



# Accredited Assessor Continuing Professional Development Log Guideline

Biodiversity Assessment Method

Department of Climate Change,  
Energy, the Environment and Water



## Acknowledgement of Country

Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the lands where we work and live.

We pay our respects to Elders past, present and emerging.

This resource may contain images or names of deceased persons in photographs or historical content.

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Environment and Heritage

Department of Climate Change,

Energy, the Environment and Water

Locked Bag 5022, Parramatta NSW 2124

Phone: +61 2 9995 5000 (switchboard)

Phone: 1300 361 967 (Environment and Heritage enquiries)

TTY users: phone 133 677, then ask for 1300 361 967

Speak and listen users: phone 1300 555 727, then ask for 1300 361 967

Email [info@environment.nsw.gov.au](mailto:info@environment.nsw.gov.au)

Website [www.environment.nsw.gov.au](http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au)

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# Contents

1.	Introduction	1
2.	Continuing Professional Development Log template	2
2.1	Four Continuing Professional Development elements to record	2
2.2	Continuing Professional Development log template	2
2.3	Flexibility for different roles in applying the Biodiversity Assessment Method	2
3.	Annual activity and transitional allowances	4
3.1	Annual activity requirements	4
3.2	Transitional arrangements for annual activity requirements	5
4.	What are the annual activity requirements?	6
4.1	Fieldwork	6
4.2	Biodiversity Assessment Method Calculator analysis and credit reports	7
4.3	Biodiversity Assessment Report authorship	8
4.4	Participating in Biodiversity Assessment Method -related events	9
4.5	Consideration of personal circumstances due to health, injury or carer responsibilities	10
5.	Meaning of ‘contracted or commissioned’	11
6.	Consideration of other circumstances where an assessor is alternatively active in the Biodiversity Offsets Scheme and the Biodiversity Assessment Method	12
	Glossary	13
	Appendix A: Continuing Professional Development annual activity requirements	14
	More information	15

# List of tables

Table 1	High level summary of annual activity requirement	4
Table 2	Transitional arrangements	5
Table 3	Types of fieldwork	6

# 1. Introduction

**The Continuing Professional Development Log (CPD-log) guideline describes how assessors should address continuing professional development (CPD) for their Biodiversity Assessment Method (BAM) accreditation.**

People renewing their accreditation must present their CPD-log in the template provided by the NSW Department of Planning, Industry and Environment (the department).

The goal of CPD is to promote the practice of key tasks of the BAM assessment. The department expects an assessor to develop their skills and experience in applying the BAM during each term of accreditation.

The role of CPD in the Biodiversity Offsets Scheme (BOS) is to support continuous improvement in the application of the BAM by all participants.

## 2. Continuing Professional Development Log template

The Continuing Professional Development Log (CPD-log) is a compilation of information (CPD-elements) representing an accredited assessor's engagement in applying the BAM.

The CPD-log is in Microsoft Word format. Each accredited assessor must address the 4 CPD-elements in the template.

This guideline describes some flexibility for assessors who have different roles in the BAM.

### 2.1 Four Continuing Professional Development elements to record

The CPD-elements are tasks carried out by assessors in applying the BAM. Each element has a minimum annual activity requirement.

Chapter 4 provides more detail about each element and how to record it in the CPD-log.

#### **Box 1 – CPD-elements**

1. Fieldwork
2. Analysing data in the Biodiversity Assessment Method Calculator (BAM-C) and preparing credit reports (*BAM-C analysis and credit reports*)
3. Authorship of Biodiversity Assessment Reports (BARs) (*BAR authorship*)
4. Participation in BAM-related events (*BAM-related events*)

### 2.2 Continuing Professional Development log template

The CPD-log is provided as a template in which CPD-activity should be recorded. It is available on the department's website.

All entries must be real and traceable. The CPD-log template requires an assessor to declare that all information is true and accurate.

The department may ask for copies of field sheets, reports or correspondence relating to any listed CPD-activity.

### 2.3 Flexibility for different roles in applying the Biodiversity Assessment Method

Assessors who have different roles and employment contexts can address their CPD in different ways.

Roles include:

- standard role of an accredited assessor as a consultant
- government and independent reviewers.

Employment contexts include:

- consultants who work as sole traders, small companies or for large organisations
- consultants who work in teams (BAM contributors)
- government decision-makers and government advisers.

**The standard role** of an accredited assessor is a consultant who engages with all stages of a BAM project (fieldwork, BAM-C analyses, BARs).

**Government decision-makers and government/independent reviewers** may demonstrate their ongoing expertise in the BAM by completing **detailed review and written feedback** of both BAM-C cases and credit reports, and individual BARs<sup>i</sup>.

**BAM contributors** are assessors who work in teams in consultancies and carry out parts of BAM projects. Their **BAM contributions** can be included in their CPD.

Section 6 provides an approach to CPD for a small group of people who are highly engaged in the BOS and the BAM but may not be able to demonstrate the annual activity as described in Section 4.

### 3. Annual activity and transitional allowances

Assessors must address **annual activity requirements** for each CPD-element.

To renew their accreditation, assessors must submit their CPD-log as part of their application to renew.

All assessors accredited or renewed after 30 June 2021 must address the annual activity requirements from the start of their new accreditation term.

All existing assessors, as of the 30 June 2021, are given transitional allowances.

#### 3.1 Annual activity requirements

Assessors must complete CPD-log activity.

Assessors must present activity requirements in the CPD-log template format.

To renew at the end of a term of accreditation, an assessor must supply their CPD-log.

For the purposes of renewal, ideally, assessors should complete their annual CPD requirement each year. However, in recognition of the periodic nature of the work, for the purposes of renewal, assessors can satisfy their CPD requirements if they meet the number of activities required for the whole term of their accreditation. For example, while the annual CPD-activity requirement is one per year, you can present 3 over a 3-year term of accreditation, regardless of the date when each was carried out.

**Table 1 High level summary of annual activity requirement**

CPD-element	Annual activity requirement
Fieldwork	Either: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 10 survey days per year</li><li>• 6 site inspections per year (government reviewers)</li></ul>
BAM-C	Either: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 1 per year, if lead assessor</li><li>• 2 per year if contributor</li><li>• 1 per year detailed review and written feedback of calculations in BAM-C</li></ul>
BAR authorship	Either: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 1 per year, if lead assessor</li><li>• 2 per year if contributor</li><li>• 1 per year of detailed review and written feedback of calculations in BAM-C</li></ul>
BAM-related events	2 per year

For details of each requirement see Section 4.



## 3.2 Transitional arrangements for annual activity requirements

Allowances have been made for assessors who are due for renewal in the years following the release of these requirements.

**Table 2** Transitional arrangements

Renewal date	Minimum requirements for renewal
1 July 2021 to 30 June 2022	If one annual CPD requirement is not met you will still be eligible for renewal; however, you are encouraged to meet the annual requirements and list any relevant CPD activities that you completed.
1 July 2022 to 30 June 2023	If you have completed at least one annual requirement over the term of your accreditation, you will be eligible for renewal.
1 July 2023 to 30 June 2024	If you have completed at least 2 annual requirements over the term of your accreditation, you will be eligible for renewal.
1 July 2024 onwards	If you have completed at least 3 annual requirements over the term of your accreditation, you will be eligible for renewal.

## 4. What are the annual activity requirements?

Annual activity is required for each of the 4 CPD-elements for the term of each year of accreditation.

Remember to refer to Section 3.2 and Table 2 to verify if there are any transitional allowances.

### 4.1 Fieldwork

Ongoing fieldwork maintains and develops an assessor's experience in applying BAM field techniques. It also increases the range of habitats and site contexts an assessor is familiar with.

#### What types of fieldwork can be included?

Table 3 describes the types of fieldwork that can be documented in your CPD-log.

#### Fieldwork minimum requirements

10 days per year of a mix of **survey** fieldwork including:

- detailed vegetation community survey
- targeted species survey
- six **site inspections** for government reviewers.

**Table 3** Types of fieldwork

Fieldwork type	Objective of fieldwork type
Detailed vegetation community <b>survey</b>	Determining plant community type (PCT) using databases and on-ground survey plots including detailed plant identification. Assessing vegetation integrity in vegetation zones using survey plots/transects to collect data about composition, structure and function. Refer: Chapter 5 (BAM 2017) or Chapter 4 (BAM 2020)
Targeted species <b>survey</b>	Targeted survey to confirm presence or absence of species that cannot be predicted by habitat surrogates (these are species credit species). The department's species survey guidelines should be used. Refer: Chapter 6 (BAM 2017) or Chapter 5 (BAM 2020)
Site inspections	Site inspections are generally shorter site visits to verify/review BAM field data reported in a BAR carried out by government reviewers. At a minimum, the purpose is to verify the PCT choice. It may also include observing landscape features and available habitats.

## Rules for recording fieldwork:

- The CPD-log should record field **days** (and **not hours**). A field day is a minimum of a 7-hour day.
- Half-days can be added together to make whole days.
- The CPD-log should include details of the survey, your role, the method and focus of the survey (flora/fauna) and the type of fieldwork (as per Table 3).
- If you are a consultant assessor, fieldwork cannot be solely targeted species survey.
- It is not necessary to be completing the fieldwork solely for BAM reports. It is recognised that detailed site assessments and threatened species surveys are carried out for a variety of purposes. To be included in the CPD-log, however, it must be a type of fieldwork listed in Table 3.
- ‘Site inspections’ are different from the 2 survey types listed in Table 3. An assessor who is also a government reviewer, who only meets the minimum ‘site inspections’ for fieldwork, and does not meet the minimum requirements of survey fieldwork, will be renewed with conditional accreditation (see Box 2).

### Box 2 – Conditional accreditation for government reviewers

Government reviewers (who are also accredited assessors) can record their fieldwork using **site inspections**.

If they do use these, and do not also complete a minimum amount of **survey** fieldwork, a condition will be placed on their accreditation that does not allow them to ‘certify’ a BAR or ‘finalise’ a BAM-C calculation.

The condition can be removed on request in the future. This will depend on fieldwork requirements being satisfied and will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Assessors can contact the [BAM\\_accreditation@environment.nsw.gov.au](mailto:BAM_accreditation@environment.nsw.gov.au) mailbox for further advice when they wish to have this condition removed if their circumstances change (for example, due to changing employment context).

## 4.2 Biodiversity Assessment Method Calculator analysis and credit reports

The second CPD-element is ‘BAM-C analysis and credit reports’. It demonstrates experience using the supporting analysis tool the BAM-C, and making credit reports from its output.

It is important assessors remain familiar and up to date with the operation of the BAM-C.

The BAM-C is where site data collected using the BAM field techniques, and other relevant data, is used to derive vegetation integrity scores and produce credit reports.

## Minimum requirements

The assessor must either:

- do one BAM-C calculation per year and finalise the case as the **lead assessor**<sup>ii iii</sup>
- make contributions to 2 BAM-C calculations per year as a **BAM contributor**
- do the detailed review and written feedback of one BAM-C analysis and credit report as a government or independent reviewer.

## What is the BAM-C element?

- For lead assessors/BAM contributors this activity includes entering data into the BAM-C, finalising the calculation in the BAM-C/BOAMs and making credit reports.
- For BAM reviewers it includes logging into BOAMs and the BAM-C to review entered data/calculations and writing a report with findings and recommendations.

## Rules for recording BAM-C activity

- Cases included in the CPD-log should be cases that are finalised<sup>iv</sup> for the purpose for which they were **contracted or commissioned** (defined in Section 5).
- **'Finalising'** refers to a case-status in the BAM-C and BOAMs.
- Multiple iterations of a BAM-C analysis for the same site cannot be used as multiple entries in the CPD-log.
- For **lead assessors**, the assessor's name must show on the credit report.
- **BAM contributors** can demonstrate their activity in BAM-C analysis work through its documentation in a BAR. This aligns with the requirement of the Biodiversity Conservation Regulation 2017<sup>v</sup> that the BAR should include the details of any other persons commissioned to conduct research or investigation that are relied on in preparing the report.
- **Government or independent reviewers** who provide **detailed review and written feedback** must be able to demonstrate this if requested. It should be a written evaluation of a BAM-C analysis for its technical quality and the requirements of the BAM.
- **Government or independent reviewers** must access the BAM-C case via BOAMs to review the underlying data and analysis.<sup>vi</sup> The BOAMs system contains records of who accesses cases. This CPD-element is not addressed if a BAR has been reviewed without the reviewer also accessing and considering the detailed BAM-C case.

## 4.3 Biodiversity Assessment Report authorship

The third CPD-element is BAR authorship. It demonstrates experience preparing reports that document the application of the BAM for specific sites.

The contents of reports are described in Appendices K, L and M of the BAM (2020).

The goal for inclusion of this CPD-element is for assessors to demonstrate they have prepared BARs.

## What is BAR authorship?

BAR authorship is the writing of a BAR as the lead author and includes certifying the report. Assessors who work in a team may make contributions to a BAR, and their name and contribution should be clearly included in the report.

For government or independent reviewers, the CPD-activity requires detailed written review and feedback.

## BAR authorship minimum requirement

The assessor must either:

- complete one BAR per year as the **lead assessor**
- make contributions to 2 BARs per year as a **BAM contributor**
- do the detailed review and written feedback of one BAR per year as a government or independent reviewer.

## Rules for recording the BAR authorship activity

- Only BARs prepared in accordance with the BAM can be used for the CPD-log. Other types of assessment reports such as flora and fauna reports, assessment of significance or landscape reports cannot be included.
- Cases included in the CPD-log should be cases that are finalised<sup>vii</sup> for the purpose for which they were **contracted or commissioned** (defined in Section 5).
- For **lead assessors**, the report must be **certified**<sup>viii</sup> by that assessor in the BAR.
- For **government or independent reviewers**, the CPD-activity requires detailed **written review and feedback**. If requested, the government or independent reviewer must be able to provide evidence of the detailed review. Only briefly looking at, or compiling other people's comments about a BAR, does not meet the minimum requirement.
- **BAM contributors** should demonstrate their input by having their contributions acknowledged in the BAR. The types of contributions may include: writing the draft report, preparing appendices, documenting part 1, 2 or 3, preparing mapping (to address BAM requirements) or preparing a site management plan (within the meaning of the BAM).

## 4.4 Participating in Biodiversity Assessment Method - related events

The fourth CPD-element is intended to improve knowledge in the BAM and facilitate engagement within the assessor community.

Interacting with other accredited assessors and related professionals about the application of the BAM provides an opportunity to expand knowledge, develop a support network and improve confidence with the BAM.

## What are BAM-related events?

BAM-related events include:

- BAM support webinars either live or on-demand; recordings can be found on the department's website
- accredited assessor workshops
- participating in BAM-related departmental working groups
- BAM-related sessions held in other settings, such as conferences or workshops.

If assessors are unsure if an event would count towards their CPD-log, advice can be sought from the [BAM\\_accreditation@environment.nsw.gov.au](mailto:BAM_accreditation@environment.nsw.gov.au) mailbox.

## Minimum requirement

The minimum requirement is engagement in 2 BAM-related events per year.

## Rules for recording the BAM-related events

Assessors should record the details in the CPD-log template.

### Ecological and environmental conferences and courses

We encourage assessors to continue to expand their knowledge of ecology and broader environmental legislation through conferences and courses. These may not meet the criteria for BAM-related events for your CPD; however, we are happy for you to include them to demonstrate your growing expertise in the ecological field.

## 4.5 Consideration of personal circumstances due to health, injury or carer responsibilities

The department will consider relevant personal circumstances in relation to CPD. If an assessor has had significant periods of absence from the workplace, for example, due to injury, illness or carer responsibilities, and cannot meet the minimum requirements, they may contact the department to discuss their circumstances and to what extent they can meet the requirements. This information will be taken into account when considering their CPD obligations.

## 5. Meaning of ‘contracted or commissioned’

The CPD-log requires that the BAM-C cases and BAR reports included as CPD-activity only be those that were ‘**contracted or commissioned**’.

The terminology has been introduced to differentiate between test, incomplete or training cases that may not include real or reliable information.

‘**Contracted or commissioned**’ includes finalised cases that have been submitted to a consent authority as part of an approval process. They may also be cases that have been provided to a client but did not progress further.

## 6. Consideration of other circumstances where an assessor is alternatively active in the Biodiversity Offsets Scheme and the Biodiversity Assessment Method

This section applies to accredited assessors who:

- are active in the BAM and the BOS
- their work does not precisely fit the annual activity CPD requirements.

An example might include very experienced consultants who are able to demonstrate their engagement in the BOS in other ways.

**‘Considering other circumstances where an assessor is alternatively active in the BOS and the BAM’ is not intended** for people who are completing different types of environmental assessments or have no or little involvement in the BOS or the BAM.

It is an allowance for a minority of people who have alternative ways of demonstrating detailed knowledge of the BAM and its application in the BOS. It is applicable to CPD-elements 1 to 3 only; CPD-element 4 cannot have alternative approach.

A different CPD approach must:

- be in alignment with the goals of the CPD-log (see Section 1)
- outline any justification for consideration against each of CPD-elements 1 to 3.

To request consideration by the Environment Agency Head (EAH):

- you should first consider if you have detailed knowledge of and engagement in the BAM
- complete the *Request for consideration* form, downloadable on the department website, and address each CPD-elements
- submit the form to [BAM\\_accreditation@environment.nsw.gov.au](mailto:BAM_accreditation@environment.nsw.gov.au) for consideration
- wait for a response from the EAH regarding your request.

Assessors should complete the request for consideration form during their accreditation period, preferably 6 months prior to their accreditation end date.

The EAH will consider these applications on a case-by-case basis and will provide a written response. Assessors who need to request special consideration for health or other reasons where they had substantial periods away from the workplace should refer to Section 4.5.



# Glossary

Term	Meaning
Annual activity	A yearly amount of actions required to meet the minimum CPD requirements.
BAM contributors	People who make a substantial contribution to BAM-C calculations or BAM reports but who are not the lead assessor. They should be recorded in the BAR in accordance with Section 1.3 of the BAM.
BAM contributions	BAM activity completed when working in a team.
BAR	Biodiversity Assessment Report – includes BDARs, BSSARs and BCARs.
'contracted or commissioned'	Status of BAM work – intended to refer to finished work (not draft or test cases/reports) (refer to Section 5).
CPD-activity	General term applied to actions that meet the CPD requirements.
CPD-elements	Categories of activities done by assessors in applying the BAM – see Box 1.
CPD-log template	The department's template in which CPD-elements must be recorded.
CPD minimum requirements	The minimum amount of activity required for each CPD-element (Section 4).
Detailed reviews and written feedback	Written evaluation of a BAM-C analysis or BAR for its technical quality, and the requirements of the BAM in the BAM-C, completeness of report. For BAM-C analysis, the reviewer must access the data in the BAM-C. For a BAR, the reviewer must critically review the content against the requirements of the BAM.
Reviewer	Can be government or independent – a person who provides a detailed review and written feedback on a BAM-C analysis/credit report or a BAR.
Transitional allowances	Reduced annual requirements for all assessors accredited as of 30 June 2021.

# Appendix A: Continuing Professional Development annual activity requirements

CPD-element	Detail	Section of guideline
Fieldwork	<p>Either:</p> <p>10 days per year including a mix of tasks – detailed vegetation community survey and targeted species survey. Cannot be solely targeted species survey</p> <p>Government reviewers may undertake 6 site inspections per year (refer to Box 2).</p>	Section 4.1
BAM-C	<p>Either:</p> <p>Shown as lead assessor in credit report – one case per year</p> <p>Government or independent reviewers may undertake one detailed review and written feedback of a BAM-C analysis per year</p> <p>BAM contributors – 2 cases per year and must be documented in the BAR.</p>	Section 4.2
BAR authorship	<p>Either:</p> <p>Shown as lead author in one BAR per year</p> <p>Government or independent reviewers may undertake <b>detailed review of a BAR and provide written feedback</b> one per year</p> <p>BAM contributors – 2 reports per year and must be documented in the BAR.</p>	Section 4.3
Participate in BAM-related events	<p>Must participate in 2 events per year.</p>	Section 4.4

# More information

- [Biodiversity Offsets Scheme Support webinars](#)

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<sup>i</sup> Reviews by local government are referred to as critical reviews in the [Guidance for local government on undertaking a critical review of a Biodiversity Development Assessment Report \(PDF 1.3MB\)](#) (DPIE 2020)

<sup>ii</sup> The **lead assessor** is the assessor who has their name identified on the credit report. They are the assessor who is taking responsibility for calculations.

<sup>iii</sup> Refer to the [BOAMs release notes: Upgrades to the BAM-C \(PDF 638KB\)](#), July 2019, regarding identifying the lead assessor in the Biodiversity Offsets and Agreement Management System (BOAMs).

<sup>iv</sup> Support documents for the BAM-C are the BAM-C user guide, and associated BAM-C release notes found on the [accredited assessors' resource pages](#). [BOS support webinars](#) (produced by the Department) guide the use of BOAMs and the BAM-C.

<sup>v</sup> Biodiversity Conservation Regulation clauses 6.8(f), 6.9(f) and 6.10(d)

<sup>vi</sup> Refer to the [BOAMs release notes: Consent Authority user access to BOAMs \(PDF 1.4MB\)](#), March 2020

<sup>vii</sup> Support documents for the BAM-C are the BAM-C user guide, and associated BAM-C release notes found on the [accredited assessors' resource pages](#). [BOS support webinars](#) (produced by the Department) guide the use of BOAMs and the BAM-C.

<sup>viii</sup> Certified in accordance with section 6.15 of the *Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016* (BC Act). '**Certified**' refers to the requirements of the BC Act for the lead assessor to take responsibility for the BAR. It should be included as a declaration at the start of the BAR.