

for developers



BioBanking is a biodiversity banking and offsets scheme that streamlines the threatened species assessment process for developers and improves overall biodiversity. BioBanking is a voluntary scheme with a consistent, scientific methodology which provides greater certainty during the development process.



Further information

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What is BioBanking?

BioBanking is a market-based scheme that brings together:

- landowners who generate biodiversity credits from a biobank site
- purchasers who buy the credits created.

Purchasers may be developers wanting to 'offset' biodiversity loss from a new development site, or conservation groups, philanthropists and government departments interested in conserving biodiversity in perpetuity.

There are two types of biodiversity credits – species credits and ecosystem credits.

How can BioBanking benefit developers?

BioBanking gives developers greater flexibility.

Using BioBanking to assess and offset biodiversity losses on a development site allows the offsets to be located in another area with similar vegetation types, minimising costs for developers while maximising gains to biodiversity.

BioBanking reduces risk. Under BioBanking, biodiversity assessments are completed by accredited BioBanking Assessors who apply the same methodology to every development and biobank site. This transparent approach minimises subjectivity in determining offsets.

The developer is also freed from any ongoing responsibility to manage the offset site as the purchase of credits funds a landholder to manage their own land, absolving the developer of any further involvement.

BioBanking improves certainty. Where a biobanking statement is granted for a development site, the consent authority must accept that the requirements for threatened species under section 79C of the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1997* (EP&A Act) have been met. Also, a biobanking statement cannot be appealed in the Land and Environment Court.

BioBanking reduces the time needed to address threatened species aspects of the development approval process. Offsets no longer need to be negotiated as the BioBanking Credit Calculator determines the credits required, eliminating a major cause of delay. The Department of Environment and Climate Change (DECC) aims to process biobanking statement applications within 28 days of receipt (42 days if the application requires a 'red flag' determination – see over).

BioBanking provides businesses with a point of difference. Where environmental considerations are one of the core values of a business, BioBanking demonstrates a clear commitment to improving and maintaining our biodiversity.

BioBanking can also be used to better plan projects and identify land suitable for future development proposals. Different scenarios can be run through the BioBanking Credit Calculator to determine the most beneficial and cost-effective development option. The calculator is available for free on the BioBanking website.



How does BioBanking work?

BioBanking is a voluntary alternative to the current assessment of significance process for threatened species. A biobanking statement can be obtained for development assessed under Parts 4 or 5 of the EP&A Act. For Part 3A applications, a developer can obtain a biobanking statement or simply use the methodology to calculate the credits required.

To obtain a biobanking statement the developer must meet the 'improve or maintain test' for biodiversity values by:

- minimising the impact on biodiversity values through on-site measures
- avoiding 'red flag' areas (those areas that are important for biodiversity conservation and that cannot be easily replaced) or applying for a red flag variation in some circumstances
- purchasing and retiring the required number and type of credits to offset biodiversity loss on the development site.

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P. Meek

The assessment process

Before applying for a biobanking statement, the development site has to be assessed. Assessments must be undertaken by an accredited BioBanking Assessor (a list of assessors is available on the BioBanking website). The assessor will produce a credit report that is submitted by the developer with the application for a biobanking statement. The credits required to offset losses on each development site will vary as each site has different vegetation types, conditions and threatened species.

Applying for a biobanking statement

When the assessment has been completed, an application for a biobanking statement is made to DECC. After checking for compliance and receiving the appropriate fee, DECC registers the biobanking statement specifying the on-site actions that must be carried out, and the number and type of credits that must be purchased and retired before development commences.

The consent authority

The biobanking statement is provided to the consent authority (such as a local council) with a development application. The consent authority cannot request further biodiversity information if a biobanking statement is provided. A biobanking statement is valid for two years from its date of issue.

The consent authority must include the conditions of the biobanking statement in the development consent. When a biobanking statement is incorporated in a development consent, the credit requirements remain valid until the development consent lapses (five years if work has not started).

Purchasing credits

Developers can purchase their required credits from biobank site owners or other owners of biodiversity credits. It is likely that credits will need to be purchased from more than one seller. If a developer buys credits to offset the effects of a development site, they must retire them so they cannot be traded again. Developers, or anyone else, can also buy credits to keep for future offsets or possible resale at a later date.

The biobanking public register lists expressions of interest from landholders wanting to establish biobank sites as well as biodiversity credits available for sale. Where an expression of interest matches a developer's needs, they may approach the landholder and enter into an option to purchase credits after an assessment is undertaken and a biobanking agreement granted.

Developers can publicise the type of credits they are interested in by submitting a 'credits wanted form' to be included in the 'list of wanted credits' on the BioBanking website.



How much is a credit worth?

As BioBanking is a market-based scheme, demand from purchasers and the supply of credits will affect how much a credit is worth. The biobanking public register lists expressions of interest, credits available for sale and all past credit transactions, which may help inform negotiations regarding the price of credits.

The condition of the vegetation on a biobank site will affect the cost of the management actions required, which in turn will affect the credit price required to ensure these actions can be completed. Landowners, or other credit owners, are also allowed to build a profit margin into their credit price.

M. Cufer



Other considerations

Developers can establish their own biobank site to create credits on land that is part of a development site but not suitable for development, or elsewhere. These credits could be used by the developer to offset biodiversity losses for a current development, future developments, or to sell to others. Where a developer establishes a biobank site, they become responsible for managing biodiversity on the site.