

Caring for our Country

Targeted Area Grants MERI Plan (example)

(For projects over \$80,000 (GST excl.)

The purpose of this plan is to clearly set out the project activities to be undertaken, and the intended outputs and outcomes of this project. The plan also ensures that the process for monitoring progress and achievements is defined – doing so will support accountability of achievements and an adaptive management approach. This MERI Plan will need to be reported on, reviewed and updated (where necessary) at each reporting period. Data and information reported as set out in this MERI Plan will also assist the Australian Government to report against the Caring for our Country 5 year Outcomes, and may also be used to report publicly on project and program achievements. To assist with this, your MERI Plan should be developed with reference to the Sustainable Environment Program MERI Plan.

The Sustainable Environment Program MERI Plan, and the following documents are available on the program website <u>www.nrm.gov.au</u>. This MERI template is based on the principles and processes set out in:

- The Monitoring, Evaluation, Reporting and Improvement Strategy Caring for our Country and Biodiversity Fund (the MERI Strategy); Completion of this MERI template will require that you are familiar with the concepts discussed in the MERI Strategy
- Developing and Using Program Logic in Natural Resource Management user guide
- NRM MERI Framework, Australian Government Natural Resource Management Monitoring Evaluation Reporting and Improvement Framework

Important Definitions

Caring for our Country Strategic Objectives - broadly defined objectives identified for the Sustainable Environment and Sustainable Agriculture Streams that align to the overall portfolio responsibilities of the Government Departments administering Caring for our Country.

Caring for our Country 5 year Outcomes - the Sustainable Environment and Sustainable Agriculture Streams both have established 5 year Outcomes that projects will contribute towards.

Investment Theme - Investment themese are the broad program outcomes areas. Within each Investment Theme there may be a number of Program 5 year outcomes

Project Outcomes - also known as 'intermediate outcomes'. These apply to the Sustainable Environment Stream Only. Project Outcomes are the desired (or actual) results, or impacts of having undertaken the sub-project(s), such as maintenance or improvement of the biophysical assets, enhanced community capacity, or changes to an organisation. Project Outcomes can be influenced by factors outside of the projects control; however they should still be expressed as a SMART Statement and monitored where possible. Project Outcomes should align with to the 5 Year Program Outcomes

Project Outputs - also known as 'immediate activities and outcomes'. Project Outputs are the key actions to be delivered by the project and are largely within the direct influence of the project team. Project Outputs should be expressed as a SMART Statements and need to be monitored and reported as part of the project.

Project Activities - including 'foundational activities' these are the activities specific to the project that underpin successful planning and delivery of the Project Outputs. These might include establishing and incorporating relevant plans, establishing steering committees, undertaking planning days, surveying sites and mapping locations, establishing base lines and delivering on ground NRM actions.

SMART Statements – stands for Specific Measurable Attainable Realistic and Time-bound. To help ensure the desired outcomes and activities to be undertaken are clear, this document asks that all outcomes and activities are expressed as 'SMART' statements.

Version	Comment	Date	
1			
Attachments			
Attachment A: Program Logics			
Attachment B: Project Risk Plan			
Attachment C: Budget Summary			

Project Information

PROJECT INFORMATION

Project Details		
Project ID:	-	
Project title:	Protecting and enhancing biodiversity assets	
Organisation name:	XYZ Catchment Group	
Organisation Address:	123 Fake Street	
Project Manager:	Jo Project	
Project Period:	5 years	
Caring for our Country Budget (GST excl, cash only) :	\$650,000	
Total MERI Budget (GST excl):	\$70,000	

Part 1 - Program Logic

PROGRAM LOGIC DIAGRAM

One purpose of this MERI template is to set out the structure and logic of the project, demonstrating how activities underpin delivery of outputs, which in turn underpin achievement of the outcomes. While Parts 2 and 3 of the template require that you provide the detail of your project in a logical and structured way, development of a diagrammatic presentation of the project logic can be a useful way to visualise and then test the design and approach of the project. All projects should attach a program logic diagram at <u>Attachment B</u>. You may choose to develop the program logic diagram as a first step in completing this template.

PART 2 - Project Linkages

2.1 KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

For each investment theme, a set of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) have been developed for the Caring for our Country Sustainable Environment Stream. These will be available within the Sustainable Environment Program MERI Plan on the MERI page of the <u>www.nrm.gov.au</u> website. Where possible these KPIs should be considered when developing the Project Outputs and Outcomes.

2.2 PROJECT LINKAGE TO CARING FOR OUR COUNTRY OUTCOMES

Project Linkage to Program Outcomes - Contribution to Caring for our Country Program Objectives			
Relevant Caring for our Country Program Strategic Objective	• Maintenance of ecosystem services, including ecological and cultural values, now and into the future		
Long Term Project Outcome(s) (refer to relevant Caring for our Country 5 year	• Better protect and conserve nationally and internationally significant ecosystems, species, ecological communities and landscapes, through actions that:		
outcomes	 Identify and address key threatening processes at a range of scales. Support recovery and threat abatement for species and ecological communities identified under national environmental law. 		
	• Build community capacity and connection with the environment, including through activities that re-establish urban bushland, areas of Indigenous significance and the health of urban waterways.		

2.3 PROJECT LINKAGE TO RELEVANT PLANS

Project linkage to relevant plans - List relevant plans (including those related to Matters of National Environmental Significance, such as Species Recovery Plans, Threat Abatement Plans, Conservation Advice, Wildlife Conservation Advice) that your project aligns with, and intends to deliver against

Name of Plan	Owner of Plan	Relevant actions within plan being addressed, (include reference where	Brief description of how target will
	(organisation that issued the plan)	possible)	be addressed.

PART 3 - Project detail

3.1 PROJECT DETAIL

Primary Investment Theme	Maintenance of Ecosystems, including ecological and cultural values, now and into the future		Project Location	Spatial Information to be updated at reporting period.
Project Outcome(s)	Contribute to conservation a	nd recovery of 1,200 ha of threatened native habitat.		
Description	 Rabbit grazing has been identified as the main threat to ecological communities. Previous management successes has demonstrated that reduced grazing pressure at specified sites has given rise to recovery of threatened native vegetation in average rainfall years. Fencing is appropriate to specific situations and provides additional opportunities for recovery although this recovery has also been demonstrated in unfenced areas. This project will promote the recovery of 1,200 ha of high value native habitat, which supports 5 EPBC listed flora species, though the implementation of a rabitat control program on 10 private properties aimed at reducing grazing pressure. 			
Project outputs, assum	ptions and monitoring			
Investment Theme. (choose those that apply)	Total Project Output – total to be delivered by end of project. Statements should be SMART. NOTE: Each output should be linked to only one Investment Theme – choose the most relevant.	Delivery mechanisms, assumptions and rationale to be delivered (i.e. briefly describe the method to assumption(s) is/are being made about how the out achieved, and how it will lead to the achievement o Outcome? What evidence is there to support the as	– How is the output be used)? What tput will be f the Project ssumption?	Monitoring - How will the progress, achievement and impact of the Project Output be monitored? Data and information collected will assist in evaluating progress toward the Project Outcome(s)
Building natural resource management community skills, knowledge and engagement		 Delivery Mechanism: Land managers have been identified in app properties were selected based on connect type and land manager commitment to ongo as demonstrated by previous work. Land M commit to Land Managemet Agreements to the work and on-going management for 10 Extension tools will be delivered via the pro- updated every 3 months, to keep the commit 	lication phase, ivity, vegetation oing management anagers will cover the scope of years. ject website, nunity informed of	Project staff will consult with community to assess if information being developed is meeting the needs expressed. Basic data on downloads and website hits will also be followed to assess extent of information dissemination. Those downloading will be encouraged to contact project staff to discuss rabbit control as a way to monitor rates of implementation of rabbit control. A broad

		 the projects progress, achievements and lessons learned. Assumption and rationale Development of extension tools, webpage etc, will result in increased landholder capacity and involvement in rabbit control. Landholder and community group consultation over the last 2 years has indicated a high demand for assistance in rabbit management. Generally requests for assistance have included initial management techniques and follow up control measures. Land Managers will commit to the project and maintain commitment over project life. Land managers have been selected based on a number of critereia, one of these is demonstrated commitment to past works. Every effort has been taken to ensure on-going commitment. 	 2 stage landholder survey will also assess improvement in landholder knowledge of management techniques, implementation of control programs, knowledge of materials developed by the project and, if relevant, adequacy of these materials. Land manager commitment will be monitored via number of agreements signed. If selected properties are no longer interested the reserve list can be turned to to ensure delivery of outcome.
Enhancing Indigenous people's capacity for natural resource management	•	 Delivery Mechanism Assumption and rationale 	
Conserving and protecting species and ecosystems (matters of national environmental significance)	 Rabbit population densities managed on 1,200 ha of threatened native habitat 	 Delivery Mechanism: Baseline survey will determine approximate rabbit populations and dynamics. Baseline information used to design control program across the 10 properties Expereinced contractors employed to undertake rabbit control, 	• The outcome of volunteer engagement/consultation will be reported to the project Steering Committee regularly. If numbers are low greater effort will be invested and if necessary a service provider will be engaged. Promotion of training will highlight the benefits to

refuge destruction and other follow up control works.

Assumption and rationale

- Consultations with landholders and community will provide the project with sufficient volunteers to undertake baseline survey. A sufficient number of volunteers have already been engaged on similar projects. Consultation during project development indicated these volunteers are likely to be involved in this project.
- Baseline data used to aid design of control program is robust enough to result in sufficient control measures being designed. Population assessment methodology follows standard protocols and will provide the data needed to assess population densities. Risk that, if not trained sufficiently, inexperienced volunteers could bias the data. All volunteers will be required to undertake a thorough training program to be involved in field assessments. In the field groups of volunteers will work in tandem with an experienced staff member to ensure accuracy of data.
- Professional advice and commercial contractors will be available to assist at appropriate times. List of contractors already known and availability checked.
- **Control measures will be effective.** Through assessment of population density and dynamics, securing involvement of targeted properties and hiring of experienced contractors control measures have a high probability of success. However monitoring wil be undertaken to assess effectiveness of methods.
- Reduction of rabbit populations will result in improved vegetation condition, and regeneration of threatened flora

landholders of learning the techniques to assess rabbit density.

- Mid and end of project monitoring of rabbit population densities.
- Use of the Ecological Moitoring Guide over project life will indicate if vegetation condition (including threatened flora species) is improving. If this data indicates the reduced rabbit population density is not resulting in vegetation condition improvement the project will be modified to address this.
- Monitoring impact of methods on rabbit populations and vegetatation condition will enable the project to assess effectiveness of methods and adapt to any difficencies detected.

		species at selected sites. Other rabbit management projects we have managed in similar environments have contributed to vegetation regeneration and recovery in average rainfall years. Furthermore, selected sites are not grazed by cattle and not subject to significant grazing pressure from macropods.		
Restoring and maintaining urban waterways and coastal environments	•	Delivery Mechanism Assumption and rationale	•	
Protecting Ramsar sites and values	•	Delivery Mechanism Assumption and rationale	•	
Protecting World Heritage sites' outstanding universal value and integrity	•	Delivery Mechanism Assumption and rationale	•	
Activity Schedule			I	
Project stage	Project Output - for each period detail the Project Output to be delivered. Note: output figures here should add up to Total Project Outputs stated above.	Key activities to be undertaken for period (include key planning/procommunication, monitoring and evaluation, reporting activities to be c	eparation, delivery, lelivered each period)	Annual Budget (GST excl, incl. cash only)
Stage 1 , Project commencement to 31	Engagement of 10 Land Managers	Activity 1: Sign 10 Land management Agreements with Landholders to under works	ertake rabbit control	Aust Gov: Other:

December 2013.		Activity 2: Experienced contractors engaged to deliver on-ground works. Schedule of work to be determined post baseline field survey.	
		Activity 3: Volunteers engaged and trained in monitoring techniques.	
		Activity 4: Baseline survey of properties undertaken to determine rabbit population and map warrens.	
		Actrivity 5: Vegetation condition monitoring sites identified and baseline surveys undertaken.	
		Activity 6: Project website developed and promoted	
		Activity 7: Baseline survey of current knowledge and implementation fo rabbit control techniques developed and deployed when project website accessed.	
Stage 2 , 1 January 2014–30 June 2014.	300ha managed for invasive species	Activity 1: Management plan developed and stage 1 control works implemented.	
		Activity 2: Update project website	
Stage 3 , 1 July 2014–		Activity 1: Follow up control work on stage 1 control sites	Aust Gov:
51 December 2014		Activity 2: Follow up survey of properties undertaken to determine rabbit population and determine follow up control program.	Other:
		Actrivity 3: Vegetation condition sites monitored	
		Activity 4: Project website updated	
Stage 4 , 1 January 2015–30 June 2015	300ha managed for invasive species	Activity 1: Stage 2 control works implemented.	
		Activity 2: Update project website	
		Activity 3: Survey of landholders accessing website information conducted to assess behavioural change.	

Stage 5, 1 July 2015–		Activity 1: Follow up control work on stage 1 and 2 control sites	Aust Gov:
31 December 2015			Othory
		Activity 2: Follow up survey of properties undertaken to determine rabbit population and determine	Other:
		follow up control program.	
		Actrivity 3: Vegetation condition sites monitored	
		Activity 4: Project website updated and promoted	
		Activity 5: Undertake mid-project evalauation to assess effectiveness of methodology, take up of	
		information, implementation of promoted methods and on-ground impact. Modify project	
		methodology as required.	
Stage 6, 1 January	300ha managed for invasive	Activity 1: Stage 3 control works implemented.	
2016–30 June 2016	species		
		Activity 2: Update project website	
		Activity 3: Survey of landholders accessing website information conducted to assess behavioural	
		change.	
Stage 7 , 1 July 2016–		Activity 1: Follow up control work on stage 1, 2 and 3 control sites	Aust Gov:
31 December 2016			Other
		Activity 2: Follow up survey of properties undertaken to determine rabbit population and determine	other.
		follow up control program	
		Actrivity 3: Vegetation condition sites monitored	
		Activity 4: Project website developed and promoted	
Stage 8 , 1 January 2017–30 June 2017	300ha managed for invasive species	Activity 1: Management plan developed and stage 4 control works implemented.	
		Activity 2: Update project website	

	Activity 3: Survey of landholders accessing website information conducted to assess behavioural change.	
Stage 9 , 1 July 2017– 31 December 2017	Activity 1: Follow up control work on stage 1,2,3 and 4 control sites	Aust Gov:
	Activity 2: Follow up survey of properties undertaken to determine rabbit population and determine on-going control requirements.	Other:
	Actrivity 3: Vegetation condition sites monitored	_
	Activity 4: Final survey of landholders accessing website information conducted to assess behavioural change.	_
	Activity 5: Project website updated and promoted	
Stage 10 , 1 January 2018 – 30 June 2018	Activity 1: Project evaluation undertaken to assess effectiveness of methods, acheivement of outcomes and to promote lessons learned	
	Activity 2: Update website	

PART 4 Evaluation and Improvement Plan

Evaluating Progress – As a funding recipient you have responsibility for reporting on how your project is progressing in terms of delivery of outputs and progress towards the desired outcomes. Through reporting on these aspects, you also play a role in contributing to an NRM community of continual improvement. Evaluation provides an opportunity to draw conclusions about what has been achieved, what is yet to be done, what worked well and what didn't. At each interim and yearly reporting period you will have the opportunity to provide a summary of your project, including progress and lessons learned. Evaluation findings may also support you to review and make changes to this MERI plan. You will also be required to provide an evaluation of your project as part of the Final Report.

In the table below describe how your project will capture the information needed, as well as the processes that are in place to evaluate and make conclusions about the progress, achievements and lessons learned. For example this may involve undertaking internal evaluations or engaging professional evaluative services. Include a description of how information about the project, including from monitoring activities will be used to evaluate progress. Also provide detail around process and roles and responsibilities.

In developing appropriate evaluation questions, you should include useful evaluation questions that:

- Cover the key evaluation criteria of: the effectiveness of the project and whether it delivered what it intended; the *impact* of the project; the efficiency of the delivery mechanism/s; and the appropriateness of the methodology.
- Consider whether the assumptions and logic of the project will hold true.
- Consider whether the project's key risks will impact the project's outcomes or whether the controls to mitigate the threat/risk will be sufficient.
- Are drawn from the Caring for our Country Program Plan(s) and evaluation questions, where possible including in relation to Community and Indigenous engagement.
- Are answerable within the resources available to the project. Larger, long-term projects are expected to provide suitably high quality responses to in-depth evaluation questions.
- Can be answered by the monitoring data the project intends (and can afford) to collect.

Key evaluation questions	Describe how this project will ensure that evaluation questions will be addressed in a timely and appropriate manner.
Impact: What was the result (outcome) of the activity or project? Did it result in improved vegetation condition, and recruitment of threatened flora species?	 Vegetation condition monitoring and rabbit population monitoring will give an indication of how successfully the activities have contributed to project/program outcomes. This will be considered by the Project team and written into a mid and end of project evaluation report. Assessment of information dissemination numbers and review of landholder survey will indicate the success of capacity building and extension activities.
Effectiveness:	

Efficiency: What parts of the project worked well. What methods / approaches worked well and why? What could be done differently next time?	•	Review and evaluation of survey data will provide information on project success in engaging target audience, the uptake of project materials and the suitability of these materials.		
	•	These questions will be assessed through a project team and stakeholder workshop at the mid and end of project phases. Findings will be written into and evaluation report.		
Appropriateness: What are key lessons learned that would be valuable to consider in the future, or for other projects?	•	As above.		

ATTACHMENT A: BUDGET SUMMARY

Attach the Project Budget with detail as in the table below. All figures are GST exclusive. In-kind contributions should not be included. Where a budget item overlaps multiple investment / priority areas, insert budget details against the primary investment / priority area. This information will be used to assist Australian Government reporting of its investments.

Investment/Priority Area	Funding Source	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	Total
		(\$)	(\$)	(\$)	(\$)	(\$)	(\$)
Conserving and protecting species and ecosystems (matters of national environmental significance)	Aust. Govt.	\$60,000	\$80,000	\$90,000	\$100,000	\$120,000	\$
Restoring and maintaining urban waterways and coastal environments	Aust. Govt.	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$
Protecting World Heritage sites' outstanding universal value and integrity	Aust. Govt.	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$
Protecting Ramsar sites and values	Aust. Govt.	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$

Building natural resource management community skills, knowledge and engagement	Aust. Govt.	\$20,000	\$15,000	\$15,000	\$15,000	\$15,000	\$80,000	
Building Indigenous people's capacity for natural resource management	Aust. Govt.	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	
Total (cash only)	All	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	
Admin & MERI budget as part of the above table								
Admin	Aust. Govt.	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$50,000	
MERI	Aust. Govt.	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$15,000	\$15,000	\$20,000	\$70,000	

ATTACHMENT B: PROGRAM LOGIC

Developing a program logic diagram can be useful in helping demonstrate how your project aligns with the Caring for our Country program objectives and outcomes and help ensure that the approach, and steps needed to achieve the project outputs and outcomes are clear. The program logic diagram attached here should reflect and be consistent with the important detail captured elsewhere in this plan. A program logic diagram can also be a useful tool for communicating the project to others.

Developing a program logic diagram can be a useful activity done as a group, with members of the project team, as it ensures that there is a shared understanding about how the project is expected to proceed, and can unearth aspects (including assumptions, risks or other factors that you had not previously thought of. You can use this information to update the relevant sections within this plan.

Develop and attach a program logic diagram consistent with the structure provided at below. For further information and guidance on how to complete program logic diagram, refer to the guidance material found on the MERI page of the www.nrm.gov.au website. Your Caring for our Country Regional Base Staff may also be able to assist.





ATTACHMENT C: PROJECT RISK

To help anticipate and determine management strategies for the risk associated with the project, update and attach the risk plan here. Based on the risks and the controls or contingencies identified, you may need to update other sections of this MERI plan. Risks identified should be those that the project team consider to be within the reasonable influence of the project team to anticipate and manage.

Risk/Threat Description Describe the threat/risk, its sources and impacts		Likelihood*	Consequence*	Rating	Current Controls/Contingency	Residual Risk	
		Rare, Unlikely, possible, likely, almost certain	insignificant, minor, moderate, major, critical	Low, Medium, high, severe	Describe what you will do to mitigate the threat/risk, source or impact to an acceptable level	Describe any remaining contingency. Consider w are needed	
	Consultations with landholders and community does result in sufficient volunteers to undertake surveys.	PossibleMajorHIGHThe outcome of volunteer engagement/consultation will be monitoried regularly. If numbers are low greater effort will be invested and if necessary arrangements with a survives provider will be entered into. Promotion of training will highlight the benefits to landholders of learning the techniques to assess rabbit density.Re		Residual risk low, no fur			
	Baseline data used to aid design of control program is not robust enough to result in sufficient control measures being designed.	Possible	Major	HIGH	All volunteers will be required to undertake a thorough training program to be involved in field assessments. In the field groups of volunteers will work in tandem with an experienced staff member to ensure accuracy of data.		
	Development of extension tools, webpage etc, does not result in increased landholder capacity and involvement in rabbit control.	Possible	Moderate	MEDIUM	 Project staff will consult with community to assess if information being developed is meeting the needs expressed. Basic data on downloads and website hits will also be followed to assess extent of information dissemination. Those downloading will be encouraged to contact project staff to discuss rabbit control as a way to monitor rates of implementation of rabbit control. A broad 2 stage landholder survey will also assess improvement in landholder knowledge of management techniques, implementation of control programs, knowledge of materials developed by the project and, if relevant, adequacy of these materials. 	Residual risk low, no fur	
	Professional advice and commercial contractors not available to assist at appropriate times	Unlikely	Minor	LOW	No management required.	-	
	Reduction of rabbit populations does not result in improved	Unlikely	Major	MEDIUM	Monitoring data gathered over the project life will indicate if vegetation condition is improving. If	Residual risk low, no fur	





risk after application of the control / hether further management strategies
ther management required.

vegetation condition at selected sites.				this data indicates the reduced rabbit population density is not resulting in vegetation condition improvement the project will be modified to address this.	
Management plan does not result in the reduction in rabbit density	Unlikely	Major	MEDIUM	As above	Residual risk low, no fur

Use the risk matrix below to determine the overall "Rating" of each risk listed in the table above based on your identified level of likelihood and consequence to produce a rating (severe, high, medium or low).

For example: If you identified a risk consequence as minor and the likelihood as possible, the risk "Rating" is low.

	Consequence								
		Insignificant	Minor	Moderate	Major	Critical			
	Almost Certain	Low	Medium	High	Severe	Severe			
	Likely	Low	Medium	Medium	High	Severe			
σ	Possible	Low	Low	Medium	High	Severe			
elihoo	Unlikely	Low	Low	Low	Medium	High			
Like	Rare	Low	Low	Low	Medium	High			

