

NSW Forest Monitoring and Improvement Program

Forest Monitoring Steering Committee Charter

Version No: 1.2

Aim

Ensure the objectives and intended outcomes of the Forest Monitoring and Improvement Program are achieved in an efficient and effective manner.

Function of Steering Committee

As per the terms of reference, the Forest Monitoring Steering Committee's role will include (but is not limited to):

- Developing an overarching Program Plan for the NSW Forest Monitoring and Improvement Program.
- Other strategies or plans will:
 - Identify and prioritise all the Regional Forest Agreements (RFA), Integrated Forestry Operations Approvals (IFOA) and other monitoring and reporting obligations and commitments, and the extent of monitoring, evaluation and reporting required to satisfy each obligation/commitment
 - identify strategies to build on existing programs or adjust them so there is consistency and relevancy
 - list commitments and relevant agency responsibilities and timelines and funding (and source of such funding) required to meet obligations and commitments
- Ensuring the program is efficiently implemented, look for opportunities to align, complement, and leverage existing data sets, indicators and programs to maximise efficiencies and avoid gaps and overlaps
- Providing strategic direction, and where possible, forecasting and future scenario planning to inform adaptive management of NSW forests and the NSW Forest Monitoring and Improvement Program
- Leading and coordinating periodic and major strategic reviews of the Monitoring and Improvement Program and the development of evaluation and progress reports, against the project plan, and RFA and IFOA requirements
- Developing a stakeholder and community engagement plan, and leading stakeholder and community planning and engagement, including with the Australian Government.

In addition, the Steering Committee will:

- Actively and overtly support the project and act as an advocate for its outcomes
- Ensure effort and expenditure are appropriate to the expectations of Ministers and Senior Executive
- Address any issue that has significant implications for the project
- Keep the project scope under control as emergent issues force changes to be considered
- Reconcile differences in opinion and approach, and resolve disputes arising from them.

Role of independent Chair

The role of the NSW Natural Resources Commission as Chair, will include (but is not limited to):

- *Program governance and design* – establishing and chairing the NSW Forest Monitoring Steering Committee; establishing a governance charter; establishing a program logic, program outcomes, program schedule and performance expectations; leading and advising on program scope, analysing existing forest Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting (MER) activities to reduce duplication and address MER gaps across private and public tenures; developing assessment criteria to determine monitoring priorities; and determining an approach that fulfils NSW Government obligations; and testing opportunities to innovate.

- *Program direction and review* – tracking the program’s achievement of objectives; reviewing the program against performance expectations; providing independent advice on program implementation and reporting; and advising on risks, timelines and priorities.
- *Program accountability and reporting* – providing a commitment to open government; ensuring program methodologies and datasets are accessible and transparent; ensuring program effectiveness and outcomes are monitored and reported; ensuring RFA and IFOA obligations and commitments are being tracked; and independently providing advice or recommending approval of plans, reports, and allocation of funding or improvements to the relevant Ministers and/or agencies.

Role of members

The role of NSW agencies will include (but is not limited to):

- ensure each organisation is represented on the Steering Committee by someone with adequate decision-making authority
- implement the NSW Forest Monitoring and Improvement Program and stakeholder and community engagement plan
- allocate and spend funding in accordance with the agreed Monitoring, Evaluation, Reporting and Research Plan
- collect, procure, analyse, store, organise, share and make available data and reports – data will be collected and analysed for all tenures in RFA and IFOA regions (all information relating to private native forestry or private land will be managed consistent with the Local Land Services privacy policy)
- participate in technical working groups
- conduct periodic and major reviews and the development of progress reports, including reporting on the Sustainability Indicators
- implement research and evaluation projects and publish results
- implement recommendations for design, implementation and improvement of monitoring from the NSW Forest Monitoring Steering Committee
- implement adaptive forest management to enhance Ecologically Sustainable Forest Management (ESFM) across tenures where agreed, in response to relevant findings, advice and recommendations of the NSW Forest Monitoring and Improvement Program
- in the case of the (then) NSW Department of Planning and Industry, disbursing retained funds under the \$9.2 million forest monitoring and mapping package announced in the NSW Budget 2018-19 in-line with agreed design direction set by the Steering Committee and those parts of an approved Program Plan and other strategies or plans, including the 3.1 FTE with the DPI Forest Science team that are dedicated to the program
- in the case of the NSW Environment Protection Authority, disbursing funds for those parts of the Monitoring, Evaluation, Reporting and Research Plan funded on the \$2 million budget allocation for Coastal IFOA monitoring and evaluation allocated for the period FY2018-19 to FY2022-23.

All members of the Steering Committee, in practice will:

- help balance conflicting priorities and resources
- provide guidance to the Project Team and users of the program's outputs
- consider ideas and issues raised
- review the progress of the program
- check adherence of program activities to standards of best practice, both within their organisation and in a wider context
- ensure confidentiality of work in progress unless otherwise approved by the Steering Committee.

Role of independent experts

- Independent experts appointed to the Steering Committee are responsible for providing strategic advice to the Steering Committee aligned to their qualifications and their thematic focus.

General

Chair

- The NSW Natural Resources Commissioner is the Commission. The Commissioner may delegate the role.
- The Commission shall convene and chair the NSW Forest Monitoring Steering Committee meetings.
- In line with the terms of reference, the Commission as independent chair provides advice or recommendations to Government in respect to program governance, design, direction, review, accountability and review.
- In delivering this function, the Commission will collaborate with agencies through the Steering Committee and consider advice and guidance from the Steering Committee members. Final decisions will be made by the Commission within the steering committee.
- The Commission, as independent Chair will note issues where there are divergent views and resolve where possible.
- If the designated Chair is not available, then the Chair can delegate the chairing role referred to as the Acting Chair, and the Acting Chair will be responsible for convening and conducting that meeting. The Acting Chair is responsible for informing the Chair as to the salient points/decisions raised or agreed to at that meeting.

Membership

- The NSW Forest Monitoring Steering Committee shall be comprised of:
 - Natural Resources Commissioner (or delegate) as Chair
- Agency Members –
 - Department of Regional NSW (inc. divisions and entities - Department of Primary Industries and Local Land Services)
 - Department of Planning, Industry and Environment (inc. separate functional representatives of Energy, Environment and Science, NPWS and crown lands)
 - Aboriginal Affairs and Heritage (DPC)
 - Environment Protection Authority
 - Forestry Corporation of NSW
 - Natural Resources Commission
- Agencies will nominate functional representatives.
- A NSW Forestry Corporation representative must attend all meetings of the NSW Forest Monitoring Steering Committee that relate to the Coastal IFOA monitoring program.
- Expert Members
 - Expert 1 – ecology
 - Expert 2 – soil erosion and water quality/pollution
 - Expert 3 – forest regeneration and principles of Ecologically Sustainable Forest Management
 - Expert 4 – social-economic

- Observers may attend meetings, and contribute to discussion by invitation by the Chair. Observer attendance and role in meetings must be included in both agendas and minutes.
- Staff from the Commission will provide secretariat support.

Technical Working Groups

- The Steering Committee can establish technical working groups to support the achievement of the Forest Monitoring and Improvement Program objectives as needed.
- Technical Working Groups will be chaired by a representative of the Natural Resources Commission.
- Technical Working Groups must report periodically to the Steering Committee on their progress.
- Technical Working Groups must respond to strategic direction set by the Commissioner as chair of the Steering Committee and any specific requests of the Commission.
- Technical Working Groups will work together to achieve specified goals.

Agenda items

- All agenda items must be forwarded to the Project Manager by C.O.B. five working days prior to the next scheduled meeting.
- The agenda, with attached meeting papers will be distributed at least three working days prior to the next scheduled meeting.
- The Chair has the right to refuse to list an item on the formal agenda, but members may raise an item under 'Other Business' if necessary and as time permits.

Minutes and meeting papers

- Members can share meeting papers within their agency for technical advice to support effective decision making at committee meetings. Members must ensure confidentiality of work in progress.
- Minutes will be prepared for each NSW Forest Monitoring Steering Committee by the program secretariat.
- Full copies of the Minutes, including attachments, shall be provided to all NSW Forest Monitoring Steering Committee members no later than three working days following each meeting.
- By agreement of the Steering Committee, out-of-session decisions are deemed acceptable. All out-of-session decisions shall be recorded in the minutes of the next scheduled meeting.
- The Minutes of each meeting will be stored on the Commission's document management system as a complete record.
- The Technical Working Groups will be required to keep minutes (prepared by the program secretariat). The Minutes of each meeting will be stored on the Commission's document management system.

Frequency and location of meetings

- The Steering Committee will meet at least quarterly or as agreed by the Steering Committee.
- The Steering Committee shall meet at the NRC office unless otherwise agreed by the Steering Committee.
- The Steering Committee may invite guest speakers to its meetings and undertake field visits.
- Steering Committee members from government agencies will cover their own costs to attend meetings. Costs of travel to meetings for expert committee members will be incorporated into remuneration agreements.

Proxies to meetings

- Nominated representatives of the NSW Forest Monitoring Steering Committee can nominate a proxy to attend a meeting if the member is unable to attend.
- The Chair will be informed of the substitution at least three working days prior to the scheduled meeting.
- The nominated proxy shall provide relevant comments/feedback, on behalf of the NSW Forest Monitoring Steering Committee member they are representing, to the attended meeting.

Reporting

- In line with the terms of reference, the Commission will report to the Premier, Minister for Planning and Public Spaces, Deputy Premier (Minister for Regional NSW, Industry and Trade), Minister for Energy and Environment and Minister for Agriculture and Western NSW.
- Reports will be provided on a 6-monthly basis to the Premier and Ministers.
- All other reporting requirements on forest monitoring outlined in the Regional Forest Agreements (RFAs), Integrated Forestry Operations Approvals (IFOAs) will be met by the Forest Monitoring and Improvement Program according to these commitments and agreements.

Intellectual Property

- Intellectual Property will rest with the commissioning agency unless otherwise agreed.

Conflicts of interest

- Steering Committee members will identify any real or perceived conflicts of interests and inform the program secretariat in advance of each Steering Committee meeting.
- The Program Secretariat will keep a register of conflicts of interest on the Commission's document management system and notify the Steering Committee of any new conflicts of interest identified at the start of each meeting.

Review of performance

- The Steering Committee will provide an annual forum and review of the Coastal IFOA monitoring program, which includes: (i) monitoring program results; (ii) monitoring program progress; and (iii) an assessment of the adequacy of the monitoring program.
- Under the Coastal IFOA, a major review of the monitoring program must be completed with each formal review for the approval and must include: (i) detailed reporting of monitoring program progress and all results; (ii) detailed analysis of trends; and (iii) an assessment of the adequacy of the monitoring program.
- The effectiveness and efficiency of the Steering Committee in fulfilling its functions will be reviewed as part of the five-yearly formal review of the RFAs and the Coastal IFOA.

Amendments to the charter

- The NSW Forest Monitoring Steering Committee Charter can be amended by the Commission in consultation with the Steering Committee.

Version control		
1.0	Final - endorsed by the Steering Committee	14/02/19
1.1	Agency name changes after MOG and other minor amendments	15/04/19
1.2	Agency name changes after MOG Direction on meeting papers	08/10/20