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1. **Benchmarks for Plant Community Types**
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4. **Threatened bat survey guide**

This email is an update to provide you with information on benchmarks for Plant Community Types, as well as some forthcoming changes to the Biobanking website, fee requirements. OEH is also close to finalising a new survey guide for threatened bat species and their habitats

Benchmarks for Plant Community Types

OEH has received a number of queries regarding the new benchmarks. The following information provides some general comments on how the new benchmarks have been derived. OEH is continuing to review benchmarks. Any updates to benchmarks will be periodically imported into the BAM Credit Calculator. We will notify all assessors ahead of any updates, including the finalisation of the proposed new benchmark confidence rating.

- Benchmarks are modelled at the regional vegetation class level (Class x IBRA) based on a dataset of >30,000 floristic plots. Modelling is particularly useful where there is a paucity of field data. The models use rainfall and IBRA as the main predictors.
- Because modelling is used, benchmark values are provided for all potential Class x IBRA combinations. This will include combinations for which no data is held, and combinations that do not naturally exist (e.g. a benchmark value is provided for Upper Riverina Dry Sclerophyll Forest in South East Queensland IBRA sub region). OEH has included all potential Class x IBRA combinations to allow for combinations on the edge of known ranges and as-yet unknown combinations.
- Benchmarks are modelled at an average rainfall level from the range of condition states found in the dataset. Hence, there may be several reasons why one or more benchmarks may not meet assessor's expectations.
- Cover benchmarks use the summed individual species cover estimates within a growth form. This will generally result in a higher cover than most ecologists will be accustomed to, with cover benchmarks over 100% relatively common. However, as BAM requires field assessments to be conducted using the same approach, these will align.
- Confidence ratings are being developed for each regional vegetation class based on the amount of field data held. For lower confidence ratings, it will be appropriate for assessors to develop local benchmarks using the methods set out in the BAM Operational Manual. There may other occasions where professional opinion may suggest development of local benchmarks are appropriate (e.g. highly dynamic or variable vegetation types).

- OEH is preparing further advice regarding when it is most appropriate to consider using a local benchmark.

Changes to the Biobanking Web pages

Now that the Biodiversity Offsets Scheme has replaced the BioBanking Scheme, web pages related to Biobanking on the OEH website are being reviewed. Biobanking web pages that are no longer relevant will be decommissioned and will not be accessible from early July 2018.

The Biobanking public registers and list of accredited assessors will persist along with web pages relating to savings and transitional arrangements (see [Biodiversity Offset Scheme Transitional Arrangements](#)).

OEH is updating and adding information to the [Biodiversity Offset Scheme](#) webpages to assist proponents, assessors and consent authorities to access information and resources related to the new scheme as it becomes available.

Fees for the Biodiversity Conservation Scheme

As of the 1st July, all fee payments relating to credit transactions and credit retirements come under the new Biodiversity Conservation Regulation. This includes credit transactions that include biodiversity credits created under the old Biobanking scheme. OEH will no longer process credit transaction applications that include fees based on those set out under the Biobanking scheme. Please note that this includes the fee for *credit retirements without a biobanking statement*. The new fee schedule can be found on the web pages for the [Biodiversity Offset Scheme](#).

Threatened bat survey guide

The survey guideline for undertaking surveys of threatened bat species and their habitat is close to finalisation and publication. The purpose of this survey guide is to define appropriate survey techniques and minimum survey effort. The purpose of this guide is to aid accredited assessors when applying the Biodiversity Assessment Method (BAM) to survey for threatened bat species or their habitat. Under the BAM some threatened bats or their breeding habitat, are treated as species credits (i.e. cannot be predicted by habitat surrogates) and require appropriately timed on-ground surveys to determine their likelihood of occurrence at a development, biocertification or biodiversity stewardship site.