further mitigate the risk
- Step 3: Identify the highest Risk Rating (across the categories) to identify the score for this sub-criterion from the Risk Scores table.

#### **Risk Categories**

Risk Category	Risk	Risk Rating
<b>Governance</b>	The lead proponent has poor governance arrangements in place (eg: to ensure their partners and subcontractors will deliver their contribution in a timely and efficient manner).	
<b>Partnerships</b>	The proposal will not engage the right stakeholders or partners to support the proposal and this may lead to delivery failure.	
<b>Capacity to Deliver</b>	The lead proponent and partners do not have the capacity to implement the proposal - consider the proponent's level of co-ordination, budget, staffing, and governance arrangements	
<b>Timeframes &amp; milestones</b>	The timeframes and milestones of the proposal are not commensurate with the size and nature of the proposal	
<b>Financial</b>	Funding is sought from sources which may not be forthcoming and this may lead to targets not being met.	



<b>Image/ Reputation</b>	The proposal activities and delivery approach are of a nature that may lead to the image/reputation of the Australian Government being adversely impacted.	
<b>Environmental Impacts</b>	There is the potential for the proposal to have unintended negative environmental or agricultural impacts (please list)	
<b>Compliance</b>	The project does not have the necessary permits and/or will contravene local, State or Commonwealth policy and/or legislation	
<b>Other</b>		

### Risk Rating Matrix

Likelihood	Consequences				
	Insignificant	Minor	Moderate	Major	Catastrophic
<b>Almost certain</b> (once a month)	Low	Medium	High	Very High	Extreme
<b>Likely</b> (once in 6 months)	Low	Medium	High	Very High	Very High
<b>Possible</b> (once in 2 years)	Low	Low	Medium	High	High
<b>Unlikely</b> (once in 10 years)	Minimal	Minimal	Low	Medium	High
<b>Very Unlikely</b> (once in 50 years)	Minimal	Minimal	Low	Low	Medium


### Risk Scores

Score	Risk Description
- 35	Represents an extreme risk of delivery failure – risk rating of extreme (add red flag)
-20	Represents a very high risk of delivery failure– risk rating of very high (add red flag)
0	Represents a high risk of delivery failure – risk rating of high (add condition/comment)
20	Represents a medium risk of delivery failure and is not likely to significantly detract from performance– risk rating of medium
35	Represents a low to minimal risk of delivery failure and will not impact on project delivery – risk rating of low or minimal

### Consequence Descriptors

Level and Description	Project / target Achievement	Financial Impacts ....	Reputation and Image per issue	Environmental impacts ...	Non-Compliance
<b>Catastrophic</b>	Non achievement of objective/ outcome; performance failure	Financial risk in excess of \$10m	Maximum high level headline exposure; Ministerial censure; loss of credibility	Multiple environmental/ agricultural issues with long term degradation consequences	Serious, willful breach; criminal negligence or act; prosecution; dismissal
<b>Major</b>	Significant delays; Performance significantly under target	Financial risk up to \$10m	Headline profile; repeated exposure; ministerial involvement	Significant impact on Australia's environment, natural icons and/or sustainable production	Deliberate breach or gross negligence; formal investigation; disciplinary action
<b>Moderate</b>	Material delays; marginal underachievement of target performance	Financial risk up to \$250k	Repeated non-headline exposure; slow resolution; Ministerial enquiry/briefing	Short term impact on environmental/ agricultural assets, but can be minimized in the longer term.	Negligent breach; lack of good faith evident; performance
<b>Minor</b>	Inconvenient delays	Financial risk up to \$10k	Non-headline exposure, clear fault settled quickly, negligible impact	Minor impact on the environment/ agriculture that is manageable and can be corrected.	Breach; objection/ complaint lodged; minor harm with investigation
<b>Insignificant</b>	Negligible delays	Financial risk up to \$1k	Limited reputational exposure	Negligible impact on the environment/ agriculture.	Minor complaints may be lodged.

Please note: Consequence of 'Project / target Achievement' is to be used for: Governance, Capacity to deliver, timeframes and milestones, and partnerships.

 <b>This proposal has residual risks (or risk after mitigation) that are not acceptable (very high and extreme)</b>	<b>Y/N</b>
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## 5. Activity Type

Please identify the primary and secondary activity type of this proposal. This information will only be used in communication and briefing activities.

	Primary Activity	Secondary Activity
<b>On-ground</b>		
<b>Capacity Building</b>		
<b>Planning</b>		
<b>Research and Planning</b>		

## 6. Linkages, Synergies and Duplication of Other Proposals

Where assessors identify duplication of activities or proposals, these are to be noted and a recommendation made. Where possible linkages or synergies are identified, please also note these (list ID numbers) and discuss at the panel meeting in order to make a recommendation.

## 7. Eligibility Review

Assessors are required to respond (yes/no) to each of the listed *Ineligible Activities* that have been identified in the business plan. If any of your responses is a yes, please detail what activities in the proposal were ineligible. These DO NOT automatically make the whole proposal ineligible.

### Ineligible Activities

- activities do not contribute to the Caring for our Country targets
- activities that have an adverse impact on any matter of national environmental significance under the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act (1999)
- legislative and regulatory responsibility of others, such as managing or controlling certain weeds or compliance activities
- activities that are inconsistent with key national, state, territory, regional natural resource management strategies or plans
- core responsibility/business of state/territory and local governments
- retrospective funding—activities that have been undertaken prior to the signing of Caring for our Country contracts, will not be funded
- direct subsidisation of commercial activities, business start-up or where the primary purpose is commercial gain
- water use efficiency, water savings, water quantity activities, development and implementation of water sharing plans such as those that are eligible under the Australian Government's Water for the Future Program
- major water infrastructure such as large salt interception or engineering works
- large capital works that do not directly achieve the Caring for our Country targets, such as the construction of buildings and car parks
- public amenity projects where the primary purpose is for recreation, safety, or tourism including toilet blocks and amenity plantings
- activities that are more appropriately funded by other initiatives or programs such as Water for the Future and Australia's Farming Future
- administration or legal costs other than those directly related to the delivery of the project
- There is potential for the project to introduce plants, animals or other biological agents known to be, or that could become environmental or agricultural weeds or pests?

 Does the proposal contain any ineligible activities?	Y/N
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