

Snowy River 'Weaving the Web' Biodiversity Fund Project

Criteria for delivery of funding

(Theme 1 – revegetation and Theme 2 – restoration)

Background

The Snowy River 'Weaving the Web' project is a six year project (July 2012-June 2017) managed by South East Local Land Services (LLS) and funded through the Australian Government's Biodiversity Fund.

The project addresses the three themes from Round 1 of the Biodiversity Fund – Revegetation, Restoration and Threat abatement. These criteria have been prepared for the delivery of funding under Theme 1 and 2 of this project. They include minimum expectations and priority criteria for on-ground activities to be eligible for funding under the deed from the Australian Government.

Project Objectives:

The project aims to restore, manage and enhance biodiversity values across multiple sites on private land from the Upper Snowy River to Kosciuszko National Park in NSW. The Snowy River will provide a spine for restoration efforts with revegetation corridors expanding like ribs into the agricultural landscape and anchoring the river to the national reserve system. Building upon the Monaro Grasslands Biodiversity Conservation Strategy (2002) and the Snowy River Rehabilitation Plan (2009) the protection of four endangered vegetation communities will increase the resilience of the Snowy-Monaro landscape in a changing and uncertain climate.

Outcomes and outputs

The Weaving a Web Project has been funded to:

- 1) Protect and enhance four endangered ecological communities by aggregating outcomes from multiple properties on private land (see Table 2 for details).
- 2) Secure 408 Ha large scale restoration sites to buffer, protect and enhance biodiversity values of Kosciuszko NP and, via works on the Snowy River, protect the downstream Byadbo Wilderness Area.
- 3) Improve the rate of river recovery for the Snowy River via in-stream and stream bank restoration works along 20% of the total NSW reach.
- 4) Deliver 50 Ha revegetation in the corridor between Kosciuszko NP and the Snowy River to expand and consolidate the network of existing conservation management agreements on private lands. There will be an increased rate of vegetation establishment, when compared to historic plantings, as species will be selected to on the basis of increased resilience to climate change and environmental shocks (incl. flood, fire and drought). Improved terrestrial habitat will also encourage bird predation of insects and reduce the rate of existing die back.
- 5) Reduce grassy weed threats over 2000 Ha to protect biodiversity values of Kosciuszko NP and the Byadbo Wilderness Area.
- 6) Provide an additional 240km (Min 565 Ha) riparian WoNS management (funded by others) to improve landscape links beyond the southern range of the current 'Kosciuszko2Coast Project'.
- 7) Facilitate completion of a consolidated Biodiversity Conservation Management Strategy for the Snowy Monaro region by 2016/17 to improve and guide future biodiversity and carbon sequestration investment.
- 8) Establish community monitoring of native and feral animals to inform future management and control strategies.

PROJECT CRITERIA

Minimum Standard Criteria

Revegetation and restoration projects funded through the Weaving the Web project are to be in accordance with the following minimum standard criteria. Projects that do not meet these criteria will be ineligible for funding. Weed threat abatement (Theme 3) of the project is not covered under these guidelines and will be addressed through separate planning documents.

These criteria have been established to address the:

- original funding guidelines
- funding deed; and
- monitoring and Reporting requirements of the Australian Government.

Table 1 – Minimum standard criteria

No	Category	Criteria	Specifications/details
1	Location	Projects are to occur within the project area boundary	Project area includes the Snowy River catchment downstream of Jindabyne Gorge – see Figure 1
2	On-ground activities that can be funded	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fencing • Off-stream watering • Weed control (to enhance remnant vegetation) • Revegetation 	<p>Incentives will be available for these activities where they contribute to meeting revegetation and restoration targets (see 2A and 2B for more detail)</p> <p>All new planting and protection of remnant vegetation sites must be fenced to a stock proof standard.</p> <p>There is no scope in this project for erosion control works.</p>
2A	Revegetation Targets (new works)	<p>Includes new revegetation activities which either:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Create or build corridors that connect remnant vegetation 2) Enhance buffers around remnant vegetation <p>Plantings may occur in riparian, terrestrial, in-stream sand sheet,</p>	<p>Revegetation includes planting of native species that are endemic to the project site. No exotics or non-endemic species to an area are to be funded.</p> <p>Minimum areas for revegetation are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • revegetation of sand sheets via direct seeding or tube stock: 1 ha or greater • revegetation of riparian land and land adjacent to upland wetlands: 2 hectares or greater (2-5 hectare average) where willows and blackberries have been reduced • paddock scale revegetation and supplementary planting on marginal agricultural

		wetland or swamp areas.	<p>land (stepping stones): 5 hectares or greater</p> <p>Other requirements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • corridors or shelterbelts are to be a minimum of three rows wide and 10 m wide • minimum two tree and four shrub/grass species to be planted per site
2B	Revegetation targets (follow-up)	Follow-up revegetation, only applicable to riparian zone of the Snowy River	<p>Landholders along the Snowy River which were engaged in revegetation through the 'Snowy Banks' program are to be audited over the term of the project. Site that meet the following criteria are eligible:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Landholders are engaged and have shown an on-going commitment towards maintenance • Revegetation sites that have previously failed due to die-back, drought and species selection. <p>Criteria for new revegetation activities (see 2B) will also apply to these activities.</p>
2C	Restoration targets	<p>Restoration includes protection and enhancement of existing native vegetation.</p> <p>Remnant native vegetation can be any vegetation community including wetlands, riparian areas, terrestrial areas and swamps</p>	<p>Fencing, off-stream watering and weed control alone are permitted where the remnant is in good to moderate condition and covers more than 50% of the project site. Additional revegetation is required if the remnant is poor condition, has limited evidence of natural regeneration and covers less than 50% of the project site.</p> <p>Funding for first pass weed control (Serrated tussock, African lovegrass and Blackberry) is permitted where remnant vegetation is to be fenced. Funding can include supply of chemical (certified chemical users only) or hire of Contractors through a 50:50 cost sharing arrangement. Follow-up weed control is ineligible for funding.</p> <p>Minimum areas that are eligible for funding are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • restoration of riparian land and land adjacent to wetlands: 2 hectares or greater (2-5 hectare average) where willows and blackberries have been reduced • paddock scale restoration and supplementary planting on marginal agricultural land (stepping stones): 5 hectares or greater
3	Management agreements	10 year agreements are to be signed between the funding body and the landholder	<p>Agreements are to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On-going maintenance expectations (e.g. maintenance of fences in stock proof condition, weed control etc)

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear objectives and milestones • Detailed cash and in-kind commitments from both parties for the term of the agreement • Risk management strategies (e.g. provision for plant replacement) • Monitoring requirements
4	Monitoring	Photo monitoring points	Photo monitoring points are to be set up on commencement of the project and recorded on completion of the work and every second year over a 10 year period
5	Incentives rates	Matching contributions are to be sought for all projects. Projects are to be funded according to incentive guidelines	<p>Projects are to be funded according to incentive rate guidelines (see Landcare guidelines for devolved USLC funding and LLS guidelines for internally developed projects).</p> <p>Any projects developed with LLS with incentives outside the parameters of these guidelines must be approved by a Technical Reference Group. For devolved funds held with USLC projects will not be funded if they are outside these guidelines.</p>

Priority Criteria

In addition to the minimum standard criteria projects must align with one or more of the following priority categories:

Table 2 – Priority criteria

Priority criteria	Justification
<p>Restoration and revegetation activities are focussed on improving TEC and EEC communities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Upland Wetlands of the New England Tablelands and Monaro Plateau • White Box – Yellow Box – Blakely’s Red Gum Grassy Woodland • Natural Temperate Grasslands of the Southern Tablelands (NSW and ACT) • Snow-Gum Ribbon Gum Grassy Woodland 	<p>State and Federally listed threatened vegetation communities</p>
<p>Activities are located along major watercourses</p>	<p>Rivers are arteries of the landscape or ‘ribs’ of the Snowy River and have significant potential to build landscape scale biodiversity outcomes. They are also often the areas of highest biodiversity.</p> <p>Significant investment has been undertaken along major watercourses of the Snowy River Catchment over recent years through the Snowy River Rehabilitation Project and Water for Rivers Project. Activities along these watercourses will build onto this investment and allow for effective revegetation where the threat of willow and blackberry has already been reduced.</p>
<p>Build onto existing and past investment (whether this is on the same property or as clusters of works in a landscape).</p>	<p>The Weaving the Web Project is aiming to achieve landscape scale biodiversity outcomes – building onto past investment will increase the outcomes achieved under this project.</p>
<p>Revegetation activities which achieve the following criteria will be given priority:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Corridor plantings that create landscape connectivity between remnant native vegetation which is >10ha at either end • Corridor plantings that are 30m or more wide and 1 km in length 	<p>The greatest biodiversity outcomes can be achieved through activities undertaken at this scale (refer to ‘Guidelines for Connectivity Management and Restoration in Australia’ Veronica A.J. Doerr, Erik D. Doerr and Micah J. Davies, CSIRO Sustainable Ecosystems</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Corridor plantings that include riparian areas or stepping stones (e.g. paddock trees) <p>Restoration activities which will protect and enhance a patch of remnant native vegetation >10ha will be given priority.</p> <p>If remnant native vegetation patches are smaller than 10ha, further apart than 1km, or in poor condition, buffer plantings which improve patch size and quality of remnant vegetation should be undertaken.</p>	
<p>Strategic sites identified in rehabilitation plans, e.g. Bombala and Snowy Catchment Rehabilitation Plans</p>	<p>Identified as having strategic or high conservation value in rehabilitation plans</p>

**Landscape scale corridor mapping is currently being undertaken for the Monaro region by LLS. Once available this will become additional priority criteria.*