Assessing environmental offset obligations

*Environmental Offsets Act 2014*

Avoid and mitigate assessment checklist

*Under the Environmental Offsets Act 2014, an environmental offset cannot be considered until it has been demonstrated that all reasonable avoidance and mitigation measures have been, or will be, undertaken. This checklist is to assist in the assessment of an application for an authority to determine whether a proponent has adequately avoided and mitigated impacts on prescribed environmental matters.*

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Authority reference number:** | Click here to enter text. |
| **Location of impacts to prescribed environmental matter(s):** | Click here to enter text. |
| **Details of the activity and impacts to prescribed environmental matter(s):** |
| Click here to enter text. |

# Demonstration of avoidance and mitigation

Prior to considering whether an environmental offset should be required as a condition of an authority, assessment officers should assess whether impacts on prescribed environmental matters[[1]](#footnote-1) have been reasonably avoided and determine whether remaining impacts have been reasonably managed and minimised (mitigated).

The following questions have been designed to assist assessment officers to determine whether an application for a prescribed activity[[2]](#footnote-2) demonstrates that all reasonable avoidance and mitigation measures have been, or will be, undertaken. This checklist is not exhaustive and there may be instances where additional measures can be implemented, and instances where certain measures cannot. Therefore determining whether all reasonable avoidance and mitigation measures have been, or will be, undertaken will need to be assessed on a case by case basis.

1. Has the proponent undertaken a desktop analysis and site survey (if needed) to locate prescribed environmental matters on the development site and provided this with the application material?

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  |  |

1. In selecting a project location, has the proponent chosen a site where there are no prescribed environmental matters?

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  |  |

1. In selecting a project location, has the proponent chosen a site where there are few prescribed environmental matters or where they are in the poorest condition?

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  |  |

1. In selecting a project location, has the proponent chosen a site that avoids habitat for species and vegetation in high threat categories (endangered, vulnerable, of concern)?

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  |  |

1. Has the proponent located the project such that connectivity (enabling movement of species and genetic material between areas of adjacent or nearby habitat) is maintained? (The Landscape Connectivity Tool found on [QSpatial](http://qldspatial.information.qld.gov.au/catalogue/custom/index.page) can be used to determine this).

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  |  |

1. Has the proponent considered sustainable design principles to reduce the footprint of the impact area to the greatest extent practicable? (e.g. designing car parking under the building rather than around it)

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  |  |

1. Has the proponent provided an explanation as to why impacts on prescribed environmental matter(s) cannot be avoided such as:
	1. Constraints of the proposed impact site and surrounding land;
	2. Location of a key resource is location or geology dependent;
	3. The economic viability of the proposed project (e.g. a simple cost-benefit analysis of the cost of avoiding the prescribed environmental matters compared to the cost of providing an offset).

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  |  |

|  |
| --- |
| Insert details here. |

1. Has the proponent proposed sufficient mitigation measures to reduce the likelihood or extent of impact to prescribed environmental matter(s)? (e.g. koala sensitive design, appropriate buffers, connectivity corridors and other designs)

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  |  |

**Decision**

Using the answers to the questions above and the evidence provided in the application material:

1. Has the proponent located, designed and implemented management procedures for the project such that they have reasonably avoided and mitigated impacts on all prescribed environmental matters?

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  |  |

1. Has the proponent reasonably demonstrated why they cannot avoid and mitigate further?

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  |  |

|  |
| --- |
| Insert reason here. |

Note: If the answer is “NO” for these 2 questions, it is recommended that an information request be issued seeking further demonstration that the proponent has reasonably avoided and mitigated impacts on prescribed environmental matters.

**Approved by:**

27 June 2018

Angela Siggery

Signature Date

Director, **Enquires:**

Conservation and Biodiversity Programs Offsets Policy Team

Department of Environment and Science Department of Environment and Science

 Email: offsets@des.qld.gov.au

**Version history**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Version** | **Effective date** | **Description of changes** |
| 1.00 | 27 June 2018 | Original version approved. |

1. Prescribed environmental matters are defined in section 10 of the *Environmental Offsets Act 2014.* The State is able to require environmental offsets for matters of state environmental significance (MSES) that are prescribed environmental matters. These are listed in schedule 2 of the *Environmental Offsets Regulation 2014*. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Prescribed activities are listed in schedule 1 of the *Environmental Offsets Regulation 2014.* [↑](#footnote-ref-2)