

EcoTender Demonstration 2007/08

Bidding process

Information Sheet No. 5

How will I know what management actions to undertake?

EcoTender Field Officers will provide face-to-face advice to landholders to help them identify current threats to native vegetation and opportunities for revegetation on their property. They will identify potential management actions that could be undertaken, and their timing and duration to help improve the environmental outcomes on their land and in the broader catchment.

Landholders will also be able to discuss their own ideas for management during this process. In some circumstances (eg. fencing, revegetation), landholders will have to meet required management specifications.

For more information on these requirements, please refer to EcoTender Demonstration project Information Sheet No. 4 - *Specifications for landholder actions*.

How do I put in a bid?

In the weeks following the site assessment, landholders will receive a Corangamite Catchment Management Authority (CMA) approved draft management plan by registered mail. This plan will be based on the management summary sheet left with the landholder. This sheet contains actions previously discussed and agreed between the landholder and the EcoTender Field Officer at the conclusion of the site visit.

Landholders can then submit their bid using the supplied bid sheet and place this in the supplied postage-paid envelope. In doing so, landholders acknowledge that the management plan is final.

How will I know how much to bid?

The amount of the bid will be entirely up to the landholder. The EcoTender Field Officer will not know what constitutes a successful bid and, therefore will not be able to provide advice on this. Landholders will need to determine the amount of money they wish to receive to enable them to undertake the proposed management actions and to fulfil any longer-term protection commitments.

Typically most landholders will consider the costs of undertaking the agreed actions and some may also include consideration of any reduced income resulting from the agreement. The final bid amount will also be influenced by how the proposed

commitments fit in with existing landholder operations and plans for their property and to what extent the landholder is prepared to share the cost of these commitments with the public.

To assist with bid preparation, landholders will be provided with the environmental benefit scores resulting from the proposed landholder commitments. Landholders will need to consider how their own view of an acceptable level of payment places them with respect to other bidders.

When do I have to submit my bid?

Landholders will have a period of 14 days (assessed by the postmark on the return envelope) to submit a bid following receipt of the agreed EcoTender draft management plan. Bids received after this period will not be eligible for assessment. Appropriate allowance will be made for areas that do not have daily post.

Please advise the EcoTender Field Officer if you are going to be away for any period of time to ensure that the delivery of the draft management plan is timed to coincide with your availability.

What if I want to alter the management actions in the draft management plan?

Landholders have an opportunity to amend the draft management plan. To do this the landholder should contact their local EcoTender Field Officer to discuss management options as soon as possible after they receive the draft plan and before the 14-day submission period expires.

Any proposed change to the management actions will require a reassessment of the landholder's environmental benefit scores. This will be forwarded to landholders along with a redrafted EcoTender agreed management plan. The landholder's bid can then be submitted within a new 14-day period.

It should be noted that only EcoTender approved plans will be eligible for landholder bids and that redrafting of management plans may involve delays depending on field officer availability.

How will bids be assessed?

Bids will be assessed according to criteria that compare the relative environmental benefit and cost being offered by each bid against the benefit/cost of all other bids.

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The **environmental benefit** is the sum of the terrestrial biodiversity, river health and estuarine health outcomes resulting from the proposed landholder management commitments.

Who will know how much I bid?

Bids remain confidential between the Department of Sustainability and Environment (DSE)/ Corangamite Catchment Management Authority (CMA) and the landholder.

Who will know the contents of my management agreement if I am successful?

Cost and payment details will remain confidential between the landholder and DSE/Corangamite CMA. For public accountability purposes, information on the geographic location of sites under agreement and the associated management plan will be available at Corangamite CMA offices. DSE or the Corangamite CMA may also make available general statistics from the project, in compliance with the *Information Privacy Act 2000*.

How will the fairness of the bid assessment process be guaranteed?

An independent probity adviser will be appointed by DSE to review and report on the bid assessment process. This report will be made publicly available on the DSE/Corangamite CMA websites and through a published report that will be sent to all landholders who participate in the project. Individual landholder bids will not be disclosed as part of this report.

How will I find out if I am successful?

Successful and unsuccessful bidders will be notified by letter when the bid assessment process is completed.

What happens if I am not successful?

If a bid is unsuccessful, it will be because it does not represent adequate "value for money" in comparison to other landholder bids.

Unsuccessful bidders will be advised in retrospect how their bid compared with the general level at which bids were successful.

These landholders will be directed towards other extension programs and financial support schemes that may be able to assist them with their native vegetation management or revegetation objectives.

What are landholder management actions?

Landholder management actions are the habitat management or revegetation activities identified in the management plan that a landholder agrees to provide for the duration of the management agreement to maintain or improve the quality and extent of native vegetation on their property.

These activities are based on management actions over and above those required by current arrangements and legislation. Typical activities may include protection of existing native vegetation assets (e.g. retention of logs on the ground, restriction of grazing to maintain the understorey); active management of key habitat components (e.g. weed control, supplementary planting of native plant species) and/or revegetation of cleared areas with indigenous species.

Protection of scattered trees to encourage natural regeneration is also a potential landholder action.

Are carbon outcomes included in the bid assessment process?

Carbon sequestration outcomes are not included in the Environmental Benefit score although landholders undertaking revegetation on their property will be provided with a measure of the carbon sequestered by their revegetation at maturity (in tonnes/ha).

The project has negotiated that any carbon sequestered through permanent on-title landholder revegetation agreements can be sold to a DSE for a fixed price. Successful bidders who sign permanent revegetation agreements and who choose to sell their carbon to DSE will receive \$12/tonne carbon sequestered calculated using the project carbon model. This amount will be combined with their bid amount into a total management agreement payment that will be paid in accordance with the agreement payment schedule.

Further information

For further information on EcoTender Demonstration project please contact the DSE Customer Service Centre on **136 186** or visit the DSE website www.dse.vic.gov.au or visit the Corangamite CMA website www.ccma.vic.gov.au and search under "EcoTender".



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