Caring for our Country

Regional Delivery MERI Plan Template

The purpose of this plan is to clearly set out the project activities to be undertaken, and the intended outputs and outcomes of this Regional Delivery 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.

Your MERI Plan should be developed with reference to the Sustainable Environment and Sustainable Agriculture Program MERI Plans, that will be available on the Caring for our Country website (www.nrm.gov.au) along with the following documents, which have informed the development of this MERI template.

- *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*

Note:
This template has been developed to cover both the Sustainable Environment and Sustainable Agriculture streams of the Caring for our Country Program. While a consistent MERI approach for projects within both streams is needed, there is some variation within the template to accommodate variation between the structure of the two streams. For example Project Outcomes are required to be developed for the Sustainable Environment stream. These Project Outcomes link the project to the Sustainable Environment 5 year outcomes. For the Sustainable Agriculture Stream, Project Outputs link directly to the 5 year outcomes, and so Project Outcomes do not need to be stated.

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 themes 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 (sub) 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.
Regional Delivery Project - includes all Sub-projects, Project Outcomes, Outputs and activities to be delivered as part of the relevant funding agreement.
Sub projects - each distinct project to be delivered as part of the funding agreement (also known as project components).
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 outputs are expressed as 'SMART' statements.

Version	Comment	Date
1		

Attachments
Attachment A: Sustainable Environment Budget Summary
Attachment B: Program Logics
Attachment C: Project Risk Plan(s)

PART 1 Regional Delivery Project Details (Part 1 is for the overall Regional Delivery Project)
1.1 REGIONAL DELIVERY PROJECT DETAILS

Project Details	Sustainable Environment Contract/Schedule ID:	Sustainable Agriculture Contract/Schedule ID:	Total Caring for our Country Budget (GST excl) : $ *Further budget detail to be provided in Attachment A*			
Regional Organisation Name:						
Regional Delivery Project Contact	Name					
	Address					
	Phone					
	Email					
Sub project details	*Sustainable Environment Stream*					
	REF ID	*Title*		*Planned START - END DATE*	*Contact Details*	*Caring for our Country Budget*
	Sustainable Agriculture Stream					
	REF ID	*Title*		*Planned START - END DATE*	*Contact Details*	*Caring for our Country Budget*

1.2 REGIONAL DELIVERY OVERVIEW

Describe the rationale for the structure of the Regional Delivery Project, including how it will address Caring for Our Country Outcomes and Strategic Objectives for each of the Sustainable Environment and Sustainable Agriculture Streams. This description should include reference to the Caring for our Country Strategic objectives and relevant Caring for our Country 5-year Outcomes. Note: Strategic Objectives and 5-year outcomes can be found in program guidelines and on the MERI page of www.nrm.gov.au website.

1.3 PROGRAM LOGIC

Program Logics were provided with applications for Regional Delivery funding. Please update and include a Program Logic for each of the overarching **Sustainable Environment** and **Sustainable Agriculture Streams** as Attachment B. Program Logics should capture the detail you have provided in Parts 2 and 3 of this MERI plan. NOTE: If appropriate/preferred attach program logics for each sub-project. You may choose to develop the program logic diagram as a first step in completing this template.

1.4 PROJECT EVALUATION

An evaluation plan will need to be developed for each of the Sustainable Environment (Part 2) and Sustainable Agriculture (Part 3) Streams. Regional NRM Bodies are responsible for monitoring, evaluating and reporting on the progress and outcomes achieved from the sub-projects, including those that have been devolved to third parties. Evaluation processes must be sufficiently robust to enable the regional body to draw conclusions about what has been achieved, what is yet to be achieved, and what worked well and what didn't. Regional bodies are required to report on the progress of all sub-projects at six monthly intervals, including providing details on the monitoring that has been undertaken, the lessons learned and any improvements that may be required. MERI plans for Regional Delivery funding should be reviewed at least annually, and amended if necessary. An overall evaluation of the Regional Delivery Project will be a requirement of the final report.

Part 2   Sustainable Environment Stream

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 www.nrm.gov.au website. Where possible these KPIs should be considered when developing the Project Outputs and the Sub-Project Outcomes.

2.2 PROJECT LINKAGE TO RELEVANT PLANS, STRATEGIES ETC

Project linkage to relevant plans- List relevant plans and strategies (such as Species Recovery, Threat Abatement, Conservation Advices, Wildlife Conservation Advices) that your project aligns with and delivers against. By listing these here the project can track and report how its is contributing to these plans/strategies.			
Name of Plan	Owner of Plan (e.g. name of organisation or Government body)	Relevant actions, targets etc (include reference where possible)	Brief description of how target will be addressed

2.3 OUTCOME SUMMARY

Summarise the outcomes of this Regional Delivery Project relevant to the Sustainable Environment Stream. In the Monitoring Summary column provide details on how progress towards Project Outcomes will be monitored.

Sustainable Environment Stream		
Investment Theme/ Priority	**Outcome Summary** – List the desired outcomes of this Regional Delivery Project. Statements should be SMART and clearly relate to Caring for our Country 5 year Outcomes and relevant KPIs (where possible)	**Monitoring Summary** – Provide a summary of how progress towards and achievement of each outcome will be monitored. This may require that you refer to individual sub-project monitoring approaches (Part 2.4 below)
Conserving and protecting species and ecosystems (matters of national environmental significance)	1.	
Restoring and maintaining urban waterways and coastal environments	2.	
Protecting Ramsar sites and values	3.	
Protecting World Heritage sites' outstanding universal value and integrity.	4.	
Building natural resource management	5.	

community skills, knowledge and engagement		
Enhancing Indigenous people's capacity for natural resource management	6.	

2. 4 SUB-PROJECT DETAIL

Complete a separate table for each Sustainable Environment stream Regional Delivery sub-project to be delivered.

Sub-project name REF:		Project Location	Spatial Information to be updated at reporting period.
Project Outcome(s)	• *INSERT THE OUTCOMES SOUGHT BY THIS PROJECT. THESE SHOULD BE EXPRESSED AS A 'SMART' STATEMENT AND RELATE TO THE Caring for our Country 5 year Outcomes*		
Description	• *DESCRIBE THIS PROJECT IN YOUR OWN WORDS (150 OR LESS)*		

Project outputs, assumptions 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** – How is the output to be delivered (i.e. briefly describe the method to be used)? What assumption(s) is/are being made about how the output will be achieved, and how it will lead to the achievement of the Project Outcome? What evidence is there to support the assumption?	**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* • *Assumption and rationale*	•
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)	•	• *Delivery Mechanism* • *Assumption and rationale*	•
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			
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/preparation, delivery, communication, monitoring and evaluation, reporting activities to be delivered each period)	**Annual Budget (GST excl, incl. cash only)**
Stage 1, Project commencement to 31 December 2013.	•	Activity 1: *Please add and delete rows as required* Activity 2:	Aust Gov: Other:

		Activity 3:	
Stage 2, 1 January 2014–30 June 2014.	•	Activity 1: *Please add and delete rows as required*	
		Activity 2:	
		Activity 3:	
Stage 3, 1 July 2014–31 December 2014	•	Activity 1: *Please add and delete rows as required*	Aust Gov: Other:
		Activity 2:	
		Activity 3:	
Stage 4, 1 January 2015–30 June 2015	•	Activity 1: *Please add and delete rows as required*	
		Activity 2:	
		Activity 3:	
Stage 5, 1 July 2015–31 December 2015	•	Activity 1: *Please add and delete rows as required*	Aust Gov: Other:
		Activity 2:	
		Activity 3:	
Stage 6, 1 January 2016–30 June 2016	•	Activity 1: *Please add and delete rows as required*	
		Activity 2:	
		Activity 3:	

CARING
FOR
OUR
COUNTRY

Stage 7, 1 July 2016–31 December 2016	•	Activity 1: *Please add and delete rows as required*	Aust Gov: Other:
		Activity 2:	
		Activity 3:	
Stage 8, 1 January 2017–30 June 2017	•	Activity 1: *Please add and delete rows as required*	
		Activity 2:	
		Activity 3:	
Stage 9, 1 July 2017–31 December 2017	•	Activity 1: *Please add and delete rows as required*	Aust Gov: Other:
		Activity 2:	
		Activity 3:	
Stage 10, 1 January 2018 – 30 June 2018	•	Activity 1: *Please add and delete rows as required*	
		Activity 2:	
		Activity 3:	

2.5 EVALUATING PROGRESS AND IMPROVEMENT

In the table below describe how the regional organisation will monitor and evaluate information collected from the sub-projects. As outlined in the MERI Strategy evaluations should be based on the criteria of **effectiveness, impact, appropriateness and efficiency.** Evaluations may be undertaken internally or by engaging professional evaluation services.

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 was 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 held true.
- Consider whether the project's key risks impacted the project's outcomes or whether the controls to mitigate the threat/risk were acceptable.
- Are drawn from the Caring for our Country Program Sustainable Environment and Sustainable Agriculture Program MERI Plans, where possible.
- Ensure the cross cutting themes of Indigenous Capacity and Community Skills Knowledge and Engagement are addressed
- 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 Regional Delivery project will ensure that evaluation questions will be addressed in a timely and appropriate manner.
Impact:	
Effectiveness:	
Efficiency:	
Appropriateness:	

PART 3 Sustainable Agriculture Stream

3.1 INDICATORS OF PERFORMANCE – SOIL MANAGEMENT

A set of soil management indicators will be provided to each NRM Region based on information compiled through the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) Rural Environment and Agricultural Collection Survey (REACS). This information will assist Regional NRM Organisations to prioritise their activities and assess performance over time. Each Sustainable Agriculture sub project should carefully consider how its activities increase productivity and/or improve the quality of ecosystem services delivered to the broader community through using these indicators.

3.2 SUB-PROJECT SUMMARIES

NOTE: Complete a separate table for each Sustainable Agriculture Regional Delivery sub-project to be delivered.

Sub-project name REF:			Project Location	Spatial Information to be updated at reporting period.
Description	• DESCRIBE THIS PROJECT IN YOUR OWN WORDS (150 OR LESS)			
Project outputs, assumptions and monitoring				
5 Year Outcome (choose those that apply)	Total Project Output – total to be delivered by end of project. Statements should be SMART. NOTE: Each Project Output should be linked to only one 5 year Outcome.	Delivery mechanisms, assumptions and rationale – How is the output to be delivered (i.e. briefly describe the method to be used)? What assumption(s) is/are being made about how the output will be achieved, and how it will lead to the achievement of the Project Outcome? What evidence is there to support the assumption?		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)
Increase the percentage and area of farming entities that have adopted sustainable land	•	• Delivery Mechanism		•

management practices to increase productivity and improve the quality of ecosystem services delivered to the broader community from their land, whilst building their resilience to climate change		• *Assumption and rationale*	
Increase the percentage of fishing and aquaculture entities that have adopted sustainable and low environmental impact management practices to increase productivity	•	• *Delivery Mechanism* • *Assumption and rationale*	•
Increase the number and area of farming and fishing entities that have trialled innovative practices for improved natural resources management	•	• *Delivery Mechanism* • *Assumption and rationale*	•
Increase the percentage of farming and fishing entities and land managers improving their knowledge and skills in managing our natural resources to deliver ecosystem services	•	• *Delivery Mechanism* • *Assumption and rationale*	•

Increase the capacity and confidence of regional community leaders involved in agriculture or fisheries production and the protection of natural resources	•	• *Delivery Mechanism* • *Assumption and rationale*	•
Increase engagement and participation by regional communities, groups or individuals in natural resource management activities	•	• *Delivery Mechanism* • *Assumption and rationale*	•
Increase community awareness and understanding of the status of Australia's natural resources (land, forests and fisheries)	•	• *Delivery Mechanism* • *Assumption and rationale*	•
Delivery of the Regional Land care Facilitator position	•	• *Delivery Mechanism* • *Assumption and rationale*	•

Activity Schedule			
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 foundational (planning/ preparation), delivery, monitoring, evaluation and reporting activities to be delivered in each period)	**Annual Budget** **(GST excl)**

Stage 1: Project Commencement to 30 June 2014	•		Aust Gov:
			Other:
Stage 2: 1 July 2014 to 30 June 2015	•		Aust Gov:
			Other:
Stage 3: 1 July 2015 to 31 30 June 2016	•		Aust Gov:
			Other:
Stage 4: 1 July 2016 30 June 2017.	•		Aust Gov:
			Other:
Stage 5: 1 July 2017 to 30 June 2018	•		Aust Gov:
			Other:

2.5 EVALUATING PROGRESS AND IMPROVEMENT

In the table below describe how the organisation will monitor and evaluate information collected from the sub-projects. As outlined in the MERI Strategy evaluations should be based on the criteria of **effectiveness, impact, appropriateness and efficiency.** Evaluations may be undertaken internally or by engaging professional evaluation services.

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 was 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 held true
- Consider whether the project's key risks impacted the project's outcomes or whether the controls to mitigate the threat/risk were acceptable.
- Are drawn from the Caring for our Country Program Sustainable Environment and Sustainable Agriculture Program MERI Plans, where possible.
- Ensure the cross cutting themes of Indigenous Capacity and Community Skills Knowledge and Engagement are addressed
- 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 Regional Delivery project will ensure that evaluation questions will be addressed in a timely and appropriate manner.
Impact:	
Effectiveness:	
Efficiency:	
Appropriateness:	

CARING
FOR
OUR
COUNTRY

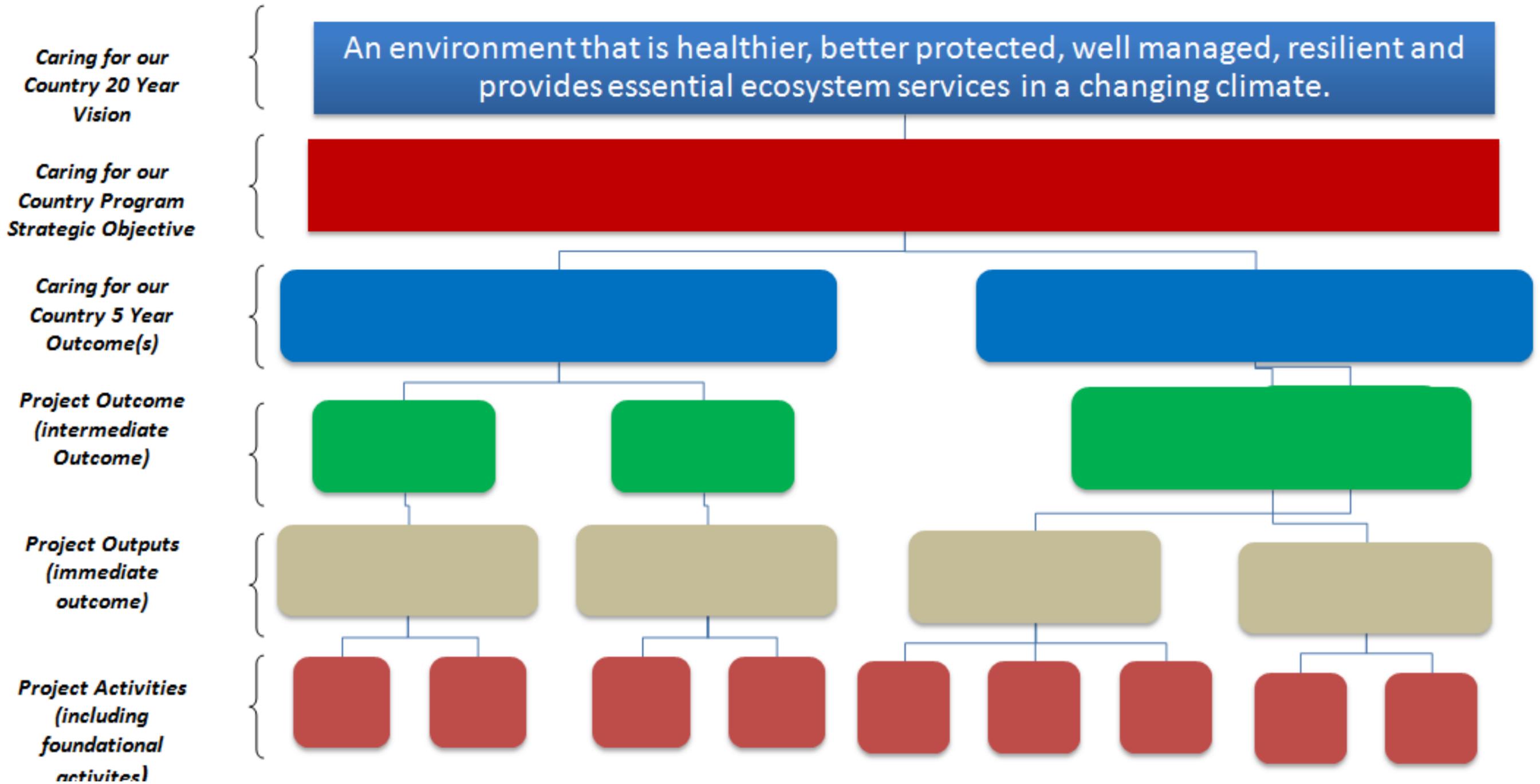## ATTACHMENT A: BUDGET SUMMARY – SUSTAINABLE ENVIRONMENT STREAM

Attach the budget detail for the Sustainable Environment Stream Investment Theme areas . All figures are GST exclusive. Include Australian Governmen contributions only. 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.

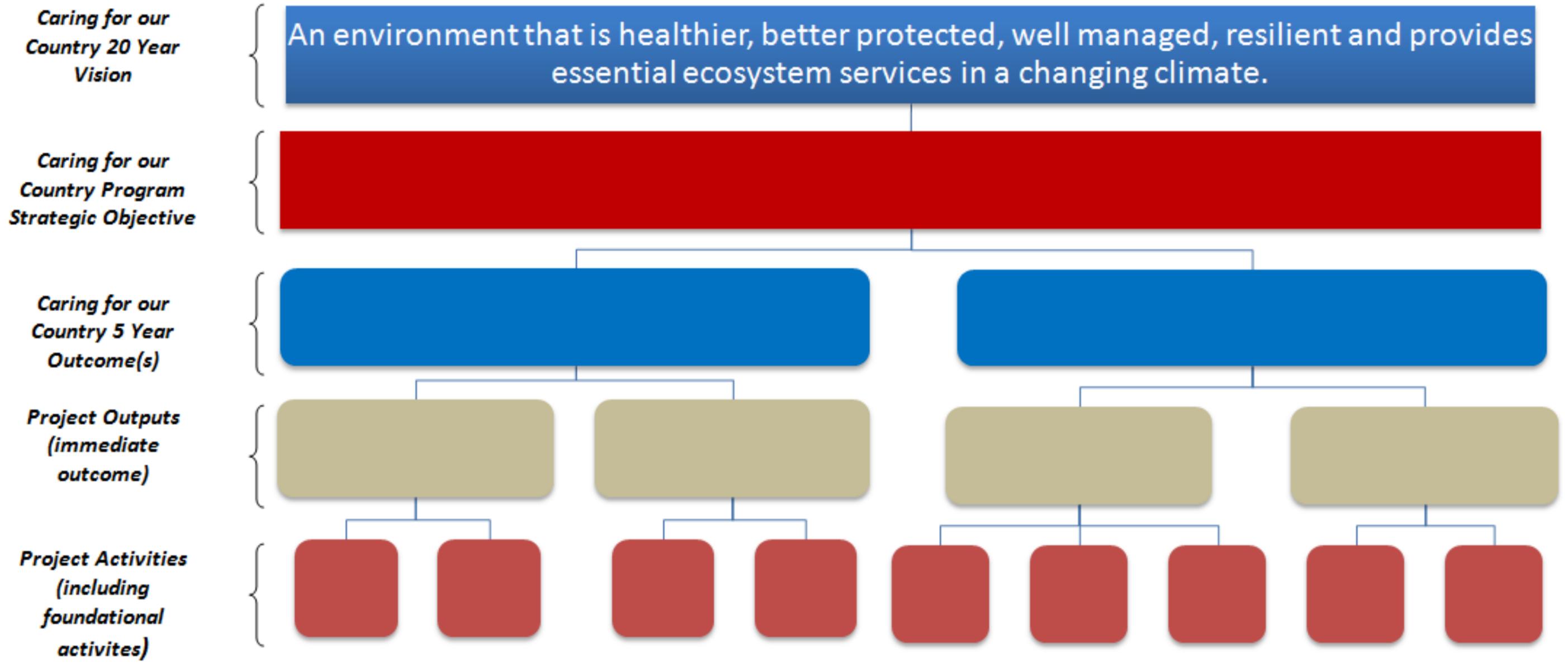| Investment/Priority Area	2013-14 ($)	2014-15 ($)	2015-16 ($)	2016-17 ($)	2017-18 ($)	Total ($)
Conserving and protecting species and ecosystems (matters of national environmental significance)	$	$	$	$	$	$
Restoring and maintaining urban waterways and coastal environments	$	$	$	$	$	$
Protecting World Heritage sites' outstanding universal value and integrity	$	$	$	$	$	$
Protecting Ramsar sites and values	$	$	$	$	$	$
Building natural resource management community skills, knowledge and engagement	$	$	$	$	$	$
Building Indigenous people's capacity for natural resource management	$	$	$	$	$	$
Total (cash only)	$	$	$	$	$	$
Admin & MERI budget as part of the above table						
Admin	$	$	$	$	$	$
MERI	$	$	$	$	$	$

CARING FOR OUR COUNTRY

ATTACHMENT B - PROGRAM LOGICS.

As part of the application process you were required to provide a program logic. Update and attach a Program Logic for each of the overarching **Sustainable Environment** and **Sustainable Agriculture Stream**s here. Program Logics should capture the detail you have provided in Part 2 and 3 of this MERI plan. NOTE: If appropriate / preferred attach program logics for each sub-project.

INSERT **Sustainable Environment** stream program logic **EXAMPLE ONLY**

CARING
FOR
OUR
COUNTRY

INSERT **Sustainable Agriculture** program logic **EXAMPLE ONLY**

Caring for our Country 20 Year Vision

An environment that is healthier, better protected, well managed, resilient and provides essential ecosystem services in a changing climate.

Caring for our Country Program Strategic Objective

Caring for our Country 5 Year Outcome(s)

Project Outputs (immediate outcome)

Project Activities (including foundational activites)

CARING
FOR
OUR
COUNTRY

ATTACHMENT C - PROJECT RISK

To help anticipate and determine management strategies for the risk associated with the Regional Delivery project, update and attach risk plans (developed as part of the application process) here. Include risk plans for each sub project. 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* RARE, UNLIKELY, POSSIBLE, LIKELY, ALMOST CERTAIN	Consequence* INSIGNIFICANT, MINOR, MODERATE, MAJOR, CRITICAL	Rating LOW, MEDIUM, HIGH, SEVERE	Current Controls/Contingency Describe what you will do to mitigate the threat/risk, source or impact to an acceptable level	Residual Risk
1.					
2. Add rows as required					

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
Likelihood	Almost Certain	Low	Medium	High	Severe	Severe
	Likely	Low	Medium	Medium	High	Severe
	Possible	Low	Low	Medium	High	Severe
	Unlikely	Low	Low	Low	Medium	High
	Rare	Low	Low	Low	Medium	High