

Questions and Answers

Topic: Auditing

How will assessors be selected for the audit program?

The department will consult with the BCD Regional Planning Teams to recommend Biodiversity Development Assessment Report (BDAR) for the pilot audits. The decision on which BDAR will be in the pilot will be made by our Director, Biodiversity Offset Scheme. The audit program has a risk assessment approach used to select Biodiversity Assessment Reports (BARs) or assessors for the auditing program. Going forward there will be a mix of random audits and themed audits based on key areas of interest of the department. This information will be released on an ongoing basis.

Will the department's reviews of major project BDARs be incorporated into the compliance and auditing process? If not, why not?

Yes, the initial pilot audits will include major projects. as well as the ongoing audit schedule.

Has the "accredited assessor consultation forum" been established, and if not, when is this likely to commence?

The department placed a call for expressions of interest from assessors which although did get some response, there was not enough to make a quorum. If anyone is interested, please get in touch through the BAM_accreditation@environment.nsw.gov.au mailbox. The department is interested in forming a group to provide input to emerging scheme issues and projects.

Since BDARs are to accompany and be consistent with development applications, will audits extend to the information that's included in the development application documentation?

The department is auditing the application of the BAM and the creation of the BAR, so if there is relevant information in other parts of the development application then that can be considered. The ongoing audit program is not going only belong audits such as those in the previous initial audit carried out in 2020/21 program. It is proposed that the next round of audits that are being conducted will take two to three weeks, which will provide for more audits to occur. The audit protocol is one of the three interim documents being released.

Topic: Training and accreditation

When will re-accreditation training be available? What happens if a renewal training session is not available before the end of the current accreditation period?

The department is currently negotiating with the existing training provider to renew their contract to provide the elearning online training course components.

<Note – elearning is now available mid-June 2022>.

The online component will be available shortly the online training will be made available upon the contract arrangements being completed and all people who have lodged an EOI for renewal training will be contacted shortly.

The department is still seeking suitably trained people to deliver the face-to-face components of the training and put out an expression of interest in a previous [BOS Update No. 2](#) newsletter. Any experienced, accredited assessors who have a training background, are encouraged to contact the BAM_accreditation@environment.nsw.gov.au mailbox. ss

The department is aware of who's accreditation is due for renewal and who needs to complete that training and has been proactively contacting people. Any assessor who is renewing or has concerns can contact the Department.

Any other individual questions or concerns should be directed to the BAM accreditation mailbox,

Will the accreditation period be extended if no reaccreditation training is available before the end date of accreditation?

There is a provision to allow one year of extension of accreditation in certain circumstances.

The alternative that is being pursued is to allow people to be renewed based on online training.

The training has been into two components online elearning (part 1) and face-to-face (Part 2). The department is allowing people renew their accreditation if they have completed part 1, and then have 12 months to complete part 2. If you're concerned about your circumstances, please don't hesitate to get in contact the accreditation mailbox who will look at your circumstances. We can provide advice directly about your personal situation.

Topic: BDAR Template

Will there be a separate BDAR template for major projects in particular long linear assessments?

There are several templates that could be developed, and that kind of work will be prioritized based on user feedback and general stakeholder feedback. You are encouraged to let us know what you need through the BOS help desk.

What sort of disclaimer/declarations within the BDAR template are appropriate?

Assessors under the code of Conduct can't act in circumstances where there's an actual, perceived, or potential conflict of interest. The declaration needs to identify those but also there's an opportunity to document the strategies that assessors have in place to manage those conflicts of interest providing as much information as possible. Where there's no conflict of interest, it's a simple legal declaration.

The department is preparing updated information on conflict of interest for accredited assessors. There is some information that's currently on our website, but the department is planning to consult with assessors to provide better guidance on how they can manage their conflicts of interest, declare them, and keep their own registers.

Will the use of BDAR templates be optional or will accredited assessors be compelled to use them over their own existing templates?

No, there's no obligation to use the BDAR template. The department recognises that consultants and companies will have their own templates. All that is required is that the minimum requirements of the BAM are met. Assessors can use certain parts of the template to inform their own templates..

Topic: BOS Help Desk

What are the roles of the BOS support help desk and BAM support mailbox?

The BOS help desk is about everything related to the scheme. The BAM support mailbox is now part of the BOS Help desk. All scheme inquiries should come through the BOS help desk.

To contact the BOS Help Desk team:

- Hotline 1800 931 717, staffed Tuesday to Thursday from 9:30 am to 4:00 pm
- Help Desk mailbox, BOS.helpdesk@environment.nsw.gov.au, monitored Monday to Friday from 9:00 am to 5:00 pm

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